

Greenpeace expectations for the Barcelona climate talks

November 2009

The Barcelona climate talks (November 2-6) is the last set of negotiations before the Copenhagen climate conference in December.

While this is not a meeting for ministers, this meeting can - and must - make substantial progress on key issues related to the new post-2012 climate agreement that governments have promised to agree Copenhagen in just over a month's time.

At the G8 and Major Economies Forum in July this year, Heads of States from countries producing about 80% of global emissions recognised at the that global mean temperature rise should not exceed 2 degrees C. Translated into emission cuts, this would require global emissions to peak by 2015 and be reduced by at least 80% from 1990 levels by 2050.

At the UN High-Level Climate Summit on September 22, the same Heads of States promised the world to do their very best in delivering a successful outcome in Copenhagen. Now their delegations in Barcelona have to put that into practice, so that in Copenhagen Ministers and Heads of State can agree on an emergency package for the planet.

Industrialised countries have refused to take the leadership they have promised. Most of them have come forward with scientifically inadequate emission reduction targets – or no targets at all – and they are still failing to make any serious finance pledges, despite having promised finance for developing countries since 1992. The lack of political will from industrialised countries has created a deadlock in the negotiations.

At the same time we have seen some very encouraging moves from countries like Mexico, South Korea, South Africa, Indonesia, China and Brazil, who are ready to take their fair share of the global emission reduction efforts – assuming industrialised countries do their fair share. Greenpeace hopes that these countries continue to make progress and show goodwill in the Barcelona negotiations, despite of the serious lack of leadership by most industrialised countries.

In Bangkok governments cleaned up the Copenhagen negotiation text. The five days in Barcelona must be all about *serious negotiations*. Countries must make choices between different, conflicting options, they must focus on the most important issues, and not get distracted by minor details at the expense of running out of time.

In Barcelona, they must lay the foundations for a strong, legally binding agreement that will ensure that global temperature increase will stay as far below 2 degrees as possible, is fair, protects forest biodiversity and ensures the survival of the most vulnerable nations.

More specifically, governments must make progress on following issues:

The “Shared Vision”

In this document, Governments must agree to put already agreed temperature thresholds into practice by defining a global pathway for emission reductions that will keep global mean temperature rise below 2 degrees C and enable cooling to 1.5 and below thereafter. This means that global emissions must peak by 2015 and be reduced by at least 80 % from 1990 levels by 2050. The Shared Vision must also define the overarching principles for the Copenhagen agreement, such as the right for survival, equitable effort sharing by 2020 and sustainable solutions.

Legal nature of the outcome

Countries need to get onto the same page on the legal nature of the agreement they are negotiating for Copenhagen, as well as on the legal nature of industrialised country commitments. The outcome must be legally binding (ratifiable), it must preserve the Kyoto protocol architecture, which provides good basis for internationally binding commitments and their measuring, reporting and verification and it must strengthen the compliance regime established by the Kyoto Protocol and its implementing rules. Of utmost importance will be an internationally binding reduction target by 2020 by developed countries.

Greenpeace, together with other NGOs, has made a comprehensive proposal for how to achieve this: by amending the Kyoto Protocol and accompanying it with another protocol that would encompass the new elements from the Bali Action Plan as well as comparable commitments for the United States, which is not a Party to the Kyoto Protocol.

In Barcelona, countries must reject the US approach for nationally binding, bottom-up targets, which would be only subject to domestic law. They need to reject proposals by countries such as China and India, to not negotiate a legally binding outcome from the so-called convention track (LCA). Instead countries should build on the proposals by Tuvalu and South Africa.

Industrialised country emission reductions

Just under two years ago in Bali, countries agreed that the lowest range of the IPCC emission reduction pathways should guide the target-setting for industrialised countries. This range is 25-40 % from 1990 levels by 2020.

Since then, industrialised countries, (except for Europe, Switzerland and Norway) have, meeting after meeting, refused to turn this range into an aggregate emission reduction target, and to derive individual targets from it accordingly. Instead, they have pledged targets based on what they feel like doing and not by what science requires.

Consequently, the targets put on table so far only add up to around 10-17 % from 1990 levels by 2020. This will not be enough to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Industrialised countries – most notably the United States – need to increase their mid-term targets significantly, so that, as a group, these countries can cut emissions by 40 % from 1990 levels by 2020. Japan and Norway have shown leadership by raising their targets significantly. Now others will have to follow suit.

Progress on target setting means also agreeing on the base year (which must remain at 1990), length of the commitment period (which has to be kept to five years), comparability of effort (need to agree on principles to measure comparability as well as similar accounting rules for all) as well as the minimum share of domestic effort (should be 30 % from 1990 levels by 2020). These are all issues where it is entirely realistic to expect progress in Barcelona. All that is required is political will.

Main elements for adequate and predictable financing

Countries will need to make progress on the scale of funding commitments from industrialised countries to developing countries. They also need to clarify the role of public funding; the mechanisms to generate funding at a scale needed and the governance and disbursement of funds.

Industrialised countries must commit to investing at least USD 140bn annually to developing countries. The primary mechanism for generating funding should be international auctioning of emission permits, as proposed by Norway. International aviation and shipping should be taxed or they would have to buy emission permits. Funds should be managed and disbursed by a new Facility that would match developing country action plans and their technological and capacity building needs with the funding streams from industrialised countries. This requires combining elements from the proposals of the developing country negotiation group (G77 and China), Mexico and the EU.

Main elements for a mechanism to stop tropical deforestation (REDD – Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation)

In Barcelona, countries need to focus on elements that will create a REDD mechanism that

- 1) doesn't treat tropical forests only as carbon sinks but recognises and preserves their biodiversity values as well as the rights of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities who live on the forests and
- 2) does not create a loophole for industrialised countries to avoid their domestic emission reductions or logging companies to just shift their destructive practices elsewhere, but instead ensures absolute emission reductions in tropical forests and preserves incentives for industrialised countries to reduce their own emissions dramatically.

Prevented deforestation should not be turned into emission allowances for industrialised countries. Forest offsets would crash the international carbon markets and allow the coal industry to continue building coal-fired power stations.

Instead, the main financing for forest protection should be fund-based, as proposed by countries like Tuvalu and Brazil. It should incentivise all countries with tropical forests to come up with national plans to end tropical deforestation globally by 2020. Biodiversity values and the rights of indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities need to be protected.

Nature of developing country actions

Countries will need to agree on the nature and scope of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) and low carbon growth plans, including their registering, measuring, reporting and verification. The proposals by Tuvalu and South Africa provide a good basis for this discussion. Countries will also have to find ways to ensure that the actions and plans add up to substantial deviation from business-as-usual for its emissions and to link the action plans into funding commitments from industrialised countries.

Compliance and reporting and review

The post 2012 agreement will need to include a strengthened compliance regime with sanctions for industrialised countries that don't comply with their commitments, and a strong measuring, reporting and verifying of actions for developing countries. These need to build on the existing elements of the Kyoto protocol.

The role of carbon market mechanisms

New carbon market mechanisms that go beyond offsetting could play a role in incentivising additional emission reductions in developing countries. However, in the current situation where industrialised country emission reduction pledges only add up to 10-17 % by 2020 (from 1990 levels), there is virtually no room for offsetting. If new carbon market mechanisms were introduced or the CDM continued, industrialised country emission reductions targets would have to increase substantially.

In Barcelona, countries need to put in place safeguard measures which ensure that cheap credits don't flood carbon markets after 2012 – stalling the needed investments into green technology in both developing and developed countries – but that carbon markets mechanisms and target levels incentivise ambitious reductions globally.

LULUCF – time to decide

Time has run out for the fractious and convoluted LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry) negotiations. In Bangkok, the G77 drew a line in the sand on further negotiations after Barcelona, to ensure clarity on developed country targets before Copenhagen. The developing country block is demanding a cap on domestic offsets available to industrialised countries, to force them to cut industrial emissions rather than try to use LULUCF loopholes to meet their targets. Finally we are seeing some sense being injected into the LULUCF controversy, after years of overly complex rules driven by an industrialised country obsession with generating offsets while ignoring emissions and the protection of forests.

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