

ECO



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Comparability of Effort and Chances of Survival

Parties should welcome the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by the nations of Kazakhstan, Turkey and Zimbabwe. Their action affirms Kyoto's continued value and demonstrates a commitment to sparing humanity from catastrophic climate change.

A Copenhagen agreement that does not aim for a high probability of ensuring the survival and sustainable development of all nations, and the welfare of the most vulnerable, is not acceptable. The targets currently tabled by developed countries fall well short of guaranteeing these core objectives. Those targets put us on a trajectory to wipe sovereign nations off the map, add to development challenges and increase human suffering.

There is a very narrow envelope of possible emissions pathways to 2050 that have an acceptably high probability of avoiding the worst impacts of dangerous climate change. These pathways require peaking global emissions within the next 5-year commitment period and achieving reductions of at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Developed nation commitments must be based on a science-driven approach. A weak, bottom-up approach to reduction targets combined with loopholes and offsets creates a race to the bottom and a crash course on the harsh reality of catastrophic climate change.

Carbon markets should play a role in a post-2012 agreement only if the currently tabled developed country reduction targets are increased dramatically. In addition, the hazard of surplus AAUs must be addressed. The rules on LULUCF, offsetting and AAU banking must be consistent with keeping temperatures well below 2°C.

There is no avoiding the fact that deep and real emissions reductions are needed now. There simply is no atmospheric space for evasion of responsibility. For this reason,

agreements in the KP track must be consistent with agreements in the LCA track in order to avoid double-counting, promote consistency, avoid loopholes and ensure the environmental integrity and fairness of the overall Copenhagen agreement.

The Kyoto Protocol provides a clear framework for industrialized country action. Rapidly evolving scientific evidence on the growing impacts of global warming does not allow for any more time to be wasted in renegotiating its architecture. Copenhagen must deliver robust, quantifiable, legally binding emissions reduction targets for all developed countries consistent with our world's shrinking carbon budget.

The existing monitoring, reporting and verification systems are essential to help ensure environmental integrity. The compliance system must be strengthened and expanded to include an early warning system to correct projected shortfalls as well as stronger consequences for non-compliance if early warning does not lead to a remedy. The system of 5-year commitment periods is vital to allow for reviews based on new science, particularly the 5th IPCC assessment report due in 2014.

Developed countries are deliberately blurring discussions by taking different rather than common approaches to negotiating their targets. Agreement must be reached here in Bangkok on a more than 40% aggregate reduction target by 2020 compared to 1990 levels, 5-year commitment periods, and an agreement on complementarity. Only when these elements are fixed can fair, effective national targets be negotiated and the "comparability of effort" be evaluated, and our chances of survival be elevated.

Based on the intervention submitted by the Climate Action Network-International to the AWG-KP.

Restoring EU Leadership

Rewind 10 months to December 2008: in Poznan, negotiators prepare for another day of working group discussions. Meanwhile the rest of the continent is intently watching Brussels, where European leaders make the big political decisions on the EU's 2020 climate package.

Now fast-forward one year to December 2009: it's mid-session in the climate talks in Copenhagen and European leaders are again meeting in Brussels. What sort of leadership can we expect?

Europe still talks a good game on climate change and headlines their place at the head of the Annex I pack. But the cracks in confidence in the EU's leadership have turned into chasms of concern as ambition has weakened.

At a moment when the vast majority of countries want a strong agreement but the negotiations remain mired in distrust and distraction, ECO suggests that European delegates consider these steps toward restoring EU climate leadership.

Step one is to communicate a compelling vision of what success looks like at Copenhagen: a vision based on staying as far as possible below 2°C through a global transition to low carbon economies and sustainable development for all.

Step two is to demonstrate that actions lead to success. That means moving onto new ground with mitigation and finance proposals that reflect scientific necessity rather than political expediency, and not simply waiting to see what the others will do first.

Step three is to shift the dynamic of the negotiations from 'after you' to 'follow me'—to build an "ambition coalition" of countries willing to take round after round of stronger action as others take steps for action and support. Together, ambition and action will lead to success.

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The Elephant in the Room

Look carefully around you: there is an elephant walking the hallways in Bangkok (it's not the local type). It's an intangible but very sizable beast: 7.5 to 10 Gt CO₂e worth of surplus assigned amount units (AAUs).

It's important to understand the scale of the AAU elephant - almost a third of current, best-case Annex I pledges. If this gets off the track, it threatens to undermine real emissions reductions and collapse the price of carbon when carried over from Kyoto's first commitment period to a post-2012 regime. This represents a serious threat to the goal of limiting warming to as far below 2°C as possible.

The collapse of economies in transition during the 1990s produced real social and economic hardship. Yet emissions fell dramatically, delaying the reduction of carbon space in the atmosphere.

However, this was by no means the result of climate policy, and rewarding this phenomenon as "early action" contravenes the principle that only targeted, policy-driven changes in greenhouse gas emissions should be accounted for. In addition, to no one's surprise, surplus AAUs are currently the "grubby outcasts" of the carbon market (even worse than HFCs).

It wasn't the best idea in Kyoto for Parties to allocate the surplus, but they can join together to correct this error in Copenhagen. If countries with surpluses want to trade, that needs to be part of a credible, environmentally sound solution.

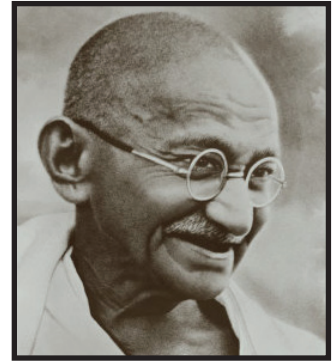
For example, countries holding extra AAU amounts could agree to a stringent

discount (e.g., 60%) of the surplus, if carried over, and the remaining Annex I countries could increase their pledges by another 5%, insuring that overall Annex I aggregate emissions stay more than 40% below 1990 levels in 2020. If countries can't agree to this kind of solution, carry-over should be forbidden under the Copenhagen agreement.

The EU Commission took a strong position on the AAU surplus issue. Options they have been considering should be rolled into the kind of compromise described above. AAUs cannot be used for compliance in the EU post-2012 climate and energy package. Now the EU can set the tone internationally, reaching a solution to absorb its surplus out of the global compliance system before Copenhagen.

Russia and Ukraine have set 2020 targets, but according to IIASA, those levels could actually be achieved by business-as-usual emissions growth from current levels, while still generating hundreds of megatons of credits annually. Talk about a free elephant ride! This could divert huge financing flows away from mitigation in developing countries.

Russia and Ukraine should set more ambitious targets, well below BAU, and address the current surplus. While their emissions collapse slowed the growth of GHG stocks, this would be reversed if the Kyoto surplus was used to achieve targets, and especially so if future weak targets generate yet more questionable credits. From ECO's viewpoint, that would be about as absurd as watching a magician pull an elephant out of a hat.



If Gandhi had believed in the absoluteness of "political realities" he wouldn't have been able to single-handedly inspire a paradigm shift, which manifested itself in a full-blown non-violent civil disobedience movement across two continents.

To honor his memory today on his birthday, ECO encourages delegates to ponder over his quote: "The world has enough for everyone's needs but not for everyone's greed."

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The EU showed real leadership when it first tabled its 20%-30% target for emissions reductions below 1990 levels by 2020 - the first major emitter to make a unilateral agreement of this kind. It is ahead of most Annex I parties in its willingness to negotiate seriously on climate finance. But there are some problems.

- Rather than preparing for success by setting out a plan to move to 30%, many European countries seem to be quietly hoping that they can stick to 20% and avoid another battle with carbon polluting industries.

- Rather than sending a strong signal that Europe is serious about building a low carbon economy at home, it has proposed achieving much of its target through land use loopholes and cheap international offsets.

- Rather than recognising the need for additional, innovative and sustained public financing flows to help ambitious developing countries transform their economies and adapt to climate change in the coming decades, it is busy lowering expectations of Europe's "fair share" of the bill.

It's still not too late to turn this around. The economic crisis has created an opportunity. Europe's emissions have fallen to a point where achieving a 30% reduction is no more difficult or costly than 20% was expected to be when leaders signed on the dotted line. In fact, by adopting more ambitious targets, Europe can ensure that the economic recovery is built on low carbon investment rather than a return to business as usual.

Furthermore, if the EU really wants to reaffirm its role as a climate change leader, it will move toward a 40% reduction target. Not only is it the right economic pathway for Europe, it is also the most credible political strategy for success at Copenhagen.



Women from countries including the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Bangladesh and India marched to the UN yesterday to highlight the burdens women face from climate change and to demand better representation in the UN Climate Negotiations.

Thanks to Oxfam for image