

CAN RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE POST-2015 DECLARATION

From 17-20 February 2015 the UNGA will discuss the declaration that will be the overarching narrative for the post-2015 development outcome document. The co-chairs set out elements for the declaration which should be a call to action by all and provide a collective vision of the road to 2030 and beyond – ‘the tomorrow we want’ – and what we must do to get there. The co-chairs also remind us that today’s challenges include poverty, climate change and the degradation of the natural world among others.

As the UN Secretary General has laid out in his Synthesis Report, today’s threats that we have to face in the context of post-2015 development “include tackling climate change. As underscored by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, climate change exacerbates threats. It makes delivering on the sustainable development agenda more difficult because it reverses positive trends, creates new uncertainties and raises the costs of resilience.”¹

In light of this aim and to emphasise the need for ambitious action in the short, medium and long-term, Climate Action Network recommends that the declaration on post-2015 sustainable development includes:

1. To include a reference to crucial goals for the tomorrow we want: **“to avoid the worst effects of climate change we must phase out carbon emissions and phase in 100% renewable energy with sustainable energy access for all”** with the possible addition **“as early as possible, but not later than 2050”**²
2. Further include paragraph 8 of the preamble to the Open Working Group report to signpost to the UNFCCC process, especially the following parts: **underscoring “that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, with a view to accelerating the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions; [recalling] that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides that parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. [...] having a likely chance of holding the increase in global average temperature below [2°C, or] 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.**³

CAN believes that in order to achieve deep reductions, action needs to start now with peaking of global greenhouse gas emissions no later than 2015. This is extremely critical for long-term climate stability. Any delay in peaking will make achieving the lowest levels of warming even more challenging, will substantially increase costs of mitigation and adaptation efforts, and may need the development of environmentally and socially questionable technologies in order to reduce emissions. While near-term emission reductions are necessary to keep the door open to limiting warming below 1.5°C, long-term emission pathways are critical to its achievement. Therefore, in addition to ambitious near-term action, the post-2015 must also outline a vision for a future with zero carbon emissions through a binding long-term goal.

¹ UNSG’s synthesis report: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/700&Lang=E

² CAN position on long term goal: http://www.climatenetwork.org/sites/default/files/can_position-long_term_global_goals_for_2050.pdf

³ Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (2014): Introduction, Para 8: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/970&Lang=E