

# eco



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## Welcome world leaders

In 1992, when you met in Rio de Janeiro for the Earth Summit and discussed the impending climate crisis, you took the unprecedented step to legally commit to do all that is necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. Seventeen years on, the world is watching these talks with increasing anxiety. Progress has been disturbingly slow.

Copenhagen is a rare moment of truth, the last chance to avoid destabilisation of states and ecosystems, and save various island nations. It is also the opportunity for a new spirit of unprecedented global cooperation, and a just economic transformation that offers a better life for all.

Will you grasp this once in a lifetime opportunity? Do you feel the weight of generations on your shoulders?

The eyes of the world are on you. Nobody is better placed to deliver the public benefits of effective climate action. Will you be the catalyst for low-carbon development or complicit in climate catastrophe? With just the people to answer to, no higher authority to hide behind and time having run out on us, a fair, ambitious and binding (FAB) new climate deal is your only viable choice.

Some countries have attempted to re-ignite trust and a range of innovative ideas are on the table. South Africa quantified the actions it can undertake to peak emissions. China clearly indicated it doesn't require financial support to achieve its intensity target. Today, France and Africa advocated innovative sources of public finance that do not depend on long-term allocations by treasuries – like a tax on international financial transactions and taxes on bunker fuels.

So, it is possible! But Chancellor Merkel

was right in expressing anxiety about the lack of progress. We worry even more about the lack of substance. Here are crunch issues on which you must deliver:

- Closing the huge gap in ambition by doubling the current proposed aggregate developed country emission reduction targets, to at least 40% below 1990 by 2020;
- Closing the financial gap by providing adequate, immediate financial support for developing country adaptation and emission reduction efforts, and the means to generate long-term public money predictably and at the scale of \$200 billion per year by 2020;
- Closing the trust gap by explicitly mandating a legally binding outcome under both negotiating tracks.

For your personal integrity as well as the environmental integrity of the Copenhagen outcome, you should further close the large loopholes and do away with accounting tricks.

Your Excellencies, to risk stating the obvious, all nations have a right to exist: A 2°C world requires a global race to peak emissions, within a 2013-2017 commitment period, that must be driven by industrialised countries; all must join to cut global emissions 80% by 2050; adapting to the impacts of climate change and variability requires resources additional to development assistance; and developing countries need support to embrace a low-carbon economy, while achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Last weekend, people took to the streets with one simple message: Lead or Go Home.

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## Supplementary action needed

*ECO* was delighted that delegates yesterday had started discussing supplementarity of offsets during the session on mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol. Grenada on behalf of AOSIS had submitted text to have supplementarity more precisely defined. This was a positive development towards fixing the loophole created by the current ambiguous definition of supplementarity. This gap has enabled developed countries on their own to choose how much of their emission reduction targets they want to meet through offsets, instead of domestic reductions. Preliminary analysis by *ECO* suggests that more than 50% of targets in the first commitment period will most likely be met by offsets.

What we need to be working toward is a complete decarbonisation of developed countries' economies by 2050. Weak targets and a heavy reliance on offsets will encourage further lock-in to long-life high carbon infrastructure. It will also delay the development and deployment of low-carbon technologies at scale. Offsets also shift mitigation efforts to developing countries, thus drawing upon their scope for domestic actions. Furthermore, a significant proportion of carbon credits under the CDM do not represent additional emission reductions.

For these reasons *ECO* believes there is no justification for offsets, as long as developed countries stop short of ensuring their domestic emissions are reduced by at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2020. We fully support Grenada and AOSIS in calling for a more robust definition of supplementarity in order to limit dependence on offsets.

## EU clueless on finance stream

In the olden days before there were banks, people used to hide their gold, silver coins and cash in all kinds of places from socks to mattresses and double sewn curtains.

The 21st century has spawned elaborate schemes to generate the modern equivalent of gold and silver coins. An interesting example is the introduction of the carbon cap and trade system. Under such a system you can then choose to auction emission allowances that are issued. In the EU such an approach under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) will result

in  $\square 30$ -50 billion a year of new additional income to European governments. This has been locked into a legally binding European Directive. There is no doubt whatsoever that this income will be generated from 2013.

In spite of this anticipated cash flow, EU finance ministers told *ECO* they had drawn a blank on finding long term climate finance for developing countries. *ECO* urges the EU leaders to look again. The huge bulge under the finance ministers' mattresses might be a good place to start.

## Missing island states

Most delegates will have passed the large black and white globe in the main hall outside the plenary without giving it too much thought. But in fact it perfectly reflects the casual indifference of the powerful countries attending these talks. Chillingly, on this globe, small island states are completely absent.

Is this the Annex I countries vision for

2050? Their current pledges will result in global temperature rises of 3°C, or even 4°C, guaranteeing that low-lying islands will disappear into the sea.

This is why small island states, led by Tuvalu, have come to Copenhagen demanding to be heard. Not because they fear economic or political disadvantage, not for media coverage ahead of an election. They are, quite simply, asking for their right to exist.

Survival for AOSIS means to keep the global warming to no more than 1.5°C. This requires that industrialised countries reduce their emissions by 45% by 2020 and at least 95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels.

It's quite straightforward really. Will world leaders ensure a fair, ambitious and binding deal, or are they effectively wiping the small island states off the globe?



Scene from Tuvalu

By courtesy of PeterSmith

## Health matters, doctors say

The overwhelming focus of these negotiations on finance ignores a non-negotiable fact – it is not finance but human health which is the bottom line. All disruptions and damages caused by climate change have as their point of convergence our own health.

Another crucial point which so far has barely surfaced in the negotiators' mindsets is that what is good for the climate is good for health. Mitigation strategies have very significant health effects, which are generally very beneficial. For instance, the *Lancet* medical journal in the November 2009 issue stating that the introduction of 150 million clean cookers stoves into India would in just 10 years reduce emissions

equivalent to 1 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. At the same time it would reduce acute chest infections in kids, chronic disease in adults and heart disease by at least a sixth – the equivalent of half the entire cancer burden of India.

This and other examples have two profoundly important implications. Firstly, it means that most of the costs of mitigation strategies have been seriously overestimated. Almost never are the benefits to health taken into account, let alone quantified. Secondly it provides a much more refined political basis for internalising the externalities of fossil fuel use. Taxing oil-dependent travel is good for the climate and good for health.

## J rgen

Emerging from his hotel room yesterday J rgen stumbled over a foreign newspaper lying open at an op-ed piece by somebody he had been hoping to bump in person at the Bella Centre – the US Secretary of State. Titled: "The US is on Board" (conjuring alarming images of surfing in stormy seas amongst ice-flows), reading the piece gave J rgen a whole new insight into the American Dream:

Everybody is henceforth deemed equal, making it logical that "all major economies" should undertake the same sort of action. Consumption and consequent pollution is clearly not an issue, even if some are more equal. So, what the world needs to address our "unsustainable path" is "a system that enables full transparency and creates confidence that national actions are in fact being implemented." Is the hill getting hostile with its intransigent northern neighbour? (Not likely with energy security sought from tar sands.)

J rgen sees clearly now why the US is so allergic to committing to national actions. With so many other countries having made commitments to national actions, perhaps all the US needs to do to preserve some slim hope of staying below 2°C, is to make sure that we are all transparent.

### – Welcome world leaders, from front page –

Let us translate that into specific actions for some key countries:

USA – we understand the setback caused by a decade of denial. Studies show easily affordable domestic mitigation options by 2020 of at least 18% below 1990. Raise your ambitions.

Germany – by tearing down the walls in the minds of your fellow leaders, you can meet the most existential challenge of the 21st century. A commitment to below 2°C also requires closing the finance gap.

Finland, Austria, Sweden – accounting tricks cannot hide attempts to avoid deep reductions in a key sector at home.

Japan – the world did not expect business as usual after being lifted by your groundbreaking commitment to cut emissions 25% by 2020, a serious long-term commitment to climate funding is needed.

To all leaders from the global South – we understand your misgivings, but we know that only a truly global outcome can avoid further loss and suffering.

*ECO* wishes you the wisdom and courage for leadership in the spirit of cooperative action.