

News release

GREENPEACE

Greenpeace responds to final climate deal

12 December 2015 (Paris) – Reacting to the Paris Agreement at the conclusion of COP21, Mike Hudema, Climate and Energy campaigner at Greenpeace Canada said:

“Today the world has come together and given fossil fuels a clear sign that their end date is fast approaching, investors should take note. Whilst the agreement will help shift us in the right direction, national leaders will need to greatly increase their ambition to meet it. The agreement however fails to deliver the needed and justified support to those most vulnerable and affected by climate change. It is very concerning that human and Indigenous rights have been left out of everything but the preamble and the section on adaptation. They have not been given the protections they deserve.”

He continued:

“For Canada, the agreement made here in Paris charts a clear course for decarbonization and we congratulate the Canadian government for being a generally progressive player in making it happen. In order to live up to this deal we must, as a country, quickly transition off fossil fuels and usher into the renewable age. This means saying no to tarsands pipelines and other carbon infrastructure, quickly reducing Canada’s emissions, and accelerating the transition to a 100% clean and renewable economy. Seeing as developed countries need to move faster and lead the way, the goal to limit temperature rise to 1.5 Celsius means that Canada must, according to IPCC scientists, make this transition happen in the next two decades. Time is of the essence to ensure Canada lives up to its commitments and does its fair share to address the climate crisis. We look forward to pushing the government both in the meeting rooms and on the streets to do just that.”

Kumi Naidoo, Greenpeace International executive director, added:

“It sometimes seems that the countries of the United Nations can unite on nothing, but nearly two hundred countries have come together and agreed a deal. Today the human race has joined in a common cause, but it’s what happens after this conference that really matters. The Paris Agreement is only one step on long a road, and there are parts of it that frustrate and disappoint

me, but it is progress. This deal alone won't dig us out the hole we're in, but it makes the sides less steep."

He continued:

"The deal sets out the objective of limiting temperature rises to 1.5 degrees, but the emissions targets on the table take us closer to 3 degrees. That's a critical problem, but it's one with a solution. Renewable energy is already doing heavy-lifting across the globe, but now its moment must come. It's the only technology mentioned in the Paris Agreement. There's a yawning gap in this deal, but it can be bridged by clean technology. We're in a race between the roll-out of renewables and rising temperatures, and the Paris Agreement could give renewables a vital boost. The wheel of climate action turns slowly, but in Paris it has turned."

He added:

"This is not a moment for triumphalism given the lives that have been lost already as a result of climate impacts, and the lives that are on the precipice as temperatures rise. This is a time for urgent action. The climate clock is ticking and the window of opportunity is closing fast."

See further (still operative) Kumi Naidoo comments here:

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/press/releases/kumi-naidoo-cop21-final-text-paris-climate/>

Now governments need to revise their short-term targets to be in line with their new goals, and revise their energy policies to speed up renewable energy uptake. They must stop funding fossil fuels and end deforestation by 2020.

The Paris Agreement is a Treaty under international law, so it is legally binding. But the national targets (the so-called INDCs) aren't legally binding and nor are the financial commitments. This is primarily to enable the United States to be part of this global agreement.

The so called “Long Term Goal” is written in seemingly incomprehensible language (“*to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century*”), but combined with the 1.5C limit , it implies a goal of achieving net zero in all emissions by around 2060-2080. This effectively means we need to phase out fossil fuels by 2050.

Indigenous Peoples rights are in the pre-amble and in the Adaptation section of the Agreement . But they’re not given the protection they deserve , particularly given that forest protection will be key to achieving 1.5 degrees. The Paris Agreement acknowledges that countries should respect and promote human rights in addressing climate change.

The conference saw good initiatives around renewables during the negotiations - though outside the official talks. India’s Solar Initiative, the launch of the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, mayors and leaders of more than 1000 cities giving their support to a 100% renewable energy future, to name a few. In the text itself, renewables are recognised in the context of promoting universal access to sustainable energy in developing countries, in particular in Africa, through the enhanced deployment of renewable energy.

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