

What is needed from the COP 18 climate negotiations in Doha?

24 November 2012

Climate change is no longer a threat for the future: it is happening now. COP 18 comes at the end of year that has seen the impacts of climate change hit hard around the world. The US suffered its worst drought in half a century, and Hurricane Sandy killed at least 250 people in the Caribbean and the US. Record flooding was seen in Beijing, Manila and across the UK. Deadly floods in the Black Sea area of Russia killed at least 171 people. In India, the worst monsoon floods in a decade hit the northeastern state of Assam, killed more than 80 people and forced around 2 million to leave their homes. Drought in the Sahel threatened millions with hunger. The annual death toll worldwide from climate change is estimated to be at least 150,000.

Faced with these threats to homes, communities, economies and indeed lives, governments in Doha will be put to the test as to whether they are willing and able to take action to protect their people.

Will they agree to adopt a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol? Will they eliminate the “hot air” surplus of emissions allocations? Will they sign up to ambitious targets for cutting emissions before 2020, and set a course for a global, legally binding deal in 2015? Will finance be made available to help developing countries transform their economies to clean energy and to adapt to those impacts that are already unavoidable? Will a framework be established that provides finance for forest protection, sets targets for halting forest destruction and includes safeguards for biodiversity and the rights of indigenous peoples? These decisions will set the course for the coming years.

Current trends are leading to ever more dangerous intensification of climate change: carbon dioxide emissions are rising faster than even the most pessimistic scientific projections, with recent studies by the International Energy Agency, World Bank and UN Environment Programme all stressing that we’re going ever faster in the wrong direction, and an urgent change is needed. Behind these trends are humankind’s apparent addiction to fossil fuels and continued destruction of forests.

In the past five years, growth in coal use has caused over two-thirds of the increase in global CO₂ emissions, pushing greenhouse gas emissions to a record high. Besides being a major and increasing contributor to catastrophic climate change, coal kills hundreds of thousands people every year, takes water needed for feeding a hungry world and destroys precious habitats.

None of this is necessary. The world simply does not need to overload the atmosphere with carbon dioxide when clean renewable energy is abundantly available and the technology to harness this energy is ready to go. In fact, renewable energy is not simply a technology that works: it is powering economies. For example, in 2011, more than 70% of newly installed generating capacity in the EU27 – 32,000 MW – came from renewable technologies.

The Kyoto Protocol is far from perfect, but it is the only legally binding international agreement that exists. And carrying forward its detailed rules and procedures – while cutting out the worst loopholes and setting ambitious targets – will help take the world towards a fair, legally binding global agreement in 2015. Just as importantly, Kyoto’s second commitment period will send a clear signal to energy investors, and encourage the transfer of capital from the dirty energy industries of the past to the clean technologies that can and must power the 21st century.

Meanwhile tropical forest destruction and land use change are currently responsible for approximately 15% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – roughly the same as emissions from all the world’s cars, planes and trains put together. In 2010, countries in Cancún committed to “slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss”. The combination for REDD+ to be successful is clear: nationwide reductions in deforestation and forest degradation combined with strong safeguards for biodiversity and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Parties in Doha must reject false solutions such as forest offset markets, and deliver decisions on national reference levels, readily available, cost-effective, and equitable MRV options, and finance that will help parties achieve that objective.

In order to prevent further suffering being caused by climate change, we must urgently transform our energy economies from fossil fuels to renewable energy, while drastically improving energy efficiency. Governments at Doha must set a clear course for this transformation, as outlined in this paper. Any less would further endanger their citizens. The way forward is clear: all that is required is governments freeing themselves from the stranglehold of the polluters and dare to act in the interest of their people. The world is watching.

At COP 18 in Doha, governments must:

- Adopt the “**Doha amendments**” to the **Kyoto Protocol** – in order to continue this legally binding agreement with a second commitment period applying from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017. The unused emission allowances from the first Kyoto commitment period must be eliminated.
- Adopt a roadmap towards the finalisation of a **legally binding global agreement for all no later than 2015**, with concrete, binding commitments.
- Adopt a work plan to urgently **bridge the growing gap between the politics and the science**. Urgent action is needed to peak global emissions by 2015. The work plan should include announcement of new mitigation commitments from those countries that have not yet made pledges internationally, and the adoption of emission reduction targets at the upper end or beyond for countries that have currently pledged ranges for their targets, plus policy measures such as elimination of fossil fuel subsidies.
- Fill the empty **Green Climate Fund**. Developed countries must commit to providing a finance package for 2013-15 that is at least the double amount of the amount provided in the period 2010-12. Furthermore, a decision must be made on the key sources of the 100 billion dollars per year promised for 2020 and onwards. Specific funding must be allocated for mitigation, adaptation and forest protection.
- Set up a **framework for the protection of tropical forests** that includes: a dedicated forest finance window under the Green Climate Fund; an integrated approach to monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) that puts equal weight on safeguards for biodiversity and the rights of indigenous peoples; and strategies for national-level reductions in deforestation and degradation.

In more detail:

1. Adopting a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is the only legally binding international agreement with emission reduction obligations for individual countries. The rules of the Protocol sum up more than a decade of negotiations and include very detailed provisions for accounting of emissions, measurement, reporting and verification of efforts as well as an international compliance mechanism.

The Protocol is far from perfect, but preserving and strengthening it is a key steppingstone towards the adoption of a comprehensive, rules-based, fair and legally binding global agreement for all countries no later than 2015. Therefore, in Doha, governments must deliver a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and ensure:

- Eliminating the “hot air” (also known as surplus emission allowances or “Assigned Amount Units”, AAUs) from the Kyoto Protocol. This refers to unused first commitment period emission allowances that do not result from real emission cuts but from a loophole in the original agreement. Cutting off these distortive allowances can be done through a ban on trading with “hot air” from the first commitment period and a complete cancellation of these surplus AAUs at the end of the second commitment period.
- Environmental integrity. The Protocol must create an incentive to reduce emissions. The rules and targets adopted must deliver higher emission cuts than what would happen in the absence of the Protocol. It is better to have a robust agreement with fewer countries than having a couple of more countries in at the price of flawed rules and targets. Therefore, in instances where countries such as Russia demand that the integrity of the Protocol be compromised as a precondition for their participation in the second commitment period, the integrity must be prioritised over the participation of countries that are not showing genuine willingness to participate in a global effort to reduce emissions.
- Provisional application. In order to avoid a “gap” between the two commitment periods, the amendments must be provisionally applied from 1 January 2013 and until the time at which they formally enter into force.
- Avoiding locking in low ambition. Current emission reduction plans are far less than what the science shows is needed. Therefore, countries submitting targets to the Protocol must go to the upper end of or beyond the ranges they have pledged and furthermore ensure that these targets are in line with the science. They must also limit the length of the commitment period to 5 years (1 January 2013 to 31 December 2017), instead of 8 years as advocated for by some governments, in order to ensure a full revision in light of the latest science by 2018.
- Preventing carbon market access for countries not participating in the second commitment period. Countries choosing not to participate in the second commitment period must not be allowed access to the Protocol’s flexible mechanisms, and their AAU account must be fully cancelled.

Developed countries refusing to participate in the Kyoto Protocol (such as Canada and the US) must not be rewarded with softer accounting rules and lower levels of transparency. Therefore, and in order to create a solid basis for global climate regulation mechanisms, common accounting rules must be created for all developed countries. A solid international system to measure, report and verify governments’ emissions and actions is a crucial element of any global climate agreement. This system must create transparency around governments’ mitigation efforts as well as provision of financial and technological support from rich countries to developing countries. Governments must also report on the subsidies provided to support fossil fuels and environmentally destructive industries as a first step towards phasing them out.

2. A clear roadmap to a legally binding global agreement by 2015

Governments must adopt a fair, legally binding global agreement no later than 2015. This agreement must be a science- and rules-based protocol with concrete, binding commitments for all major economies (the EU, the US, China, India, etc.).

In order to achieve this, governments meeting in Doha must deliver a specific plan for the negotiation of this protocol, with concrete milestones towards 2015, as part of the negotiations under the “Durban Platform” (the ADP).

Governments must agree common minimum standards for carbon markets and ensure that any new market mechanism being developed as part of the negotiations under the Durban Platform has a high environmental integrity and is based on solid international rules for accounting and compliance. Such a mechanism must not undermine the global ambition level by introducing double-counting of emission reductions, windfall profits for carbon market participants or by diverting finance to false solutions such as nuclear energy and carbon capture and storage. Furthermore, governments must recognise that a global ambition level in line with science must be a precondition for any carbon market mechanism.

The negotiating track on Long-term Cooperative Action (LCA), which was established in Bali in 2007 must complete its work and close in Doha. Key institutions that have been developed under the LCA, such as the adaptation committee, technology mechanism and the Green Climate Fund, must be linked to the new protocol that is to be adopted no later than 2015.

Issues covered by the Bali mandate that have not yet been resolved must be followed up with concrete commitments. This includes the obligations of developed countries to provide financial and technological support to climate action in developing countries. Other remaining issues such as comparability of developed country mitigation actions or common accounting rules for all developed country mitigation actions must also be resolved in Doha and, once agreed, passed on to the subsidiary bodies under the UNFCCC for further elaboration of the legal and technical details.

The issue of response measures was sorted in Durban and should therefore not be carried forward in the Durban Platform negotiations.

3. Delivering the action the science demands

In Durban last year, governments acknowledged the urgent threat posed by climate change, the significant gap between the scientific recommendations and the political targets currently on the table, and decided that more emission cuts are needed to close the gap. Therefore, as a second and equally critical component of the Durban Platform (ADP) negotiations, governments agreed to have a work plan to increase ambition in the short term.

In Doha, governments must agree a plan for how to close the remaining gap between the political ambition and the science with an aim to peaking global emissions by 2015. This plan must include both increased targets (mitigation) and means of implementation (such as finally ending fossil fuel subsidies).

Secondly, in Doha, it's time to make action reflect the words by delivering concrete initiatives that close the gap. There are many easy steps that can be taken immediately, including:

- Increasing the 2020 targets. Many governments could easily increase their 2020 targets, including the EU who pledged to reduce emissions by 20% compared to 1990 by 2020. Already in 2011, the EU has achieved that target and numbers from the European Environment Agency show the EU could reduce emissions up to 24% by 2020 just by implementing existing and planned measures. Therefore EU should increase its target to 30% domestic reductions of emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 levels.
- Governments must agree to peak global emissions by 2015 and reduce emissions by at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, in accordance with the recommendations of the IPCC¹ and in order to not lock in the world onto a path towards catastrophic climate change. Any delay of the peak year will increase the environmental and economic costs and diminish the probability of keeping temperature rise below 2°C, which governments adopted as a target at COP 16 in Cancun, let alone the 1.5°C which is supported by more than 100 countries.
- Mitigation commitments from all countries that have not yet made pledges internationally. For example, several Arab governments are already pursuing very concrete national targets for renewable energy, which have not been formally submitted as Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) to the UNFCCC. By submitting these targets the Arab countries can gain international recognition of their efforts and help building a climate deal that matters.
- Increase the international financial and technological support for climate action in developing countries.
- In January 2013 a science-based review of the global efforts and temperature targets must be initiated as a matter of priority and urgency in order to assess whether the current objectives will keep us safe from dangerous climate change. This review must be technical and science based, and while it should be informed by the IPCC 5th Assessment Report it must be initiated immediately and provide advice to COP annually from 2013-2015.
- Agree to phase out fossil fuel subsidies by 2015. These subsidies are costly and increase greenhouse gas emissions as reports from the International Energy Agency and the OECD have shown. In Doha, governments must agree to phase out fossil fuel subsidies as part of a plan to close the ambition gap (see above). By COP 19, governments must agree to a clear timetable and milestones to facilitate subsidy reform. The UNFCCC process is well suited to facilitate and support such a reform as governments have already committed to reporting regularly on their efforts to reduce emissions, while the NAMA registry and the Green Climate Fund are well positioned to provide the necessary support to developing countries to ensure a just

¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded in its 4th Assessment Report, published in 2007, that reaching the lowest range in concentration stabilisation levels assessed (445 to 490 ppm of CO₂-equivalent, leading in the long term to a temperature increase between 2 and 2.4°C), would require global CO₂ emissions to peak before 2015.

transition. Further technical and coordination work needed must be completed through a dedicated working group on subsidy reform under the “Durban Platform” (ADP) ambition work stream.

4. Financing the transformation of developing country energy supplies

In Copenhagen in 2009, the rich nations pledged \$10bn US dollars annually in the period 2010-12 for climate action in developing countries, as well as to increase the climate finance to \$100bn annually by 2020. However, currently no agreement has been reached on how to deliver on this pledge between 2013 and 2020. Instead of an increase in finance there is a risk of a decrease or a gap in funding.

Developed countries must commit to providing a finance package for 2013-15 that is at least the double amount of the amount provided in the period 2010-12 in order to insure solid progress towards the \$100bn annually by 2020. This finance can for example be generated through redirection of subsidies for fossil fuels and environmentally destructive industries. The majority of the resources should be channeled through the Green Climate Fund.

Furthermore, specific innovative sources of funding must be identified which can deliver the \$100bn annually from 2020 and onwards. These sources must include financial transaction taxes and levies on international transport.

The Green Climate Fund must deliver finance for adaptation, mitigation and have a specific funding window for forest protection in developing countries (REDD) while ensuring no negative impacts on local communities and maximising the participation of these communities.

A key role for the financial and technological support is to enable and support decentralised renewable energy (DRE) development in developing countries, for example by supporting the development of policy measures (i.e. feed-in tariffs), payment of incremental costs and risk guarantees, which will allow poor communities without access to electricity to leapfrog towards a clean energy future.

As part of the Durban Platform negotiations on a new protocol, the development of a solid mechanism to provide compensation for loss and damage must also be initiated.

5. Set up a framework for the protection of tropical forests

In Doha, governments need to set up a framework that includes:

- The establishment of a dedicated forest finance window under the Green Climate Fund with funding directed towards additional reductions.
- Rejection a forest offset market as a finance mechanism for REDD. Not only do offset markets by definition merely shift emissions rather than reduce them, but they also decrease incentives to invest in clean solutions.
- Adoption of an integrated approach to monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) which puts equal weight on safeguards for biodiversity and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities as well as on carbon benefits. Countries must agree to provide information to the UNFCCC that ensures safeguards are being addressed and respected nationwide. Information systems must include participatory and independent monitoring approaches, be fully transparent and publicly accessible. Also grievance mechanisms must be transparent, accessible and independent.
- National-level reductions in deforestation and degradation. In Doha, governments need to adopt strategies that will reduce deforestation and degradation nationwide through the use of national reference levels, monitoring and accounting measures. Sub-national projects and approaches alone risk shifting deforestation from one part of the country to another.

6. Participation, transparency and democracy in the UNFCCC

Civil society has a right to know how our governments are responding to the international climate crisis, and be heard in the political discussions. Therefore, governments must improve the transparency of the UNFCCC negotiations, and ensure meaningful participation of NGOs as well as indigenous peoples and local communities.

For more information, contact:
pressdesk.int@greenpeace.org

Greenpeace International
Ottho Heldringstraat 5, 1066 AZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands

greenpeace.org