

# ECO

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The Ice Cream  
Issue

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## Courage for an Upward Spiral

Solving a crisis often requires deviation from business as usual, in practice and in our minds. History tells us that often it's not so difficult to develop new concepts and strategies, but it is more difficult to leave behind old routines and models. 2000 years ago the Roman philosopher Seneca argued, "not because something is difficult we lack the courage daring it, but because we do not dare it, it is difficult." The greater the danger, the greater the courage that is needed to counter it, courage is needed to grasp opportunity.

Many countries have proved their courage in Cancun by taking a step forward. Back home, they had to show courage again in order to explain the compromises they made as compromises are in the nature of the agreements. Many did this in hope that Cancun was the floor from which an upward spiral of action could emerge. There are many elements in the Cancun agreements which can provide the ingredients to accelerate this action once the pieces fit together. These include: the technology mechanism to the Cancun Adaptation Framework, from low carbon development plans for developed countries to low-carbon development strategies for developing countries, global objectives to principles for guiding actions. The delivery of promised climate finance and ambitious mitigation targets are crucial to initiating an upward spiral much faster than it would happen without.

Today, millions of people around the world are much more aware of the risks of climate change and also the opportunities that a dedicated response entails. They are demanding action from their governments.

The more small-scale measures that are taken by people and business, by local communities and regional governments, the more these actions materialize into progress towards a low-carbon transformation. Recognizing that such a dynamic social environment is emerging across the world provides the backbone for the courage that is required to implement actions which today seem unrealistic and unpopular, but will be demanded tomorrow. ECO hopes that negotiators will come back to Bonn and demonstrate their courage to increase the spiral of action and ambition in the spirit of our common future.

## ECO Loves the KP!

Eco is an entity of passion. Nowhere is this passion more evident than in ECO's deep and abiding love for the Kyoto Protocol. Our love for Kyoto is based on various endearing and enduring elements.

- **A thing of beauty is a joy forever:** the KP can become ever stronger and more handsome in each commitment period, whilst keeping its core attractive features.
- **Does what is needed rather than missing the good, the bad, and the ugly:** sets out where we need to go, giving fair share for developed countries to jointly fulfill commitments based on science and equity (including the CBDRRRC principle).
- **Legal, decent, honest, and truthful.** Legally binding, economy-wide, absolute emissions reduction targets for developed countries, based on 1990 levels.

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In order to bring attention to melting Himalayas, Thursday morning youth from numerous countries distributed 450 ice cream cones handed out information, and presented a large banner to negotiators outside the UN.

- Photo Credits: Christian Teriete



## Adaptation: Homework from Bangkok to Bonn

In just as 8 weeks negotiators will meet again in beautiful Bonn, walking by the Rhine river banks and looking forward to the Maritim cuisine (OK, maybe not so much!). ECO would like to point towards the adaptation agenda particularly the Adaptation Committee where efforts need to be scaled up significantly. In Bangkok ECO went through 35 submissions on the Committee and has found remarkable similarities, but also areas of divergence. Addressing this divergence will determine scope and effectiveness of the Committee over time.

Parties need to expedite decisions on loss and damage in order to ensure delivery of concrete proposals for action by COP 18 as agreed in Cancun. All approaches including the Climate Risk Insurance Facility as well as seriously addressing

slow-onset impacts should be prominent on the agenda. With the adoption of the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters shortly before Durban, this will further highlight the importance of loss and damage.

Also in Bonn, Parties must debate how to advance support for the preparation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans. And the SBSTA will also consider the next steps for the Nairobi Work Programme. This seems like a lot of preparation for negotiators for Bonn, but ECO considers that this is not only homework but an opportunity for designing a stronger, coherent and effective international approach, which can really scale up successful adaptation actions.

## From Conditionality to Confidence

ECO is puzzled that many developed countries have pledged not the maximum they could achieve toward the emissions reductions that are needed (from the perspective of science *and* survival) but rather target ranges.

To start with, the combined ambition of developed countries on their current pledges would still be far below the 25-40% reduction by 2020 on 1990 levels identified in the Cancun Agreement. That in turn is well short of the 40%-plus needed to really reduce the chances of ever more likely climate disaster. But on inspection, even the pledges toward the upper end of the range are weaker than they appear since they are subject to a variety of conditionalities.

Looking more closely, the wording of those conditionalities often seems to be quite, well, un-MRV-able. That raises the

prospect of somewhat arbitrary interpretation as to when and if those conditionalities are met.

Developed countries should specify clearly which if any of their conditionalities already have been met under the Cancun Agreements, and provide a clear list of the further actions or evidence needed to achieve those that remain.

Anyone encountering the KP and LCA chairs in the last day here in Bangkok might suggest the advantages of including, in the reports of the sessions, an invitation to developed countries to make submissions to that end, opening the door to confident adoption of high end pledges and increased ambition. Then we might all travel home with the feeling of having achieved something this week.

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- **Keep it regular:** 5-year commitment periods, with comparability of effort.
- **Trust AND verify:** monitoring, review, and international verification system for life.
- **Regular check ups:** mandatory review of provisions for implementation and adequacy, so take care.
- **Stays up to date:** reporting on "demonstrable progress" from developed countries.
- **Compare and contrast:** use of Global Warming Potentials (GWP) to allow comparability of the impacts of different gases on global warming.
- **Equality:** common accounting, common reporting, common sources, etc.

## A Choice Between US and Legally-Binding?

Statements by US special climate envoy Todd Stern, who is currently not in Bangkok, are undermining the UNFCCC process and missing a central point of the international climate negotiations. Stern said at an energy conference in New York that legally binding international obligations to cut emissions are not necessary or even possible. Statements such as these impede the global effort to achieve a fair, ambitious and binding deal.

Stern said, "I don't think it's necessary that there be internationally binding emission caps as long as you've got national laws and regulations. What I am saying is it's not doable." This could represent simple US myopia, as treaties signed internationally and ratified do become domestic law. But a key point is at stake here. Being legally bound for emission caps under international law, as well as other key elements of a full climate regime, can mean a great deal to the effectiveness of the climate treaty we already have. It's already evident that the do-it-yourself pledge and review approach, even backed by domestic laws, is not enough.

In the UNFCCC, internationally binding commitments and common accounting rules for emissions will ensure transparency and accountability. They will also give businesses certainty about their investment opportunities and attract new investments in technology.

Of course the US delegation wants to appear as if they remain a willing partner in these negotiations. But ECO has to wonder whether the US sees the UNFCCC as an international "polluters anonymous" meeting, where domestic actions are discussed and various kinds of cooperation occur, but the ability to more effectively achieve the purpose of the Convention through internationally binding commitments is simply off the table.