



Climate Action Network Canada Réseau action climat Canada

Climate Action Network Canada
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Ottawa, Canada
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Yvo de Boer
UNFCCC
Executive Secretary

January 28th, 2010

Dear Mr. de Boer,

On behalf of the people of Canada, we are making a “Peoples Submission” to the Copenhagen Accord. We realize it is exceptional for you to receive a national submission through a nongovernmental organization. However, the present circumstance in Canada is exceptional. The views and aspiration of the majority of Canadians are not reflected in the views and actions of the present government.

The Canadian people have been very clear in their continuing support for the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We also support Canada adopting science based emission targets and contributing our fair share to a mitigation and adaptation fund.

We want the international community to know Canadians will one day live up to our obligations.

Please accept this “Peoples Submission” as an indication of the real values and views of Canadians.

Sincerely,

Graham Saul
Executive Director
Climate Action Network-Réseau action climat Canada



A People's Submission on Canada, Climate Change and the Copenhagen Accord

Submitted January 28th, 2010 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This submission is made on behalf of Canadian citizens who overwhelmingly desire that our government take real action on climate change. We submit that in order to contribute its fair share to a meaningful global climate change agreement, Canada should take the following actions:

1. Canada should commit to a science-based emissions reduction target of 25 per cent below 1990 levels by the year 2020 – “further strengthening” the government’s current target of 3 per cent below 1990 by 2020, as required by the Copenhagen Accord.
2. Canada should provide its fair share (3 to 4 per cent) of long-term climate financing to assist the most vulnerable and poorest countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to unavoidable climate change impacts. The Copenhagen Accord commits developed countries to “a goal of mobilizing” US \$100 billion per year by 2020. Canada should go further by supporting a collective financing target of US \$195 billion per year by 2020.
3. Canada should also provide its fair share (3 to 4 per cent) of short-term climate financing to assist the most vulnerable and poorest countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to unavoidable climate change impacts. This is equivalent to CAD \$320 to 420 million per year in new funds, over and above our Official Development Assistance commitments, from 2010 to 2012. This financing would be a first step towards the long-term financing commitment noted above.
4. Finally, Canada should recommit itself to fulfilling its legal obligations under the Kyoto Protocol (an emissions reduction target of 6 per cent below 1990 levels during the period 2008 to 2012), and working with the international community to come to an agreement in 2010 on stronger commitments under the Protocol, post-2012.

Background

The Copenhagen Accord, states the following in paragraph 4...

“Annex I Parties [industrial countries and Economies in Transition] commit to implement individually or jointly the quantified economy-wide emissions targets for 2020, to be submitted in the format given in Appendix I by Annex I Parties to the secretariat by 31 January 2010 for compilation in an INF [1] document. Annex I Parties that are Party to

¹ **INF.** Information document. Usually provided during meetings to provide background information to draft decisions, resolutions, and recommendations. These documents are not subject to negotiation.

the Kyoto Protocol will thereby further strengthen the emissions reductions initiated by the Kyoto Protocol.”

Because January 31st has been identified as a key decision point, we would like to take this opportunity to express our concerns about the Copenhagen Accord and the Canadian Government’s complete failure to deal with the climate change crisis.

The position of the Harper government is in direct opposition to positions supported by the Canadian public, most provinces and the Canadian Parliament. The Government has not sufficiently considered the majority viewpoint that Canada needs to take serious action to tackle global warming rather than sit on the sidelines doing nothing.

Our submission does not imply support for the Copenhagen Accord, and we strongly condemn any attempt to establish a new negotiating process outside the UNFCCC based on the Accord. The Copenhagen Accord was undoubtedly the most controversial outcome of the Copenhagen climate conference. Divisive from its inception, the Accord remains the subject of great debate and has uncertain political implications.

Procedurally, consensus on the Accord was impossible, so the United Nations Conference of the Parties only “takes note of” the Accord. It is effectively outside of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is not clear how many countries have endorsed the agreement, but essentially the Accord was pushed by major industrial polluting countries in order to give some semblance of success in Copenhagen. The Accord is a greenwash *not* supported by the 192 countries party to the UNFCCC or the 184 countries party to the Kyoto Protocol.

The Accord’s ‘pledge and review’ system for developed countries’ emission reduction targets, and the absence of a science-based aggregate target, threaten to lock in the low levels of commitment that were seen in Copenhagen, rather than provide a route towards a fair, ambitious and binding global agreement.

The United Nations is the most accountable, transparent, and inclusive forum for delivering a global climate change deal. The two-track process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with negotiations proceeding under working groups on the Kyoto Protocol and Long-term Cooperative Action, will proceed into COP16 in Mexico in December 2010. We urge the Canadian government to renew its commitment to the UN process in the lead-up to the G8 and G20 summits that Canada will host in June of this year.

The Copenhagen Accord has fundamental flaws which include the following:

- **No substance / No timeline** – The Accord completely failed to achieve an agreement that could prevent catastrophic climate change in the coming years; it failed to delineate the nature of the agreement that would have to be achieved; and it even failed to adopt any timeline for the achievement of such an agreement. At two and a half pages in length, the document is an insult to the effort of the nations who have been negotiating since the Bali conference in 2007 in the hopes of obtaining a meaningful agreement in Copenhagen.
- **Not legally binding** – One of the major strengths of the Kyoto Protocol is that it is legally binding. Environmentalists and most countries argued strongly that the Protocol should be maintained, strengthened and extended as a fundamental

structure going forward. Although the Accord recognizes that both negotiating tracks under the UNFCCC (the Kyoto Protocol and the Long-term Cooperative Action) will still proceed into COP16/CMP6 in Mexico, some countries, notably Canada, appear to think they can use the Copenhagen Accord as a basis for killing the Kyoto Protocol.

- **No aggregate industrialized country target** – An ambitious outcome from any climate change agreement will depend initially on industrialized country targets. The Accord fails to identify a science-based aggregate (i.e. collective) target for reduction of industrialized country greenhouse gas emissions. With no aggregate target, and no negotiating process where individual country targets must be agreed by all, reduction commitments are completely arbitrary and voluntary. There is thus no guarantee of reaching the science-based target implied by the 2 degree C limit above pre-industrial levels that is mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Accord. The Accord also fails to require 1990 as a base year for reduction targets, thus ensuring further uncertainty, inequity, and confusion.
- **Inadequate financial commitment** – A fair and just outcome in any climate change agreement depends on clear, adequate financial commitments from industrialized countries for adaptation and emissions reduction in the developing world. Climate Action Network International estimates that industrial countries will have to provide long-term climate financing of at least \$195 billion USD annually by 2020 to provide adequately for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. The Copenhagen Accord does not even come close to this level of financial support. The Accord specifies at Paragraph 8 that developed countries will provide fast start financing “approaching USD 30 billion” for the three-year period from 2010 to 2012. Paragraph 8 also mentions “a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020”. However, we note that this long-term goal not only fails to stipulate an adequate amount of financing, but that a vague “goal of mobilizing”, through a wide variety of public and private, bilateral and multilateral sources, does not constitute a firm financing commitment.

Having said this, with the resumption of negotiations under the United Nations’ existing two-track system, Canada’s position on climate change, as put forward by the Harper Government, is in need of radical reform. It is in direct contradiction to positions supported by parliament, most provinces, and public opinion.

The Position of Canada’s Parliament:

Over the past two years, a majority of Members of Parliament (MPs) have consistently voted for more ambitious objectives than this government. For example, a resolution was passed by the House of Commons in November that called on the Canadian government to commit to a more ambitious objective in Copenhagen of reducing global warming pollution to 25 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 and contributing its fair share of financing to assist developing countries with adaptation and adoption of clean energy technologies.²

² Opposition motion introduced by the Bloc Quebecois motion, November 19th, 2009 : <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=40&Ses=2&DocId=4232530&File=11>

The government has prorogued Parliament, again depriving elected Members of Parliament of an opportunity to democratically debate the outcomes of Copenhagen, including the controversial Copenhagen Accord, by the submission deadline of January 31, 2010.

Provinces:

More than 80 per cent of Canadians live in provinces with significantly more ambitious climate change agendas than the federal government. British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland all have much more ambitious targets than the federal government. Many cities within Canada are also taking notable action at the municipal level.

Canadian citizens:

Polls show that half of Canadians are not satisfied by our Prime Minister's performance in Copenhagen.³ Polls also show that the majority of Canadians believe the government's target is not ambitious enough and 75 per cent of Canadians are embarrassed by the government's inaction on climate change.⁴

Over 150,000 Canadians have signed the *KYOTOplus* petition which calls for emission cuts of 25 per cent below 1990 by 2020; an effective national plan to reach this target; help for developing countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change; and a fair, ambitious and legally-binding second phase of the Kyoto Protocol.

³ Angus Reid Public Opinion – Canadian's unhappy with Harper's performance at climate summit – January 5th, 2010

⁴ Hogan and Associates November 20, 2009