

ECO

THE ONE WEEK DOWN ISSUE

eco@climatenetwork.org • www.climatenetwork.org/eco-newsletter • December 6, 2018

ECO has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at major international conferences since the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. ECO is produced co-operatively by the Climate Action Network at the UNFCCC meetings in Katowice, Poland during the COP 24 meeting.

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12 Years Left

It seems that some information on clarity, transparency, and understanding of NDCs is playing hide-and-seek. What happened to additional information on mitigation targets under paragraph H in the last iteration? Shouldn't these targets be clear, transparent and understandable too? ECO is witnessing a scraping of integrity from text on mitigation – which now is completely imbalanced.

So, Parties, who is going to be “it” and seek out this hiding text?

Even if the guidance becomes mandatory for all Parties, it isn't worth as much if it doesn't actually provide transparency. Many countries did not provide enough information in their NDCs to calculate what their plans really mean for future emissions, and thus require assumptions including some of the world's largest emitters. By excluding this crucial text, this loophole extends indefinitely.

When the Secretariat prepared a synthesis report to aggregate effects of INDCS in 2016, they struggled to produce accurate results. The same will occur in the global stocktake

if there isn't additional clarity and transparency of Parties' mitigation efforts. We won't be able to accurately determine where we are going or how much further effort is needed.

What's more, accounting and tracking progress of NDCs will become much more difficult to determine. Without clarity on what the targets actually represent, in terms of emission reductions, how can you accurately determine if you've achieved your target and track progress toward it? It will be all too easy for countries to hide their true progress as a result of uncertainties around their actual targets.

What happens to the legitimacy of the Paris Agreement when Parties are able to show they've achieved their targets as a result of ambiguous and uncertain results, but international reports tell us the global emissions gap continues to grow?

It is time to step up and put back the missing text. Clarity on mitigation targets is essential to be able to understand whether or not we're on track to meet the globally-agreed temperature target and are preventing the worst impacts of climate change.

Can't Burn Our Way Out of the Climate Crisis

Everyone knows that CO2 emissions from burning coal are a massive contributor to climate change. Yet there's confusion about burning wood. In fact, generating a unit of energy from wood emits more CO2 upfront than generating it from coal!

“Even if forests are allowed to regrow, using wood deliberately harvested for burning will increase carbon in the atmosphere and warming for decades to centuries –as many studies have shown –even when wood replaces coal, oil or natural gas. The reasons are fundamental and occur regardless of whether forest management is ‘sustainable,’” 800 scientists told the EU Parliament earlier this year.

Large scale energy facilities burning forest biomass or co-firing it with coal are mushrooming. In the next decade, this energy source is projected to increase by 250% globally. It mostly cannot and will not be sourced from post sawmill residues as misleadingly represented. The exorbitant harvest of trees for energy has a huge impact on climate, forests and people.

The text for accounting under APA 3 would allow countries to burn biomass with zero of the carbon emissions being accounted. Absolutely zero. This would not only increase atmospheric carbon in the precious few years left to stabilize the climate, but would also undermine a transition to truly clean renewables. More countries are finding it easier to have NDCs that swap coal power plants with wood pellets rather than build new wind or solar. To fix this, the land sector must be accounted for like any other.

At this COP, the bioenergy industry is peddling this false solution: in a conference on Thursday and at showy event in the Polish pavilion on Monday. Next week's Forest Declaration will probably push it too.

We have to go beyond burning to save the climate. Yet, citizens and decision makers are being misled and accounting scams make it seem that this is a carbon neutral energy source, which, ECO is here to warn, is not true.

Indigenous People's Day Ends With a Win!

After a successful decision at COP23 concerning the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP), negotiations on the LCIPP have been stalled on multiple fronts since the negotiations first started in May at Bonn session.

In Katowice, several key issues arose during this first week. Of particular concern was the largely undefined concept of "Local Communities", who are not currently recognised by the UNFCCC as a constituency. Late last evening, Parties and Indigenous Peoples finally reached consensus on the LCIPP, following intense trilateral negotiations between key Parties and Indigenous Peoples.

The final decision includes maintaining a balance between Indigenous Peoples and states on the Facilitative Working Group which will be mandated to develop the work plan for the platform and its functions: strengthening and sharing of traditional knowledge; creating synergies with other bodies both within and outside of the UNFCCC; and supporting Parties and Indigenous Peoples engagement in the UNFCCC.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change and Parties celebrated this momentous

decision with the final informal session this morning. It also happened, perhaps in a happy coincidence, on Indigenous Peoples Day - the day set aside to highlight Indigenous Peoples involvement in climate action.

The next activities of the Platform will take place in June 2019, including a thematic in-session workshop in Bonn focused on enhancing the participation of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples; and the first meeting of the Facilitative Working group - the first Constitutive body that has equal representation between Parties and Indigenous Peoples.

While Indigenous Peoples can start today in this spirit of gratitude and celebration of this momentous decision, the work for the Platform begins as the Co-Facilitator urged Indigenous Peoples and Parties to nominate their representatives as fast as possible to maintain momentum.

There remains much work to be complete the Paris Rulebook at this COP. Indigenous Peoples will now turn their attention to push Parties to uphold their commitment to respecting, protecting, and advancing the rights of Indigenous Peoples in all negotiations under the Paris Rulebook.

Frontline Survivors and Climate Pilgrims Urge for Climate Ambition

Climate change is a matter of science and facts, not beliefs or opinions. The science is clear and the facts linked to climate change - like typhoons and droughts - have been so devastating that both secular and faith communities take up their stand to urge political leaders for ambitious climate action.

ECO highlights that after over two months of walking from the Vatican through seven countries, the Climate Pilgrimage participants have arrived in Katowice to call on the Parties at COP24 to respond to the recent IPCC report and take ambitious action to keep global warming to 1.5°C, in accordance with the Paris Agreement. Simultaneously, an Ecumenical Climate Pilgrimage from Bonn, has arrived in Katowice, also calling for bold action.

The Climate Pilgrimage consists of pilgrims from Asia, the Pacific countries, America and Europe, who have walked 1,500 km (nearly 950 miles) to draw the world's attention to the dire effects of climate change already affecting their homes. For these pilgrims, climate justice is a personal matter. Some of the pilgrims are survivors of Typhoon Haiyan, a storm linked to climate change that killed over 6,000 people in South East Asia. One of them, AG Saño, dug the bodies of 72 of his neighbours from rubble in the wake of the storm while his brother, Yeb Saño, led the Philippines' delegation to

COP19 in Warsaw.

The pilgrims started their inspiring journey at the Vatican on October 4, and almost each day they engaged in climate change-related workshops and meetings with local communities, students, media, mayors and top-level decision makers. In Vienna, the pilgrims met Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen. Van der Bellen has recently launched an initiative for more climate ambition, co-signed by 14 European Heads of State (including Germany, France and Italy) and the prime ministers of the Netherlands, Spain, Denmark and Sweden. In Poland, the climate pilgrims engaged in a joint activity with the people of the town of Imielin in the Silesia region, who oppose the construction of the new hard coal mine and ask for the deployment of renewable energy instead.

In recent months, the Vatican has convened a top-level conference on climate change and the Pope has told oil company CEOs that "civilization requires energy, but energy use must not destroy civilization!" In his famed encyclical letter on climate change and ecology "Laudato Si'", Pope Francis states that "technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels—especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas, needs to be progressively replaced without delay."

What is a Rulebook without Rights and Participation?

With a flurry of new texts, ECO was hopeful that Parties had made good progress. But upon closer examination, ECO is very worried. Not content to undermine ambition alone, backsliding continues to broaden its reach to the whole rulebook. With each new APA text, ECO's worries grow.

Where are the rights? Where are non-party stakeholders? Where are indigenous peoples? Where is gender? Food security? Just transition? Intergenerational equity? Biodiversity and ecosystem integrity? Just three years after the Paris Agreement was adopted, it seems Parties are suffering from amnesia.

Luckily, ECO is here to remind you: the success at COP21 did not come only from the fact that the Paris Agreement got all countries on board to tackle the climate crisis. It also came from the fact that they agreed climate action should be people-centered and rights based. Yet, three years later, mentions to human rights have mysteriously disappeared from the entire text of the rulebook. References to gender are equally elusive, including as it relates to adaptation, an area Parties explicitly agreed must be gender-responsive.

And then there's participation. The participation of non-party stakeholders in nearly every APA agenda item is critical. ECO is watching carefully, and with concern as references to participation of non-Parties progressively

disappears or finds itself almost all alone in brackets. Non-party stakeholders, including NGOs, have a lot of expertise and cover the whole globe so why would you want to exclude them from developing NDCs, helping craft adaptation plans, participating in the global stocktake and the transparency framework? After all it's not only better for climate action, but you've already agreed to it.

The timing of this amnesia couldn't be more ironic. On Monday, we will celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at a time when world leaders aligned to ensure that egregious human rights violations would never again be committed on a global scale. And here we are. On the precipice of a climate crisis that, according to the IPCC, requires immediate action to avoid the suffering of millions of people and the collapse of eco-systems.

Failing to protect human rights (and related rights) in the Paris rulebook, while simultaneously celebrating this important anniversary, would not only undermine the Paris Agreement itself but also existing human rights frameworks beyond the Spodek arena. It would also send an extremely dangerous signal to the populations living on the frontlines of climate change. ECO therefore hopes you will not miss the opportunity, and invites you to celebrate the anniversary of rights with rights... in the rulebook!

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Voices From the Front Lines

In Vanuatu, we relish the good things in life. We in the Pacific Islands love the oceans and the forests of our natural environment, we are raised by our customs, and respect our traditional way of living. We see things and do things in our island fashion, the way that our ancestors, our grandparents, and our parents taught us. With respect for the land we live in, we take good care of our environment. With respect for our future generations, we preserve the resources our environment gives us.

The local woven basket symbolizes unity in Vanuatu. Made with pandanus leaves and centuries of time-honed skill, our baskets are more than tools for storing and carrying food – they reflect the beauty of our mothers and sisters and they keep our local knowledge to be later shared with our children and grandchildren. Our baskets tell the story of our traditional relationship with our environment. The natural world provides us with what we need, and we sustain and enrich our lives with those resources, weaving our culture and stories in harmony with our environment.

We do not have the term "climate change" in our local languages, but we are affected by it as people and as a nation. The severity of category 5 Cyclone Pam is now attributed by scientists to climate change. It completely wiped out the pandanus trees on 22 islands, affecting over 190,000 people. Climate-related disasters and droughts are causing irreparable loss to our pandanus and plastic bags are replacing our baskets. The consequences of climate change are impacting our lives and our future.

Recognizing our common humanity lets us stand strong and with one voice — let's demand zero net carbon emissions. We are the people of Vanuatu. We are citizens of this planet earth. We have the same right as others to live and enjoy our environment.

By Eddy Maliliu, CARE Vanuatu

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Switzerland

Does anyone know what all the fuss is in Katowice? It's the 24th conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Just checking that you all know what you are actually attending.

Unfortunately, when negotiations on climate finance accounting opened on Tuesday, Switzerland stated that according to their reading, the terms "New and Additional" (named so due to the new and additional changes climate change poses) did not make it into the Paris Agreement. Why is this important? Developed countries provide new and additional finance, which is required by developing countries to make action possible.

The basic challenge, and argument, is that if climate funds are not new and additional, developed countries can just relabel ordinary Official Development Assistance (i.e. 'double' or 'triple' dipping). That means that there is a risk that other development topics such as human rights, gender, education, health care, are getting less attention. And, there should also be a concern for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). There is a general trend where climate finance is focused on mitigation in emerging economies. That means that funds can be shifted from education in LDCs to mitigation in China, for example. But hey, you could argue that it's not only Switzerland! Aren't there other rich states who are in favour of re-shuffling and relabeling existing aid?

And, indeed, other developed countries (many from the EU) have also been blockers on this issue throughout the week, but Switzerland has been the most outspoken.

The need for climate action calls for increased attention, and this additional need should be addressed with additional funds, to ensure that no money is lost!

But alas, there is also a moral aspect! Climate change is caused by countries with big emissions, and consequently these countries should also pay for the additional challenges countries with low emissions are facing. "The polluter pays principle" is still relevant and "new and additional" is a way to ensure that it is operationalized.

Switzerland (and others) attempt this week to annul the New and Additional requirement translates into: The richest country in the world leading on taking development assistance away from the poorest peoples - to use it to comply with their obligation at the UNFCCC!

Germany

Today Germany was questioned by parties at the Multilateral Assessment on its progress towards emission targets. In its written answers, as well as in announcements from the government, Germany admits that it will miss the 2020 target, by as much as 8%! Their plans for moving forward? Giving up. Not even the urgent warnings from the IPCC this year could make Germany change its mind and get moving on pre-2020 action at home!

The 40% target was committed to ten years ago. Unfortunately, German governments since that time have not taken bold steps to reduce coal power plants and transport emissions. While Germany did install a lot of wind turbines and solar panels, it did not reduce its fleet of old and dirty coal power plants that are running day and night. During these many, many years, coal companies in Germany have continued to burn coal, destroy villages by enlarging lignite pits, and polluting the environment. The government is now facing legal cases for not reaching its 2020 target, which have been raised by affected people and supported by NGOs.

One year ago, at COP 23 in Bonn, chancellor Merkel announced that Germany would address a phase-out of coal, but here we are one year later, and not one single concrete measure has been taken! Instead, in an amazing display of inaction, the government installed a Commission to make proposals for a coal phase-out and on how to deal with the 2020 target. Wow. So incredibly helpful!

The report on the 2020 target was due before COP 24, but conveniently, shortly before the COP it was delayed by the government to next year. Shocker. Germany is here with essentially nothing to offer emission reductions at home.

If Germany, as the biggest European economy does not act, the entirety of EU ambition is at stake. Given the failure in CO2 reduction, Germany is unwilling to accept a higher EU 2030 target. The same is true for the net zero target for 2050 for the EU that the EU Commission presented as its preferred option in a communication last week. While countries like France, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and others are welcoming net zero in 2050, Germany remains silent and is also not opposing further subsidies for coal power plants in Europe in the form of capacity payments. Get a move on, Germany! Those targets will only get farther away – stop playing games and wasting the planet's precious time!

CAN PARTY

When: Saturday, December 8, 2018, 21.00 hrs. til late

Where: CLUB FAME KATOWICE

11, Sobieskiego, 40-082 Katowice

Bring your badges and cash or credit card to buy drinks for all of your friends!!

The CAN Party has a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of harassment

