

ECO



Eco has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at major international conferences since the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. This issue is produced co-operatively by CAN groups attending the climate negotiations in Barcelona, November 2009.

Ensuring planetary life support

Ecosystems contain and support life on our planet, and Article 2 of the Convention recognizes their surpassing importance. Yet recognition of the essential value that ecosystems provide could be lost as the negotiating texts are consolidated – and here especially, less is not always best!

To prevent this loss, the LCA text on adaptation needs to: (1) include recognition of the role that ecosystems, their functions and services, play in all adaptation; (2) recognize the role biodiversity and specific ecosystems services play to support human adaptation (often called Ecosystem-based Adaptation); and (3) include particularly vulnerable ecosystems as a priority for action.

Understanding the role of natural systems is fundamental to building resilience to climate change. If adaptation actions ignore

or further damage ecosystems, the poorest people are likely to suffer most and future flexibility will be lost.

An “ecosystem approach” involves taking account of vital functions and valuing the ecological goods and services they provide in all decisions. It is particularly important in natural resource and infrastructure management. It promotes the integrated management of land, water and living resources, and supports conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

Including ecosystems in adaptation planning and implementation should complement and not exclude other approaches. This is particularly important in community-based adaptation.

“Ecosystem-based adaptation,” as set out
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El clima no está en venta

As the clock ticks down the hours towards Copenhagen, grassroots organizations are stepping up their visibility here in Barcelona and around the world.

On Saturday evening, over 1,000 people marched through the streets of Barcelona to demonstrate strong public support for an ambitious climate treaty and remind politicians that “El clima no está en venta” (the climate is not for sale).

“We’ve got a simple message for the delegates,” said Teresa Niño, a Spanish organizer with 350.org, “Bienvenidos a España ... now get to work!” Spanish activists are planning more demonstrations throughout the conference.

Greenpeace activists also urged world leaders, especially President Obama of the US, to take concrete action in Barcelona. They deployed a banner yesterday on the Sagrada Familia saying, “World Leaders, Make

the Climate Call.”

Climate activists worldwide are on the march as the clock ticks relentlessly ahead of the opening plenaries in Copenhagen. Last weekend, over 5,200 climate actions and rallies took place in more than 180 countries for the 350.org International Day of Climate Action. Journalists called it the most widespread day of political action in history, all anchored in the demand for a 350 ppm climate target. (Photos of those events are displayed throughout the FIRA conference venue.) Yesterday, activists greeted delegates with hundreds of alarm clocks to sound a climate wake-up call.

All eyes are now on Parties in the UNFCCC negotiations to deliver a fair, ambitious and legally binding climate agreement.. ECO cordially reminds delegates: “the world is watching” and adds, “time to get to work!”

Enough dating - it's time to commit

After two years of intense climate negotiations, it seems some negotiators just can't get enough of these UNFCCC meetings. But as true as it may be that COP 15 will not allow time for negotiating every little detail of the future climate regime, the rumor that there is not enough time for Copenhagen to deliver a legally binding framework agreement is quite untrue.

Anyone who has lived and travelled with the climate change talks for the last 23 months since Bali will know that we need political will to commit to an ambitious result. To be more precise, the developed countries, with a few brave exceptions, have kept postponing the difficult question: Are you really ready to commit to following the science by delivering the emission reductions and finance needed to avoid climate chaos?

Instead of answering this crucial question, some governments now seem more focused on trying to downplay expectations for Copenhagen. The latest variant is the claim that the outcome of Copenhagen should be a “politically binding” agreement.

We certainly need political commitment by the world's leaders at Copenhagen. But the commitment must be to outline, in the Copenhagen decision, the key elements of a legally binding international agreement and a comprehensive framework for its completion.

The Kyoto Protocol established a strong international system with commitments by developed countries to take on internationally binding and enforceable emission reduction targets, an international compliance regime, and a system of consistent accounting rules on a range of issues such as LULUCF and global warming potentials (GWPs).

It took several years to work out these rules and procedures after the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997. We can't afford to throw out all of that hard work and start over
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Adaptation “hearing”

Yesterday, the first contact group on adaptation in Barcelona took place as the countdown to Copenhagen enters its final phase. It was an extraordinary hearing although ECO struggled to hear because the acoustics were bad.

And there were some important things ECO wanted to hear clearly. The chair set out the mission: finish on Friday with a concise and manageable negotiation text that can be taken back to capitals for full review before Copenhagen.

Yet not all Parties seemed to share this objective. A well-known big oil-exporting country complained about the chairs and the secretariat providing too much guidance, with the argument that this is a party-driven process. But ECO notes that everything in the text is a product of input by Parties. The chairs' guidance is a way of facilitating what otherwise would be largely unmanageable. And time is running out.

Looking forward, let's review some things that definitely would be good to hear today with respect to the adaptation non-paper.

The preambular section must recognize the fact that there will be loss and damage from past emissions, and it is important to recognize who is responsible.

Under section A, the scope of action must include the provision of support, and not just the adaptation actions (Para. 5). A credible response to the challenge of adaptation must also prioritize the needs of vulnerable countries on the international level, and the needs of particularly vulnerable people, groups and commu-

nities and ecosystems when it comes to implementation within developing countries (Para. 6). The communities and people included in these groups should be identified by countries and should not be internationally prescribed. The meaningful inclusion of the vulnerable in all stages of decision-making must be ensured, in line with their human rights (Para. 7).

Under section B, ECO hopes to hear clearly recognition of the full range of adaptation activities, including support for situations where adaptation is no longer possible, and the need to scale up work as soon as possible.

Section C gets to the crux of the matter: the means for implementation. Legally binding funding obligations for developed countries are crucial if the Copenhagen Agreement is to provide a serious response to climate change.

Resources must be provided in addition to Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets and not come at the expense of the poor who are denied the expansion of basic services because ODA finance is diverted into adaptation. And it is clear that on average at least USD \$50 billion per year of predictable and reliable resources are needed between 2013 and 2017, with further scale-up in the future. These funds should be delivered as periodic grant installments, so that recipient governments can plan their adaptation programmes with the certainty of receiving funds.

So delegates, please hear us clearly. Get to work right here, right now. There are only 8 sessions left until Copenhagen. Can't you hear the countdown clock? Tektctck . . .

– Ensuring planetary life support

by the Convention on Biological Diversity's Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change (CBD AHTEG), refers to the inclusion of biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy. Further insights can be found in the report 'Connecting Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation' launched this week.

Sustainable management, conservation and restoration of specific ecosystems will help people adapt to climate change impacts. As examples, consider coastal defense through the protection of mangroves, or conservation of agricultural biodiversity to provide specific gene pools for crop and livestock adaptation.

Ecosystem-based adaptation is intimately tied to maintaining the integrity of the natural systems that are threatened by dangerous climate change, and thus strengthen the effort to protect and sustain human communities.

– Enough dating – It's time to commit

from scratch to negotiate a new set of rules - or worse, to allow each country to set its own rules, as some are suggesting.

With the world facing ever greater consequences of climate change, this is absolutely the wrong time to start talking about inventing new, weaker types of agreements. Instead it's time to strengthen the international climate change regime as represented by the Kyoto Protocol, and to expand upon that regime by including the United States in the circle of developed countries who take on legally binding international commitments to reducing their emissions. Developing countries should also take stronger action on climate change in the post-2012 regime.

Such a comprehensive strategy is the only way to respond to the urgency of the science and to craft a response that gives us a fighting chance of averting truly disastrous climate impacts. The voters of the world expect nothing less of the governments and politicians they elected.

Fossil of the Day Monday 2 November



1st Place Denmark

The host of the crucial Copenhagen climate summit this December, Denmark received the award for promoting the concept of a “politically binding” deal in Copenhagen as a possible alternative to a “legally binding” framework agreement.

“Instead of showing leadership, Denmark's Prime Minister, Lars LÆkke Rasmussen is spreading confusion and insecurity,” said Tove Ryding of Danish Greenpeace. “Rasmussen is providing fuel for the many governments attempting to downplay expectations for a legally binding framework agreement coming out of Copenhagen.”

“The concept of a ‘politically binding’ deal is simply not adequate when the threat of climate change is so urgent. As the host of the Copenhagen summit, Denmark should be supporting a legally binding outcome this December, which would be the real win for our climate.”

2nd Place Canada

Canada received the second-place Fossil of the Day award for its environment minister's statement that it would be “irresponsible” for Canada to meet a -25% emission reduction target by 2020 - below the latest scientific recommendations.

The minister's comments were in response to an economic modeling study that showed that Canada can significantly reduce emissions while maintaining healthy economic growth. The study found that real reductions would reduce Canada's annual growth rate in the short term from 2.4 % to 2.1% annually.

Dale Marshall of the David Suzuki Foundation stated that “for the minister, apparently this is too much to invest in avoiding dangerous climate change and the economic damage that goes with it.”

“The minister was particularly worried about the economic impact on the oil industry in his home-province of Alberta, but the study actually showed that Alberta would still be the country's fastest growing province.”