

Eco



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Move it or Lose it!

With a 199 page monster of a negotiating text, and more than 2,500 brackets, the way forward has become a hot issue in the LCA. Understandably, the perspective of consolidating text has caused many Parties to become worried about losing important paragraphs, and ultimately losing political ground in the negotiations. Further delay however raises the risk that some may begin looking to outside sources for text. Already the corridors are buzzing with creative ideas as to how the LCA text can be replaced if it is still too convoluted by December. For example, it has been suggested that the Major Economies Forum or the upcoming Danish COP-presidency can produce an alternative text to be put on the table in Copenhagen. Both of these alternative processes will result in much reduced participation, transparency and ultimately lower chances of agreement and an ambitious outcome.

Let's be clear: now is not the time to remove proposals and ideas Parties have put on the table. In fact, some Parties are concerned that, even at 199 pages, the text does not reflect their submissions. That said, it is also important to realize that COP is less than twenty negotiating days away, and that every day spent with 190 Parties caught up in political, highly inefficient group editing of a repetitive, unstructured and barely understandable text, one day less will be available

for actually getting into narrowing differences, making compromises and getting rid of the political roadblocks between now and the COP. Therefore, it is time for the Parties to increase the degree of goodwill, flexibility and ultimately trust in each other, as well as in the Facilitators of the LCA informal groups. An example of possible ways forward emerged yesterday as Parties participating in the Technology informal group asked their Facilitator to improve the text by eliminating repetitions and consolidating similar ideas.

By the time Parties get to Bangkok, the negotiations need to start focusing on substance instead of process. Therefore, negotiators in the remaining groups must make the remaining time in Bonn productive by mandating their Facilitators to start getting rid of repetitious text, and consolidating and structuring the proposals into a workable form.

In the process however, the ultimate objective of the Convention as well as scientific realities must be kept in mind to ensure that it is not the level of ambition, nor the necessary commitments and actions, that are removed from the text.

No matter how painful this high speed clean-up process might sound to Parties, it is clear that the alternatives are far worse. Please see table below which illustrates why the LCA really needs to move forward.

	<i>Participation</i>	<i>Transparency</i>	<i>Other</i>
UNFCCC negotiation produce text	All Parties	Good	Must vulnerable countries included in the process
MEF	Big polluters only	Poor	Risk of increasing mistrust among Parties, ultimately jeopardizing the agreement
Danish COP presidency text	1 Party + friends	Even worse	

Russia's Hot Air Target

It may come as a surprise to some, but it seems that President Medvedev has announced Russia's mid-term target. Did he do this, to public fanfare, in front of the world's press? Did he instruct his delegation to announce it here in Bonn? No, he chose to slip it in to an interview on an agricultural programme, (with an audience of around six people and two sheep) on June 18.

So what caused such diffidence in Russia's leader? Is he just a modest man, who avoids congratulations on his achievements? Or is there another motive, perhaps? Let's look at what he said. Rather than stating that he was making a formal announcement of his country's position, he responded to a question on the subject, by saying that "under current circumstances, by 2020 we could reduce emissions by 10-15%". Some observers assumed that he was talking about reductions from current levels, but later the presidential spokesman explained that he was in fact referring to 1990 levels.

As we all know, Russian emissions fell drastically after 1990 as a result of the collapse of old Soviet industry, and its Kyoto "reduction" targets would actually allow it to massively increase its emissions – so-called "hot air" reductions. Even in 2006, Russian emissions were 34% below 1990 levels. So 10-15% below 1990 levels, rather than being a pathetically small reduction similar to New Zealand or Japan's current plans, actually on current levels consists of an *increase* – in the order of 30%!

Could this be the worst target yet?

Now, some may wonder how ECO can have concluded that a month-old TV interview could have been the official statement. Indeed, it had been rumoured that the Russian delegation might announce something on Tuesday. However, when ECO's correspondent tackled them on this yesterday, we were told that, yes, the presidential interview was the official thing.

So there you have it.

Just show us the numbers!

Yesterday, LULUCF negotiations reached a crunch point when Parties discussed putting their forest management data on the table. This would enable all parties to calculate and see the full implications of the changes to the rules they are discussing. Thank you Brazil and the G77 and China for putting this on the agenda.

So what kind of numbers are we talking about? We calculated that a casual 2.4 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions are at stake if one of the proposals on the

table, the “bar to zero” approach, gains traction.

Clearly we all need to see the numbers. Only then will the extent of any skullduggery be revealed. And who knows what skeletons will be found in the LULUCF closet? We wholeheartedly support Tuvalu’s proposal to ensure that we all get access to these revelations via open sessions. Perhaps a few red faces round the room as the latest LULUCF tricks become evident will lead to some honesty for the atmosphere.

The Ugly Negotiating Text

Once upon a time there was a big and ugly negotiating text, filling out no less than 128 pages of unstructured and heavily bracketed text. The time was April 1997, and with a crucial Conference of the Parties approaching fast, UNFCCC negotiators were worried and distressed. But conscious of the fact that the well-being of all future generations depended on their ability to adopt a legally binding agreement, the negotiators went to work, and carried the process to the point where they were ready to mandate the chair

to refine the text on their behalf. And would you believe. By the month of October, the work of the brave negotiators and their chair had resulted in a neat and sexy “consolidated negotiating text” of only 26 well structured pages of text. By the time the politicians arrived to the negotiations, the text was ready for the ministers to discuss and ultimately, after a bumpy ride of political discussion, adopt. Perhaps today’s negotiators might have something to learn from this old fairy tale...

LUDWIG

Ludwig is incensed! Somewhat belatedly, he has discovered that a week-long session such as this doesn’t allow for the traditional Saturday

day night party. It’s bad enough that, without the rows of unmanned display stands, he has nowhere to rest his head in the daytime, but he’s now realised that Barcelona is also a week-long session. What madness possessed the Bureau to plan a visit there without a Saturday night? Ludwig thinks they should all be fired.



Both the LCA and KP have broken up into informal working groups

Keeping it Real

Developed countries need to do two things if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change. First: make cuts in their own emissions – of more than 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050. Second, they need to put sufficient finance on the table so that developing countries can adapt to climate change and follow low carbon development pathways. But even if developed countries agree to these commitments, for them to be worth the paper they are written on, other tough measures must be included in the LCA text:

1. No double counting. At present there is nothing to guarantee that developed country offsets won’t be counted towards both a developed and a developing country’s emission efforts. This kind of accounting means the overall effort just won’t add up to a 2 degree deal, and it must be outlawed.

Neither is the sneaky option of counting finance from offsets as MRV finance ruled out: ECO would like to remind developed countries that money that pays to achieve their own mitigation actions (even if these take place abroad) does not fulfil their obligations to provide large scale MRV public finance for mitigation in developing countries. The text must be amended to ensure that tricky accounting is not permitted.

2. Top down binding science-based targets for developed countries

The only way to deliver an aggregate target for developed countries of at least 40% cuts on 1990 levels by 2020 is through binding economy wide targets that add up to this amount. The alternative suggestion of bottom-up schedules, or pledge and review (call it what you will) can guarantee neither comparability of effort nor the reductions that the world needs. And it’s an obvious point, but these targets must also be enforceable if they are to deliver. That means a compliance mechanism with teeth.

And long-term zero carbon action plans up to 2050 for developed countries are needed – developed countries should not try to impose a requirement for long-term planning on developing countries without getting their own houses in order.

3. A scientific review by 2015 at the latest and a structure of five year commitment periods. 40% reductions on 1990 levels by 2020 may turn out not to be enough. The climate science is trending in one direction – and it’s not good. So if all the commitments to 2 degrees are to mean anything, developed countries must allow for their targets to reflect the latest science. This means a commitment period that does not risk locking us into weak targets.