



Climate Action Network

Comments on post-2015 final draft from climate change perspective¹

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Climate Action Network (CAN) is the world's largest network of civil society organizations working together to promote government action to address the climate crisis, with more than 900 members in over 100 countries.

www.climatenetwork.org

Key recommendations

The post-2015 final draft must be strengthened, inter alia by:

- 1. Incorporating clear reference to limiting global warming to 2 or 1.5°C in §27,**
- 2. Incorporating the need to phase-out carbon emissions in §27;**
- 3. Strengthening the role of and support for adaptation (§9, §27 & §28) to climate impacts and addressing loss and damage (§27); and**
- 4. By recognizing climate change is not only an environmental issue, but also an economic, social and political challenge. A strong statement on this interlinkage must be included in the Preamble**

Introduction

Climate Action Network welcomes the opportunity to offer further comments and recommendations to the final post-2015 draft text in order to progress towards securing a truly sustainable development agenda.

While some good references to climate change, resilience and sustainable energy were included in the new draft, the text still falls short of incorporating the fundamental sustainable development challenge entailed in climate change and a vision to embrace a future in which we fully phase out fossil fuel emissions.

The declaration must recognize (a) that climate change will lead to grave and irreversible impacts if the world does not act immediately and decisively with unprecedented ambition, and (b) it has the

¹ Dated: 10 July 2015, based on

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7603Final%20draft%20outcome%20document%20UN%20Sept%20Summit%20w%20letter_08072015.pdf.

potential to overwhelm progress on and achievement of virtually all SDGs, but in particular those related to poverty eradication, food security and health.

Clear references to phasing out emissions, to taking urgent action before 2020 in line with a reference to limit any temperature increase to maximum 2/1.5 degrees are key elements, along with adaptation and loss and damage measures, to safeguard sustainable development in particular in vulnerable countries.

CAN believes the post-2015 development framework must be a clear and unanimous call to the world that achieving sustainable development, eradicating poverty and tackling climate change are inextricably linked and at the same time give hope these challenges can be addressed simultaneously.

Key textual suggestions²

Preamble

[...] We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet for present and future generations. **We recognize these objectives are inextricably linked.** We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps needed to shift the world on to a sustainable path.

[...] The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing demonstrate the scale and ambition of the new universal Agenda. **They are integrated and indivisible and** will stimulate action **by all countries and stakeholders** over the next fifteen years in the following areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

Prosperity

‘We want all human beings to enjoy the fruits of economic, social and technological progress and live productive and fulfilling lives **while safeguarding our common home.** We want to ensure **sustainable and sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic development growth;** promote decent work and employment for all; foster shared prosperity and sustainable lifestyles worldwide; promote sustainable industrialization, agriculture and infrastructure; and ensure access to affordable, **safe, reliable and sustainable** modern energy services.’

Justification: The final draft has failed to understand that the current economic model based on growth has failed to deliver equality, sustainability and inclusion. We suggest replacing economic growth with economic development in the preamble and throughout the declaration and in § 3, 9, 16, 20, 25. We also welcome the inclusion of access to sustainable energy, which is crucial to achieving poverty eradication while combating climate change. However, we propose the inclusion of ‘reliable’ to address quality and ‘sustainable’ and ‘safe’ to ensure services are environmentally and socially sound and climate-sensitive.

² **Suggested amendments**

Declaration

3. ~~We recognize that~~ **This agenda is the international community's commitment to** poverty eradication **and is the greatest global challenge and indispensable requirement for** sustainable development. **We recognize climate change presents a significant threat to the achievement of these aims.** We recognize that the dignity of the human person is fundamental. We intend, between now and 2030, to [...] ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its resources; **to change unsustainable and promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production;** and to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and ~~sustained~~ **equitable economic development growth** and shared prosperity.

Justification: The introduction should clearly reflect the dual agenda of poverty eradication and sustainable development on equal footing and as mutually reinforcing elements and should recognise the massive threat that climate change poses to the achievement of the SDGs..

7. In these goals and targets, we are setting out a supremely ambitious and transformational vision. We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, **climate change**, disease and want, where all life can thrive. We envisage a world free of fear and violence. A world with universal access to quality education and to health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being are assured. A world where access to safe and affordable drinking water is a basic and universal human right; where food is safe, affordable and nutritious; where there is adequate and accessible sanitation. A world where human habitats are safe, resilient and sustainable and there is affordable, reliable and sustainable energy.

9. We envisage a world in which economic growth, consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources – from air to land to oceans – are sustainable. **A world in which our societies thrive without carbon emissions and are adapted to climate change impacts.** One in which development and the application of technology are climate-sensitive, respect biodiversity and are resilient. One in which humanity lives in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and living species are protected.

Justification: this visionary paragraph should also reflect more clearly the need to make societies thrive in a climate-friendly and resilient manner, in line with a global temperature limitation goal of 1.5 degrees which leaves no country behind.

11. [...] Natural resource depletion and adverse impacts of environmental degradation, including desertification, drought and land degradation, and the prospect of irreversible, **dangerous** climate change, **exacerbate the** ~~add to the list of~~ challenges which humanity faces. The survival of many societies, and of the planet itself, is at risk.

Justification: Climate change significantly threatens to reverse development progress achieved, further exacerbating other challenges, rather than being another challenge added. Also, climate change should not be subsumed under environmental degradation, which can be achieved through the proposed insertion of a comma.

25. We will seek to build strong economic foundations for all our countries. **Sustainable** ~~Sustained,~~ inclusive ~~and sustainable~~ economic **development growth** is essential for **human dignity and prosperity**. This will only be possible if wealth is shared through progressive policies aimed at redistribution. [...] We will therefore adopt policies which increase productivity and productive employment, financial inclusion, **sustainable** agricultural and industrial development, sustainable transport systems and **sustainable** modern energy provision and which build resilient infrastructure and **sustained** access to basic services.

Justification: We propose strengthening language around agriculture and energy provision. In the absence of a separate paragraph on energy, this paragraph must emphasise that the transformation of energy systems is an essential building block to protect our climate while reducing energy poverty.

27. **Through this agenda, we** ~~will be determined~~ address decisively the threat posed by climate change, ~~and environmental degradation~~ **particularly for the poorest communities, ensuring low-carbon and climate-resilient development**. The global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible international cooperation aimed **at holding the increase in global average temperature below 2° C, or 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels by** accelerating ~~the phase-out~~ ~~the reduction~~ of global greenhouse gas emissions. Looking ahead to the COP21 conference in Paris in December, we underscore the responsibility of all States **to equitably contribute towards** a meaningful and universal climate agreement which will stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, **and which will adequate support climate adaptation and address loss and damage resulting from climate change impacts, in particular for vulnerable developing countries**.

Justification: The post-2015 development framework should set the global ambition at a level commensurate with the objective to limit global warming to as close as possible to 1.5 degrees, as demanded by LDCs and Small Island Developing States. The recently released report of the Structured Expert Dialogue (SED) under the UNFCCC concluded that “The ‘guardrail’ concept, in which up to 2 °C of warming is considered safe, is inadequate and would therefore be better seen as an upper limit, a defence line that needs to be stringently defended, while less warming would be preferable.”³ Thus, “leaving no one behind” is not possible with a temperature increase which would be highly dangerous for 100 vulnerable developing countries. In order to achieve this common temperature goal it is indispensable to phase out fossil fuel emissions towards zero emissions in the future.

28. We are determined also **to address the threat posed by environmental degradation. To** conserve and sustainably use oceans and seas, protect biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife, promote sustainable tourism, tackle water scarcity, desertification, land degradation and drought and promote resilience **through climate change adaptation** and disaster risk reduction. **This will require integrating resilience across all development work and also additional measures such as strengthening early warning systems, maintaining food and seed stocks at all levels, bottom up risk mapping and planning**.

³ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/sb/eng/inf01.pdf>; page 18

29. We will reduce the negative impacts of urban activities, including through the safe management and use of chemicals, the reduction and recycling of waste and more efficient use of land, water and energy **and shifting to sustainable renewable energies**. And we will work to minimize the impact of cities on the global climate system **and ensure they are climate and disaster resilient**. We will also take account of population trends and projections in our national, rural and urban development strategies and policies.

Justification: Our proposal aims to highlight that cities can provide significant solutions to mitigate climate change through more renewable energies but that these also require strong measures to build resilience to the impacts of climate change on the millions of citizens. Furthermore climate change adaptation must be explicit recognized here, as it is not sufficiently captured by the concepts of resilience or disaster risk reduction.

32. It is disappointing to see that 'environmentally sound' in relation to transfer of technologies has been removed (§32). This language should be reinstated.

NEW 34. We recognize that climate change impacts and loss and damage impose significant additional costs on societies. We therefore stress the need for concrete commitments to deliver additional support and sources of climate finance, in particular to support action in the most vulnerable developing countries..

Justification: The post-2015 development agenda should recognize the significant additional costs imposed by climate change induced loss and damage, and highlight the need for additional resources, even if it does not result in defining additional climate finance.