

Kyoto and the Bali Mandate: what the world needs to do to combat climate change

Climate change is undoubtedly the greatest environmental threat facing the planet today. According to a series of reports released throughout 2007 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the impacts of climate change are already being felt, particularly in the poorest countries of the world – those with least capacity to adapt and the least historical responsibility for causing climate change. Immediate action is required to keep global mean temperature rise as far below 2°C as possible compared to pre-industrial levels in order to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate change.

The IPCC reports also state that our “[M]itigation efforts over the next two to three decades will have a large impact on opportunities to achieve lower stabilization levels”. In other words, we need to act now. Time is not on our side. If we want to keep temperature rise below 2°C, **global emissions need to peak by 2015 and then be reduced by at least 50% by 2050 (from 1990 levels)**. This means industrialized countries cutting their emissions by at least 30% by 2020 and by at least 80% by 2050.

Keeping global temperature rise below 2°C is still possible

It is still technologically, economically and scientifically possible to keep global temperature rise well below 2°C, but we are within a decade or two of closing off those options with known technological means.

The consequences of delay in the process of reducing emissions are serious. If we delay, we will face a dire global emergency in the 2020s which will require rates of emissions reductions, which in the past have only been associated with massive economic collapse, i.e., with the collapse of the Soviet Union. We must not allow ourselves to be forced to choose between economic catastrophe and climate catastrophe...the most likely outcome in that case would be both. We have a good chance of avoiding this if we **act now**.

Industrialized countries must act first

From a moral, legal and practical perspective, the initial burden of emissions reductions has to fall on industrialized countries. Domestic reductions of at least 30% on 1990 levels (the ‘baseline’ year for the Kyoto Protocol) by 2020 from industrialized countries are required, with a target of at least 80% reductions by mid-century. However, a fair means must be found for engaging rapidly industrialising countries in reduction efforts in the near future.

Although climate change is at last taking centre stage globally with discussions in fora such as ASEAN, APEC the G8 and now the United Nations High Level meeting, not enough urgency prevails in these discussions and there is insufficient momentum towards the crucial United Nations climate negotiations to be held in Bali, Indonesia in December of this year. What must be agreed at this negotiation is a **Bali Mandate** that establishes the ambition, content, process and timetable for negotiation of the next stage of international action on climate change to be concluded by 2009.

The Bali Mandate

A strong Mandate in Bali is a first critical step towards the negotiation of essential agreements that can peak emissions by 2015. Without this step the world cannot have confidence that the international community is seriously tackling this issue.

If we are to prevent, or avoid being committed to, dangerous climate change the Bali Mandate has to be ambitious. It must set the parameters for the negotiations in 2008 and 2009 that can set the world on a course to stay as far below a 2°C temperature rise as possible. This requires that the emission limits and actions to be negotiated under the Bali Mandate achieve the following:

- **Peak in global emission by 2015 and put the world on a track that can lead to more than a halving of global emissions by 2050 compared to 1990 levels; followed by**
- **Developed countries emission reductions commitments, as a group, of at least 30% by 2020 (from 1990 levels) and virtually complete decarbonisation (greater than 85% reductions) by 2050.**

Recent studies have revealed that the response from the climate to the anticipated rise in greenhouse gases (GHGs) could be even more dramatic than previously thought. We have to act even faster and take more dramatic action if we are to avoid the damage associated with a 2°C global average temperature rise. This means that for now we have to aim for stabilizing GHGs in the atmosphere at a level below 400 ppm and then seek to bring them down as rapidly as possible.

In accordance with the principles of historical responsibility and equity, industrialized countries must take the lead in substantially reducing emissions whilst a means must be found to involve rapidly developing countries in reduction efforts in the near future.

- **Including more countries in the Kyoto emission trading regime, which means newly industrialised countries with a high per capita incomes such as South Korea, Singapore and Saudi Arabia should join the Kyoto system and adopt binding emission limitation targets for the next commitment period beginning 2013.**

Setting the world on the pathway to 50% global reductions by 2050 must include more countries than currently have binding reduction commitments. The present list of countries with commitments should not be viewed as set in stone. There are a number of countries that are at least as wealthy as those on the original list and by any measure of fairness should be taking on binding targets after 2012.

- **New market mechanisms to create incentives for rapidly industrialising, middle income countries such as China, Brazil, India and South Africa to participate in the Kyoto emissions trading system (through sectoral or other quantified action commitments for greenhouse gas emission limitations and/or reductions (e.g. for the electricity sector).**

These mechanisms will need to be tailored, to the different circumstances of middle income countries but must all involve additional action and not involve crediting for action that would have happened anyway. These countries should actively support the development of these mechanisms and to be involved in their implementation

- **Establish architecture for the Kyoto second commitment period that would enable any developing country that wishes to join the international trading system with national level quantitative emissions limitation commitments to do so.**

This would allow a developing country to volunteer to negotiate a national emissions reduction target and having done so, that country would then be eligible to join the international trading system.

- **A massive new Clean Technology Deployment Mechanism system aimed at switching to clean, efficient, renewable technology in developing countries.**

Developing countries need assistance to follow a low carbon path to development. The availability of resources and technology from the industrialized countries is critical as is the capacity and ability of the developing countries to act. New and effective forms of clean technology cooperation and deployment combining financing with set goals and policies are required to enable developing countries as a group to contribute to the global effort.

- **A Deforestation Reduction Mechanism that provides the necessary scale and financing to drastically reduce deforestation. The reductions from forest protection must be *additional* to cuts in industrial emissions.**

Tropical forests contain up to 40% of the world's terrestrial carbon and play a powerful role in mitigating the growing instability of the climate. Therefore addressing deforestation must be a critical component of the next phase of the Kyoto Protocol. Funding for this mechanism must be linked to developed country emission reduction commitments and the resulting reductions must be additional to cuts in fossil fuel emission targets by developed countries. The world needs deeper cuts in both fossil fuel and deforestation emissions in order to keep us well below a 2°C rise in global mean temperatures.

Accounting for the reduction of emissions from deforestation must be done at a national level and not project by project. A project which reduces deforestation in one part of a country could simply lead to more deforestation in other parts of that country whereas a national approach would account for *all* of the emissions from *all* of the projects within a country.

Actions funded under the **Deforestation Reduction Mechanism** must also protect biodiversity and engage and share benefits with local indigenous peoples. This must not turn into an international subsidy for logging companies and agribusiness

Credits from a **Deforestation Reduction Mechanism** should not be freely/openly traded within an international carbon market for industrial greenhouse gas emissions. Markets like the CDM contain strict governance, monitoring, and verification requirements for participants, which some of the most important developing countries with tropical forests would not be able to meet. Also, the inclusion of a large number of cheap deforestation credits could potentially "flood" the market, thus delaying industrialized countries from making the necessary changes in the energy sector now (because they would purchase the cheap deforestation credits instead).

- **An Adaptation Mechanism track with a reliable financing mechanism linked to real needs and coupled to a large international effort to scale up adaptation action, which at present falls far short of needs**

The impacts of climate change will disproportionately affect those societies who have contributed the least to the problem. Developing countries don't have the resources that the wealthy countries have to adapt to the impacts of climate change. They are often cultures that rely on the land (farming and hunting) for subsistence and economic activity.

The funds currently available to assess and counter the projected impacts do not begin to provide anywhere near the scale of funding required: \$50bn **per year as a minimum**. A post 2012 regime must ensure consistent and sufficient funding linked to the costs of adaptation and damages for the most vulnerable countries and should prioritise the most vulnerable communities and those with the least capacity to cope with climate change impacts.

- **This package to be agreed to by 2009 at the latest**

The carbon markets and business need political certainty to provide a favourable investment environment for the deployment of climate-friendly, sustainable technologies. Continuity is required to signal an ongoing and strengthening commitment to emission reductions and keep the carbon market strong and the price of carbon high. A gap between the first and second phase of Kyoto would severely compromise this signal and be disastrous for the price of carbon

Summary

In summary, global emissions must be cut by at least 50% by 2050. The “aspirational targets”, that are being promoted by some at fora such as APEC or the ‘major economies meeting’ in Washington D.C. will not be effective in securing the emission reductions required. History shows this unequivocally. Recognising that the non-binding targets in the United Nations Framework on Climate Change were inadequate to protect the climate, the international community agreed *binding* emission cuts - for industrialized nations - in Kyoto in 1997.

The Greenpeace Energy [R]evolution Scenario¹ shows, that we *can* reduce emissions from the power sector by 50% by 2050, if we ensure *both* a massive uptake of sustainable renewable energy options and double the efficiency with which we use energy.

There is still time but it is indeed getting very late. Ominously, the climate is changing faster than we imagined and impacts coming earlier than were predicted. The costs of adaptation to inevitable changes in the next decade or so are already staggering. Sober scientists and economists are raising alarm bells that can be ignored only at great peril to us all

There is no time for diversions. The world's governments must concentrate their discussions on mandating a framework for negotiations on the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol at Bali.

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¹ <http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/international/press/reports/energyrevolutionreport.pdf>