

ECO



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 Bonn, Germany during the September ADP 2.10 meeting. ECO email: administration@climatenetwork.org • ECO website: www.climatenetwork.org/eco-newsletters • Editorial/Production: Linh Do

5-year Commitment Periods: Not Just a Teenage Crush

Rumours are circulating that certain Parties have been shopping a less-than-precise interpretation of EU positions in Bonn. Apparently, one of the main messages has been that the EU's proposal for 10-year commitment periods has developed into quite an obsession, with little chance of recovery. ECO begs to differ.

There is no legislation in place that would hinder the EU's adoption of a 5-year commitment period. Even if there is political resistance from certain corners. ECO has reliable intelligence that several EU member states actually see the merit in shorter commitment periods, which capture technolog-

ical and economic progress, protect against low ambition, and react more quickly to the increasingly severe consequences of the changing climate.

The EU's decision on the length of commitment periods will be made from purely political motives. Everyone knows that political winds shift as fast as teenage crushes do, though. Champions of 5-year commitment periods should ramp up the pressure on the EU—the window of opportunity still stands. Upcoming legislation will make this shift more difficult, so now is the time to act with swift determination. ECO will be here cheering you on every step of the way!

Bold Words and Empty Promises

The Arctic is one of the regions hit hardest by the climate change, and on Monday, the US convened the GLACIER summit – Global Leadership in the Arctic: Cooperation, Innovation, Engagement, and Resilience – to muster ambition among Arctic Council nations ahead of Paris.

With reluctance from Canada and Russia, a joint statement on climate change and the Arctic was signed. Notably, it did not commit to any concrete actions. “We take seriously warnings by scientists,” they said, but only recommended fossil fuel companies voluntarily join an Arctic methane mitigation program.

President Obama stressed that not enough was being done. “This year in Paris has to be the year that the world reaches an agreement. None of the nations represented here are moving fast enough.” He also added that: “any so-called leader who does not take this issue seriously or treats it like a joke — is not fit to lead.”

ECO would like to remind GLACIER countries, now that you have affirmed your commitment to climate action, it's time to walk your talk in Bonn.

#Ganietinberoep



“If, and this is the case here, there is a high risk of dangerous climate change with severe and life-threatening consequences for man and the environment, the State has the obligation to protect its citizens from it by taking appropriate and effective measures.”

The Hague District Court, 24 June 2015

You can't have missed it: the Dutch NGO Urgenda, alongside over 900 citizens, recently won a historic climate lawsuit against the Dutch state. The Court in The Hague confirmed what scientists, the public and civil society have long known: developed countries must take more climate action, now. And if they don't, they face being held legally liable for impacts of their inaction.

Accordingly, the Court ordered the Dutch government to reduce its emissions by a minimum of 25% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels,

deeming the current target of 17% wholly inadequate.

And rightly so: for a likely chance of avoiding dangerous climate change, developed countries must make much bigger cuts to their greenhouse gas emissions. In mandating a 25% target, the Court express-ly provides a great deal of leeway for the Dutch state, noting that, “a reduction target of this magnitude is the absolute minimum”.

However, what might have been an opportunity for Dutch leadership and an ‘orange is the new green’ attitude has instead become a fossil-worthy fiasco. Earlier this week, the Netherlands announced its intention to appeal the case—despite numerous protests all pleading “#ganietinberoep!” (don't appeal!).

There are strong signals that the government's main rationale for the appeal is that it hopes to continue its dirty ways, with less than 5% of the country powered by renewables and annual fossil fuel subsidies ap-proaching \$10 billion.

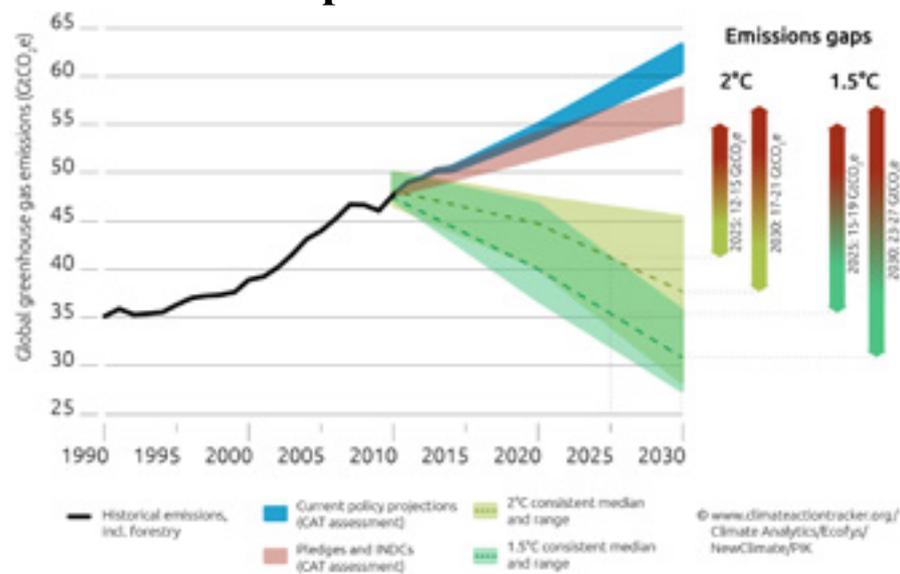
With its future adaptation costs estimated in the billions, this low-lying country should really know better. The Netherlands is just the first in a long line of countries that could eventually be held legally accountable for climate inaction and delinquency towards their citizens.

All developed countries must cut their emissions by at least 40% by 2020 from 1990 levels in order to help bridge the emissions gap. The Urgenda case is an indictment of all who put the priorities of powerful vested interests above those of their citizens, and a clarion call to the need for quick and powerful action on climate change.

An Inconvenient Gap

ECO would like to draw Parties' attention to new analysis out today: even though only two-thirds of the world's emissions are covered by currently submitted INDCs, there is a substantial gap in mitigation ambition as we speed toward Paris. Submissions for 2025 put us on a dangerous track to warming of well over 1.5°C, and the 2030 goals are simply not good enough. And the 2030 commitments submitted thus far would make 2°C "essentially infeasible", and 1.5°C "beyond reach". Then there's the pesky problem of actually meeting the commitments put forward so far, let alone any new ones. Only the EU and China have realistic pathways to meet their 2025 targets. Everyone else needs to step up their game to ensure stabilisation of the climate.

It's time for countries to take a hard look at global goals and play their part. ECO has three prescriptions: increased ambition for 2025 targets, 5-year cycles to ensure an opportunity for course correction, and strong encouragement to increase ambition back home to pass policies in line with stated commitments.



Graph and report courtesy of Climate Action Tracker

Remember the Science: 2°C is Not Safe

When working at a microscopic level, we know there is a danger of delegates losing perspective. In June, the presentation of the Structured Expert Dialogue (SED) results saw intensive exchanges on new science, the impacts of climate change and how to keep warming at 1.5/2°C. But the end saw Saudi Arabia and others sideline an agreement to inform the ADP on their work and conclusions.

The SED found that the 'guardrail' concept, in which up to 2°C of warming is considered as relatively safe, is in fact inadequate due to the severe risks and potential irreversible impacts. Instead, the long-term goal should be defined as a 'defence line' and efforts should be made to put the line as low as possible. It's important to note that more than 100 Parties already support limiting warming to 1.5°C, a group only likely

to gain members in the run-up to Paris.

From the 10 key SED messages, ECO wants to reiterate three:

- 1) Warming of 2°C would lead to catastrophic impacts, slow down economic growth and hinder poverty reduction efforts considerably.
- 2) The world is not on track for a path towards a 1.5/2°C scenario. Past and recent global GHG emissions have accelerated, the emissions gap is growing, and the current Cancun pledges are more consistent with pathways limiting global warming to 3-4°C.
- 3) Keeping warming at 1.5/2°C is still achievable. Deep emission cuts are needed to keep warming at 1.5°C and below 2°C levels. This would require full decarbonisation of energy systems. Achieving this would not significantly affect global gross domestic product growth.

Towards a Global Goal On Adaptation

With severe climate impacts already harming vulnerable people and ecosystems, Parties' attention to a global adaptation goal is essential—and long overdue.

To be strategic, visionary, and durable, a global adaptation goal should complement an ambitious long-term mitigation goal that limits global warming to 1.5°C. A global goal should advance adaptation to increase resiliency to the impacts of climate change. This should be underpinned by principles, building on those agreed in the Cancun Adaptation Framework. The pathway to achieve the goal must be dynamic, taking into account increasing warming, and scaling up disaster risk reduction to minimise residual impacts and loss and damage.

It must also be underpinned by key mechanisms. First, gradually and regularly advance an understanding of how countries are managing current and expected climate risks, and the sufficiency of those efforts. Countries will need to prepare for the expected level of warming—more than 3°C due to inadequate INDCs.

Second, regularly assessing needs in terms of support, in particular financial support based on CBDR+RC. ECO imagines that National Adaptation Plans, adaptation components of the INDCs, or those included in National Communications could inform this assessment. Third, establishing a process for meeting public finance targets for adaptation by developed countries and others that significantly reduces the gap between needs and the support provided.

These pillars will require further technical work before the Paris agreement's entry into force, in order to develop real value in addressing adaptation.

Hot Air

With all the puffery at these talks, you'd think a little more hot air might not be noticed. The problem is, it's not just a little bit of hot air, the result is sweltering.

The lack of integrity of the market mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol, combined with weak targets, have created an 11 gigatonne CO₂e hot air loophole. That's right, 11 big ones -- clearing up that loophole would go a long way to closing the gigatonne gap. One important way would be to agree the KP hot air credits must be ineligible for compliance in the Paris agreement.

To ensure that we learn from the KP experience, the Paris treaty should define principles for the eligibility of use of international markets to achieve a country's Nationally Determined Commitment. This should include how markets should reach standards that deliver real, supplemental, additional, verifiable, permanent emissions reductions, avoid double counting of effort, result in a net atmospheric benefit, and deliver sustainable development co-benefits. These principles will need to be defined in the COP decisions. Unless the core agreement specifically refers to these well-established standards, the transparency and environmental integrity of many Parties' NDCs that depend on the use of markets cannot be assured.

To be effective, only countries with NDCs expressed as multi-year carbon budgets should be allowed to use markets for compliance. Such countries should also only be able to use market mechanisms if they have an ambitious 2025 mitigation target in line with their fair share 1.5°C target. Confidence in the carbon markets post 2020 requires rigorous MRV and accounting of emissions.

As Winston Churchill put it: "Those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it." Will we learn from the KP experience? The agreements you come to, dear delegates, will test whether you indeed have learned.