

News release

GREENPEACE

COP21 must be the beginning of the end of the fossil fuels era: Greenpeace at the UNFCCC negotiations in Bonn

23 October 2015 (Bonn, Germany) – Responding to the week's events at the UNFCCC meeting in Bonn, Greenpeace Canada Climate and Energy Campaigner Patrick Bonin declared:

"Heads of state should be inspired by the unprecedented global mobilization that is speeding up our transition away from fossil fuels and towards a 100% renewable energy world. Prime Minister-designate Justin Trudeau can play an important role and add momentum to the ongoing negotiations by committing to increase funding to climate-vulnerable countries and by adopting an ambitious GHG reduction target in Paris. This conference must be the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era, which must come to a full stop in 2050 at the latest."

Martin Kaiser, Head of international climate politics at Greenpeace, said:

"This week started with a powerful typhoon battering the Philippines, the 12th storm to hit the country this year. It's ending with Mexico about to be hit by Hurricane Patricia, the most powerful hurricane ever recorded in the western hemisphere. We need no other reminder that we are already feeling the impacts of climate change.

"Meanwhile, negotiations have gone on here for five days as if there is no urgency at all. This puts more pressure on the negotiations in Paris, and makes it much more difficult to reach an ambitious agreement.

"On the positive side, some critical elements like the long-term goal of phase out fossil fuels are back and getting growing support among countries. We want to see words which signal the end of the fossil fuel era, and a new era based on 100% renewable energy. But this is a start.

"More and more countries also support a mechanism for ramping up climate pledges every five years. This process needs to start before 2020 to avoid locking in weak ambition.

"It's also good that loss and damage has remained in the text. This is a must-have for the poorest, who are losing their homes now in countries like the Philippines or Mexico.

"On the other hand, the text is far too long. With only five weeks to go before Paris, we have 55 pages. And it's not specific enough on some of the key issues. It's clear why this has happened: the oil-producing countries are trying to block negotiations and hi-jack this process for their own ends. They mustn't be allowed to get away with this.

"The shortage of time is becoming a serious issue. Negotiators are getting nervous and that's understandable given what is at stake. Everyone wants to play their cards very late.

But not everyone can have the Ace of Spades. And this is too important to be a high-stakes poker game. Countries need to drop the cards, and play together as a team.

“What gives us hope is the dynamic change going on outside the UNFCCC process. This year we’ve had the G7 declaration on de-carbonisation, the Pope’s Encyclical, China-US co-operation on climate change and Ban Ki Moon’s meeting with global leaders at the UN where 100% clean energy was one of the options in the final declaration.

“There has also been a mind-shift in the business world. Only yesterday, one of the energy giants, Enel of Italy, said it would phase out coal completely by 2050. The message is being sent to investors that the age of fossil fuels is over, and that should speed up the transformation from brown to green investments.

“The winds of change are blowing through the energy world. Paris needs to feel those winds, and bend with them.”

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