

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 November COP 23 meeting. ECO email: administration@climatenetwork.org • ECO website: www.climatenetwork.org/eco-newsletters • Editorial/Production: Andrés Fuentes

Germany: Climate Leader or Climate Laggard?

ECO was pleased to hear the German environment minister announcing a new pledge of €50 million for the Adaptation Fund (and the development minister adding another €50m for the Least Developed Countries Fund). This has been a welcome signal on day 1 of the COP23 – and all the other rich countries now have nearly two weeks to contemplate if they follow suit.

What the minister did not mention in her opening speech is that the current government has slowed down renewable energy expansion and failed to agree on a phase-out plan for coal. This is at odds with the majority of the German population who favour a coal exit. Last Saturday, Bonn saw the largest climate march ever in Germany, with people demanding climate justice and a rapid coal phase-out. It may have slipped some delegates' attention, but Bonn is not even 50km from the Rhineland coalfields, Europe's largest source of carbon pollution with huge open-pit lignite mines and coal power stations.

In fact, German greenhouse gas emissions have not gone down for the past 8 years. Germany is going to miss its domestic 2020 reduction target of 40% compared to 1990 levels by a wide margin if the new government does not act decisively. During the election campaign, Chancellor Merkel made a public promise that her next government will meet the target. The only way to achieve that will be to shut down the oldest and dirtiest coal power stations. This would both be technically possible and economically feasible – but of course meets resistance from the big coal power utilities.

Now that the elections are over, four parties are meeting in Berlin almost every day to find out if they can form a coalition government. Three of the four parties (including Merkel's own) so far refuse any measures needed to implement the Paris Agreement and to meet its own 2020 target.

Germany is very proud that COP23 is taking place in Bonn and doing its best to be a good technical host. ECO believes that it isn't



Climate March demonstrators demanded action on coal phase-out. Photo credit: Jasmin Ithram

enough to ensure that there is good coffee and sufficient meeting space (although both are essential!). But true climate leadership at the side of the Fiji Presidency also means standing in solidarity with the vulnerable countries (alright, the €100m announced today is a step in this direction), and demonstrating ambitious climate actions.

Merkel had the G7 countries agree in 2015 on the need to decarbonize their economies and has contributed to getting the Paris Agreement together. Yet, all that is worth very little if it is not backed up with cutting emissions at home. Since ECO is convinced that Merkel's promise to meet the 2020 target was sincere, delegates may wish to ask her, when she graces the COP23 with her attendance next week, how she intends to fulfil it.

Bula! To the Talanoa Dialogue

ECO read the informal note prepared by COP22 and COP23 Presidencies on the features of the facilitate dialogue in 2018 (a.k.a “Talanoa Dialogue”) with great interest and believes that the note reflects rich consultations they had with Parties throughout the year. It can serve as a good start for discussion to finalize the “design” of the dialogue at this COP.

The dialogue will be the first opportunity for Parties to recognize the gap we have and to explore ways to ramp up their ambition. The increase of ambition could take various forms but one thing is clear: the Dialogue has to inspire Parties to take concrete actions to put us back on the right track to achieve the Paris Agreement's purpose.

ECO finds it a great idea to have both COP23 and COP24 Presidencies navigate the Dialogue. We trust both presidencies to conduct the Dialogue in a “Talanoa” style, meaning, in an “inclusive, participatory and transparent” manner. We also welcome the fact that the note recognizes the role of non-Party Stakeholders in convening national, regional or global events as well as in preparing analytical and policy relevant inputs. There are still some issues to be resolved in the design but we also recognize that we do not have much time left till the end of this COP.

ECO recently learned the literal meaning of “bula” is “life” and meetings get started with a loud chant of “Bula!” in Fiji. So, let us say “Bula!” at the end of this COP to the Dialogue, which could pave the way for a year-long process of increasing ambition.

Adaptation Checklist for COP23

ECO listened carefully to governments' opening statements and is pleased to hear that adaptation is not forgotten. Ambitious adaptation is necessary for countries' sustainable efforts to succeed despite the growing impacts of climate change, many of which are unavoidable. Contributions such as the 50 million Euros pledge for the Adaptation Fund by Germany on day 1 of COP 23 should inspire other developed countries to follow suit.

So, adaptation is crucial. However, as is often the case, adaptation is scattered across various agenda items and it is easy to lose sight of the full adaptation picture. That is why ECO is offering this handy guide:

o Adaptation Fund (AF): The easy answer to the question of whether the AF shall serve the Paris Agreement is: YES! And Parties could agree on this answer here in Bonn, while sorting out remaining details in the next year.

o Adaptation Communications: Under the Paris Agreement, Parties should make progress on the guidance required in order to report what they have been doing on adaptation, outlining their plans for future actions, and informing the Global Stocktake. Just repeating what is already enshrined in the Paris Agreement is not enough. Parties have to say what they want in the adaptation communications, capture common points, sort out the differences and start to write down the draft guidelines! And of course, in those guidelines, the guiding principles for good adaptation contained in Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement have to be reflected.

o Global Goal on Adaptation: Parties agreed in Paris to set a global goal on adaptation, but have not done much progress on operationalizing it or figuring out how it can be reflected in the Global Stocktake.

o National Adaptation Plans (NAPs): Although they do not feature prominently on this COP's agenda, Parties should remember to accelerate the development of participatory, gender-equitable NAPs in 2018, as a contribution to the required ambition increase.

ECO is pleased to see that vulnerable countries can increasingly benefit from support from the GCF and expects a good and effective use of those resources on the development of their NAPs.

o Adaptation Finance: COP23 has to prepare the ground for an increase in adaptation finance, reflecting the polluter pay principles, so that when ministers meet for the 2018 ministerial dialogue on climate finance next year, they will report on the progress they have made towards the 50:50 balance between adaptation and mitigation. The guidance for this dialogue needs to be shaped here.

Keeping Up With Technology

We all know that strong NDCs require strong support, including technology development and transfer.

Given the capacity gaps in many developing countries, matching national needs and NDC priorities and assessing the often complex technological choices and trade-offs can be a challenge. With rapid changes in technologies, developing countries will need more timely and suitable support to fully implement their NDCs at the scope and scale necessary to be able to limit temperature increases to 1.5°C.

Countries need to ask their representatives at the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) to embrace the Technology Assessment and Horizon-Scanning.

It all starts with the recognition that all technologies are not equal when it comes to safety, impacts and efficacy. So before countries make their technology choices, there must be solid **Technology Assessments** to help them fully understand the risks, costs, and benefits of the decisions they are making. That alone is a good start, but if we want to further increase ambition, we must do more.

The purpose of **Horizon-Scanning** is to mine relevant existing data to predict future climate technology advances, scales, needs and potential impacts, and then to identify the most promising mitigation, adaptation, and loss-and-damage remediation technologies to find environmentally sound, socially acceptable, gender responsive, and effective options on which countries can rely. For climate technologies, Horizon-Scanning should be based on knowledge of the existing and predicted needs and demands, and could help guide investments into future public and private research and development for climate technologies. Horizon-Scanning needs to take into account all relevant data and information, from the UNFCCC and beyond.

And finally, to support NDC implementation, funding for the CTCN must be sufficient to match the scope and scale necessary for the 1.5°C goal. ECO hopes to see developing countries demand this support, to make sure the technologies change in step with the times.

ECO online

Remember you can read ECO online or on your iPhone, iPad or Android!

<http://bit.ly/ReadECO>



“Climate Neutral” Transportation?

ECO received an invitation a few days ago to make its travel to COP23 “climate neutral”, by calculating the emissions of round trip air travel in tonnes of CO₂ and compensating them. We decided to look into it a bit more and we have come out with more questions than answers.

First, is the calculator giving a real idea of someone's carbon footprint? The invite says the calculator produces “conservative estimates of the climate footprint in tonnes of CO₂”, which would give the impression that all the pollution is covered. But then, it refers to another tool for “more accurate calculation”. Additionally, the footprint does not take into account the impacts of non-CO₂ pollutants such as aerosols, contrail formation and nitrogen oxides, which the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) has estimated to have 2 to 4 times the climate impact of CO₂ emissions alone.

Second, is there double counting? If passengers buy credits that are already counted towards meeting a country's climate target, then the offset credit does not neutralize anything as the emission reductions were already planned elsewhere. The newest UN Environment Emissions Gap Report, points out that in the case of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects initiated several years ago that have not sold their credits, the reductions might be included in the emissions trajectory a country commits to in its NDC. If those credits are finally being sold to offset aviation emissions, they would be double-counted. This is becoming tricky.

Third, what offsets are being used? Even if offsets are not double counted, most do not represent real emissions reductions. The “Climate Neutral Now” initiative proposes only CDM offsets — but various studies have shown that some CDM projects are highly questionable.

Most importantly, can we get to 1.5°C by telling everyone they can be carbon neutral? Because at the end of the day, aviation is expected to grow to 1.1 billion tonnes of CO₂ per year by 2030. That's 22% of the global carbon budget in 2050, and that's *not very neutral* for the climate.

It's important that everyone takes the time and effort to gather here to discuss how the world should fight climate change. However, if we are going to be transparent about our transportation footprint, we need to consider long term strategies that actually reduce emissions. Offsetting is not a real route to climate neutrality and does *not erase* the impact that aviation (we are looking at you too, shipping) has on the global carbon budget. Limiting air traffic is still the surest way to cut emissions. Policies should support these solutions as well as further technological advances to boost efficiency.