

# CANCUN CLIMATE TALKS: BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

In late November, the world's governments will meet in the Mexican city of Cancún to continue negotiations on a global climate agreement. Christian Aid believes the European Union must show that it is ready to lead the global fight against climate change.

The Cancún climate change conference is the first high-level meeting of its kind after the Copenhagen summit in 2009 failed to reach a legally binding agreement to avoid dangerous climate change.

At Cancún, governments must show that a fair, ambitious and binding agreement is both essential and achievable and that they will take all the necessary steps to lay the foundations for such a deal. Christian Aid calls on developed countries to support the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol and to deliver on their financial obligations to help developing countries cope with the devastating impacts of climate change and become part of a global low-carbon future.

If the climate talks are to succeed, Christian Aid believes greater leadership is required from developed countries to bridge the divide between climate justice (what needs to happen) and political 'pragmatism' in the north (the domestic political constraints of negotiating parties).

Only then will a fair, ambitious and legally binding deal be possible.

## Where is the gap?

Many developing countries continue to demand a fair, ambitious and legally binding deal on climate change based on equity, justice and science. However, most wealthy nations are instead moving towards a deal that they view as politically pragmatic from their own domestic political perspective.

The United States, the biggest historical global polluter, is refusing to accept legally binding commitments. Instead, it champions the voluntary and unambitious approach of the Copenhagen Accord in place of the multilateral architecture negotiated since 1991. This means a low-ambition 'pledge and review' approach that will be delivered

largely through the carbon market and private-sector players, and which is likely to result in a world warmed by 4°C.<sup>1</sup>

This post-Copenhagen reality requires a paradigm shift to restore trust and hope, and to reach a global fair, ambitious and legally binding deal. A new level of leadership and cooperation is required from all parties to break the deadlock in talks. With the US unwilling to lead or get out of the way, the world now turns to the European Union to reclaim the mantle of developed country 'leader' of the international climate negotiations. Only enlightened leadership will help deliver the required emissions cuts and support for adaptation, climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building.

## A better approach

Cancún needs to deliver specific actions that can bridge this divide, advance the climate negotiations in a difficult political context, and build momentum towards a fair and ambitious global deal.

Concrete decisions at Cancún can help bridge the trust deficit that has prevailed in climate negotiations. Developed countries must acknowledge their role as historical polluters by committing to provide practical, financial and technological support to alleviate the impact that climate change is having in the poorest countries while helping them to build a clean-energy future.

### 1. Kyoto Protocol: second commitment period

Christian Aid believes that it is now time for the European Union to accept that the US is not in a position to be part of a fair, ambitious and global solution to climate change at this stage. European Union leadership must focus on saving the existing architecture that has been negotiated since 1992.

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Mohamed Adow, senior adviser, global advocacy and alliances, Christian Aid

POVERTY

**About 1.7 billion poor people are on the frontline of climate change through no fault of their own**

Christian Aid calls on Annex 1 parties (industrialised countries) to fulfil their legally binding obligations established under Article 3.9 of the Kyoto Protocol. Parties must commit to an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol before any outcome is finalised in the parallel Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) track. This will prevent the Kyoto Protocol from being ‘held hostage’ and will ensure that non-Annex 1 Kyoto parties (developing countries) undertake comparable efforts under the AWG-LCA track.

**2. Finance: the key to success in Cancún**

At the Copenhagen climate conference in December 2009, developed countries pledged to provide ‘new and additional’ short-term financing approaching US\$30bn between 2010 and 2012. The delivery of this short-term finance in a transparent manner holds the key to rebuilding trust between the wealthy north and poor south.

Christian Aid calls on developed countries to honour their pledges from public sources and to ensure that they provide new and additional funding as grants. Christian Aid also believes that a new fund should be set up under the Conference of the Parties (COP) to administer climate finances.

In the longer term, developing countries have called for finance equivalent to 1.5 per cent of Annex 1 gross domestic product (GDP). Christian Aid believes that finance mechanisms under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) should be scalable to meet climate costs to developing countries. Decisions at Cancún should set us on track to deliver long-term funds.

**3. Where are the climate leaders?**

The world today needs leaders that face up to the post-Copenhagen reality and set out methods for sharing the responsibility

to tackle climate change based on fairness, equity, justice, science and agreed principles.

The acrimony that followed the Copenhagen talks still lingers at climate talks and risks locking in the much criticised bottom-up voluntary pledge-based approach of the Copenhagen Accord with no consideration of science or equity (see Table 1 below).

We can’t afford a system that allows the biggest polluters to do only what they are politically prepared to do, instead of what science and equity requires.

Without leadership by the countries that caused global warming, the world will almost certainly warm by 4°C or more – heralding catastrophic impacts for all people, particularly the poor.

**The world poor’s dilemma**

About 1.7 billion poor people are on the frontline of climate change through no fault of their own.<sup>2</sup> They are likely to be affected further as global temperatures increase due to greenhouse emissions of the developed world and they are less likely to be able to prevent it on their own. It is therefore imperative, for those who are responsible and capable, to act first and fast.

The meagre pledges developed countries have made would contribute to a world that warms by more than 4°C with irreversible and catastrophic harm to all. The European Union and other developed countries have set a 2°C global goal but their pledges clearly fail to hold with a 2°C objective and would lock us into a trajectory that will result in catastrophic impacts and risks.

This is an injustice and a moral issue which, if the talks are to succeed, must be at the heart of the deal.

It is the view of Christian Aid, based on analysis using the Greenhouse Development Rights approach, that the European Union

	Principle-based	Pledge-based
Collective target for developed countries	Based on science and equity	None (or merely the sum of the pledges)
Individual targets for developed countries	Defined multilaterally; based on science and equity from aggregate target	Defined domestically
Loopholes and markets	Full accounting of reductions	Extensive use of loopholes and markets
Comparability of efforts	Annex 1 countries share burden fairly	None
Legally binding obligations	Binding in fact	Binding in form only
Effective compliance	Compliance under the Kyoto Protocol	Relies on transparency
Likely implications	Warming limited to levels that avoid catastrophic climate change	4°C of warming or more – with catastrophic impacts

*Table 1: This table shows a comparison of the bottom-up voluntary pledges-based approach and the science-, equity- and principle-based methodology.*

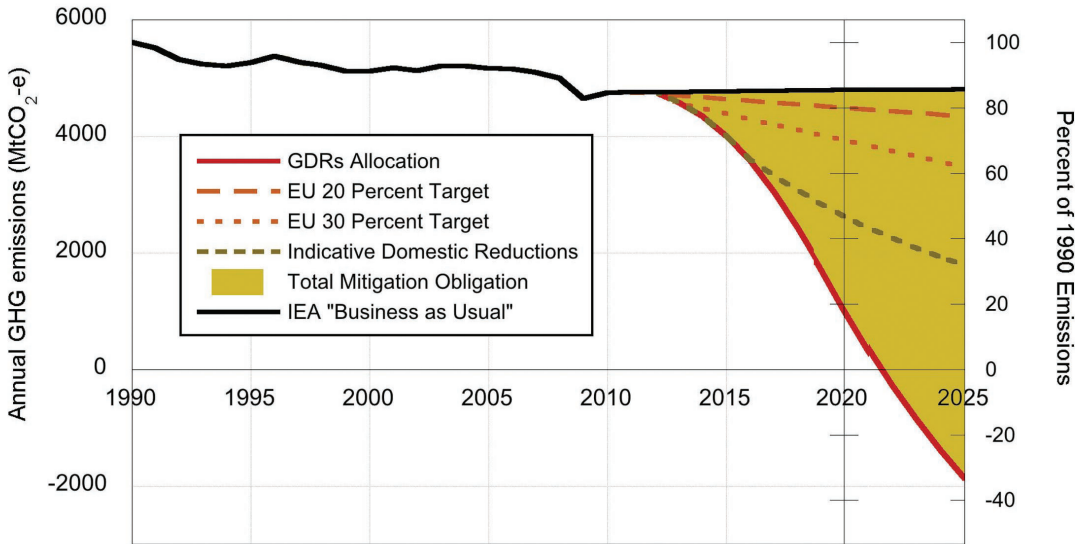


Figure 1: The European Union’s mitigation obligations, as calculated by the Greenhouse Development Rights framework under a 2°C emergency stabilisation pathway (shown in red). An indicative domestic reduction effort is shown for comparison purposes.

should take on emissions cuts of at least 40 per cent by 2020, and commit to financing a similar level of reductions overseas (as shown in Figure 1 above).<sup>3</sup>

The European Union – informed by its historical responsibility and existing capability – should reclaim the mantle of developed-country leader and help save the existing climate architecture from being dismantled. It is only with such leadership that we can genuinely confront the global climate challenge.

**European Union must set the stage for an ambitious outcome**

The European Union’s conditional support for the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol is problematic. It is inconsistent with the European Union’s legally binding obligations, which it has agreed to comply with in order to deliver a second commitment period of Kyoto. This position imperils the future of the only legally binding climate change treaty at a time when a number of developed countries are seeking to dismantle it. The European Union must commit unequivocally to maintain the Kyoto Protocol. If this doesn’t happen, it would herald the death of the only multilateral system of emissions reductions.

The science is clear on what needs to be done. It is time to change the climate politics and confront the changing climate with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and holding temperature at safe levels while simultaneously tackling poverty.

Christian Aid supports those who call for warming to be limited to less than 1.5°C.

We call on the European Union to commit to an equity-, science- and principle-based

method of effort-sharing to meet the set goal of limiting global warming to 2°C, and to do so based on the agreed principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities’.

**Solve the climate jigsaw**

For any climate deal to be fair and adequate it must add up to keep the world safe. Just like a jigsaw, the different pieces of the deal – including a global goal to limit global warming, and mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology and capacity building – must fit together coherently to get the job done.

If these pieces of the puzzle don’t fit together – as in the case of the Copenhagen Accord – then it is likely to be a deal that is inadequate to keep the world safe.

A fair climate deal needs to limit global warming to safe levels and share out the economic burden of doing so according to responsibility for climate change and capability to deal with it.

Similarly, climate finance and technology must be made available by the rich, industrialised countries to enable developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change, while simultaneously advancing sustainable development.

The challenge in Cancún is to reorient intergovernmental climate politics in order to solve this climate jigsaw. At the very least, parties must acknowledge the relationships between the main topics under negotiation. These include the shared vision, the mitigation commitments and actions, adaptation, the nature and level of technology transfer required and the requirements of finance for developing countries. Only then will we be able to overcome the Copenhagen paralysis.

**Christian Aid supports those who call for warming to be limited to less than 1.5°C**

It is against this backdrop that Christian Aid, with its partners, put forward an equitable burden-sharing framework – the Greenhouse Development Rights approach, which defines the level of action each country should undertake to avoid climate catastrophe.

We can't afford another failure – let parties work towards sealing a deal that keeps the world safe.

**What the world needs**

Christian Aid calls for Cancún to agree a set of decisions that correct the current course, and set the world on a course towards a safe and sustainable future.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, Christian Aid calls for an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol to be adopted at Cancún to avoid a gap between commitment periods. Developed countries must commit to science-based cuts and must close the accounting loopholes that threaten to undermine their climate change efforts.

Under the Convention, we call for a coordinated package of COP decisions under the Long-term Cooperative Action (LCA) track. This package will coexist with the Kyoto Protocol to enhance implementation of the Convention in accordance with the Bali Action Plan. In particular, the package must include:

- a) an overarching decision containing a shared vision and long-term global goals on mitigation, adaptation, technology and finance in accordance with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, equity and international human rights obligations, and a procedure for review of implementation of the Convention
- b) a framework decision ensuring that all non-Kyoto Protocol Annex 1 countries have comparable mitigation commitments to Kyoto Protocol parties and effective procedures for reporting and compliance

- c) a framework decision for enabling and supporting nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries in the context of sustainable development through the provision of technology, financing and capacity building, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable (MRV) manner
- d) a framework decision for the protection of forests that includes protection of the rights of indigenous and forest-dwelling communities, with appropriate mechanisms to ensure this
- e) a framework decision for the creation of a work programme on adaptation, and the creation of appropriate mechanisms including a new subsidiary body on adaptation, a mechanism for loss and damage, a mechanism dealing with displacement and migration as a result of climate change, and an adaptation fund under the Convention
- f) a framework decision for the creation of technology action plans, a new subsidiary body on technology, and a technology fund
- g) a framework decision creating an effective financial mechanism under the authority of the COP including an executive board, secretariat, trustees, technical panels and appropriate funds
- h) a framework decision creating a mechanism for resolving questions on implementation (including MRV mechanisms).

A calibrated approach under both tracks of the negotiations will in our view allow parties to further elaborate the details for a fair, ambitious and binding (FAB) deal at COP 17, which is to be held in South Africa in 2011. Let's keep the momentum for a full FAB deal.

**Endnotes**

- 1 [www.nature.com/nature/journal/v464/n7292/full/4641126a.html](http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v464/n7292/full/4641126a.html)
- 2 [www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/9/44623102.pdf?contentId=44623103](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/63/9/44623102.pdf?contentId=44623103)
- 3 Paul Baer, Tom Athanasiou, Sivan Kartha et al, *The Greenhouse Development Rights Framework: the Right to Development in a Climate Constrained World*, Revised Second Edition, Christian Aid, 2008, <http://gdrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/thegdrsframework.pdf>

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**Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of power over their own lives.**

**Christian Aid has a vision – an end to poverty – and we believe that vision can become a reality. We urge you to join us.**

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