We Stand With Philippines

As climate talks enter their second week, the reality of a changing climate is striking home. In the LCA Plenary session Monday, a delegate from the Philippines said “instead of getting ready for Christmas, we may be counting our dead”, referring to the impending landfall of Super Typhoon Bopha. On Monday night, the storm caused over 40,000 people to flee their homes, and many wait to see the impact of the 16th extreme weather event to batter the Philippines this year.

Meanwhile, ambition remains off the table in Doha. The outcome on loss and damage lacks any mechanism necessary to address bigger issues. Policies limiting polluting industries’ drive to blow past our global carbon budget are more than dreams of civil society and nations already bearing the brunt of a warmed world.

The time for talk has run out. Yet still the talks stagnate, and those responsible for this crisis stand in the way of justice. Blocking ambition and equity on the global scale is a criminal act. It is, at a minimum, the willful destruction of property and the knowing neglect of human life and loss. The parties who continue to defend business as usual are guilty, and history will judge them as such.

We stand with the Philippines and the millions of people around the world paying for the ignorance and arrogance of countries and fossil fuel corporations who put the interests of profits ahead of the needs of people.

On ne lâche pas – we won’t back down.

In solidarity,
The #ClimateLegacy Team and YOUNGO

Ministerial Manners When Dining in Doha

Most developed countries came to Doha eager to move on to a new track of negotiations, even while several critical issues from recent years of the talks are left unresolved. It is vital these issues are addressed before the talks move on.

Like all good mothers, ECO wants to tell developed country ministers they can’t have their dessert before they have finished their mains, including all their vegetables. They need to eat up fast, because we won’t solve the climate crisis until everyone in these talks has finished their meal.

Developed countries have responsibilities under both the Kyoto Protocol and the LCA track that must be fulfilled in Doha. Chief among these are a second commitment period of the KP – and one that is worth the paper it is written on – raising their mitigation ambition, and showing how they are going to deliver their $100 billion per year climate finance commitment. Unless these things are delivered, the new Durban Platform (ADP) track will lack the solid foundation it needs to ensure a step change in climate action in the years ahead.

But with the resolution of these issues and this foundation laid, the ADP can and must kick start a new era of climate negotiations in a spirit of trust, solidarity and collective action. This must include actions taken with the utmost urgency under the ADP work track on raising pre-2020 mitigation ambition. No Party in these talks can afford to allow any delay in this endeavor.

ECO expects that developed countries have come to Doha with every intention of showing their best table manners. There will be nowhere to hide for countries that attempt to avoid their past commitments by shifting focus only to future plans. Success in Doha requires both of these things: that’s what makes for a balanced meal of ambitious and co-operative global climate action.
Which Way, Japan?

ECO is concerned to hear that Japan may not keep up its 25% reduction target by 2020 compared to 1990, and instead is considering reducing it to around 5 to 9% (domestic reduction target).

Of course, Japan has already undermined the momentum of the negotiations by rejecting the Kyoto CP2. If Japan now lowers its voluntary pledge under the Cancun agreement, that reduces ambition and credibility. ECO worries that perhaps Japan’s voice might be not taken seriously anymore.

To some extent, the country has already lost its credibility in the last two years. Now is the time for the Japanese Minister to step up and announce that Japan aims to do everything possible to keep the 25% target intact. It should also pledge appropriate funding for the period 2013 to 2015. This is the only way to regain its positive and constructive role for the global effort to tackle climate change.

Next Steps to Enhance the Review

The start of the first periodic review (2013 – 2015) is approaching. This is intended to be a strong science-based instrument to increase ambition.

But still there is no decision on which body will conduct the review. Informal groups have ongoing meetings but there has not been much convergence. The most convincing solution would involve a review expert group which would preferably be established here in Doha and assisted by the Secretariat going forward. This group would gather new scientific intelligence from the coming Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC and many other sources including the UNEP gigatonne gap overviews, biannual reports and reports from ICA and IAR.

Of course inputs and submissions from Parties are necessary. But ECO is perplexed: why is there no mention of observer participation in the draft decision, through submissions or otherwise? Surely those experiences, data and insights can add measurable value to this crucially important new initiative.

Ray of the Day goes to the United Kingdom for being the first mover on announcing a post-FSF pledge.

The UK announced today its climate finance will be £1.8bn over the next two years, which is a 40% increase on FSF levels, with 50% of it being dedicated to adaptation.

This announcement sets a constructive tone to the negotiations on finance here in Doha. We urge other developed countries to start putting money on the table and commit to post-FSF going up not down.

While this commitment is certainly noteworthy and welcome, in other circumstances, it may not have met the “Ray of the Day’s” stringent standards.

What makes it worthy of such a coveted recognition is that the UK government has gone first. Rather holding back its commitment to exact concessions from other Parties, the UK has done much to create a positive dynamic by putting it forward early in the Ministerial session, and with no apparent strings attached. We look forward to other donors coming forward in similar fashion over the next three days, and we think that this cooperative approach is one that all Parties should emulate.

The First Place Fossil goes to the United States for downgrading developed country MRV.

Comparability between those inside the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and those outside is essential to underpinning a regime built on trust and transparency.

The US has been consistently blocking progress on MRV inside the talks.

This is all the more strange because in Copenhagen the US pushed hard on China to be more robust in its accounting and reporting of emissions. Now the tables have turned. If the US is serious about a 2015 deal they need to count their carbon. Their blocking is counter-intuitive. The US has some of the most robust transparency and accounting procedures in the whole world, but simply has an allergy to replicating these at an international level.

The key to securing a global binding treaty is trust; the US knows more than anyone that transparency and accountability help reassure all countries that they each are all doing what they said they would. What the US, and their minions, like Japan and Canada, are doing is corrupting their carbon accounting.

The spectacular coral reefs off the coast of Qatar are experiencing severe degradation from pollution, illegal fishing and other causes. Now climate change threatens to raise water temperatures above those that coral reefs can tolerate, putting the diverse fisheries of the Gulf at risk. Excerpt from map by EWS & WWF.