

AVOIDING A DANGEROUS DEAL

DEMANDS FOR THE COPENHAGEN CLIMATE TALKS

“Climate change is not simply an environmental challenge; it is fundamentally about poverty eradication, development, people’s sovereignty and environmental and social justice.”
Friends of the Earth



Foreword

This summary sets out Friends of the Earth’s demands for the Copenhagen climate talks. Tackling greenhouse gas emissions to prevent dangerous climate change is one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. A peak in global emissions by 2015 and a steep decline thereafter are necessary for a reasonable chance to secure a safe climate for all.

Rich developed countries are responsible for three quarters of emissions historically despite representing only 15 per cent of the

world’s population. They have a legal and moral duty to lead the fight against climate change and to support clean growth in developing countries as well as compensate them for harmful impacts.

As the Copenhagen negotiations begin, deep divisions remain between developed and developing countries. Developed countries have failed to fulfil many existing obligations, and continue to promote dangerous and inequitable climate policies such as carbon offsetting. These barriers and lack of political ambition must be overcome to avoid a dangerous deal in Copenhagen.

In addition to specific demands for the Copenhagen climate talks, Friends of the Earth demands that governments tackle the underlying drivers of climate change such as exploitative economic models, excessive consumption and fossil fuel subsidies. Cancelling the illegitimate debts of the developing world is also critical to the people now on the front line of climate impacts.

Demands to governments

All countries **must agree:**

- Emissions cuts of at least 40 per cent by 2020 on 1990 levels – without offsetting – for all developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol’s second commitment period.
- Emissions cuts from the United States equivalent to the efforts of other developed countries.
- A new financial mechanism under the authority of the UNFCCC to adequately fund developing-country adaptation and mitigation from developed-country public sources.

All countries **must reject:**

- The use of forests in carbon trading.
- Sectoral carbon offsetting and trading mechanisms.
- Any role for the World Bank in controlling climate finance.



**Friends of
the Earth**

THE COPENHAGEN NEGOTIATIONS

At the Bali climate talks in 2007 all countries agreed to a two year process under two separate negotiating tracks – the “Kyoto track” and the “Convention track”. These two tracks were established to fulfil specific obligations of countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. Both tracks are scheduled to reach important decisions in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The Kyoto track

Friends of the Earth demands that setting adequate targets under the Kyoto track is the overriding priority for the Copenhagen talks. The latest climate science shows these reductions must be at least 40 per cent by 2020 on 1990 levels – without offsetting – for any acceptable chance of avoiding catastrophic climate impacts.

The Kyoto track requires developed countries who are signatories to the UNFCCC’s Kyoto Protocol (excluding the United States) to agree their legally-binding post-2012 targets under a second commitment period.

Developed countries are reluctant to set themselves reduction targets consistent with what the science demands. Worse still, they are threatening to abandon their commitments under the Kyoto track, to appease the US desire to set only voluntary targets and drop the existing legally-binding penalty system. But the United States agreed in 2007, under the Convention track, to match the efforts of other developed countries. It is vital to hold the EU, Japan, Canada, Australia, Russia and other developed countries to their legal obligations. This would oblige the United States to match their commitments.

Failure to set adequate second commitment period targets under the Kyoto track would severely weaken the international climate regime and sideline the principle of “historical responsibility” enshrined in the UNFCCC.

The Convention track

Negotiations under the Convention track are guided by the Bali Action Plan, which seeks to “enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012”.

The Bali Action Plan requires emissions reduction commitments from all developed countries (including the United States), mitigation actions from developing countries (supported and enabled by finance and technology), policies to address deforestation, enhanced action on adaptation, and enhanced action on mobilising finance and technology cooperation.

Friends of the Earth has prioritised its campaigning under this track on four cross-cutting issues: climate finance, offsetting, forests, and human rights.

Climate finance

A new financial mechanism must be established under the authority of the UNFCCC to support and enable developing countries in tackling climate change.

Developed countries owe developing countries a climate debt because of their historic contribution to causing climate change. The compensation for climate impacts in poor countries is a straightforward obligation. Additionally, as all countries will now be required to take decisive action on climate change, expecting poorer countries to avoid fossil fuel growth requires additional compensation from the rich world, to fund the “incremental costs” – as agreed under the UNFCCC.

Scale and source

New research published by the UN’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimates developing countries will require between US\$500 billion and US\$600 billion annually for mitigation and adaptation. It also asserts that it will be necessary for most of this finance to come from public-sector sources.

The UNFCCC and Bali Action Plan require developed countries to deliver new and additional finance and technology. Most developed countries, however, continue to evade these obligations, and are instead attempting to count private financial flows – through offsetting – as meeting their own emissions reductions commitments despite emissions cuts and additional public finance being distinct obligations.

Attempts to justify the expansion of offsetting through new sectoral crediting and trading proposals, to fund developing country action, must be scrapped from negotiations.

Developed countries must instead tackle their own domestic emissions through public investment and direct regulation, and must use progressive taxation and innovative sources such as currency transaction taxes to raise the financial flows needed to meet their additional international finance obligations.

Governance and delivery

The needs assessment, governance and allocation of climate finance should be democratic, transparent and fully accountable to the UNFCCC.

Most developed countries, however, are positioning the World Bank to assume a controlling role for climate finance. This is despite the clear conflicts of interest with the World Bank and its poor environmental and social track record.

Climate finance policies and programmes must enable effective public scrutiny. Funds should be allocated according to equitable and rights-based criteria and should respect people’s sovereignty with due regard to vulnerable people. Funds should prioritise local technologies and knowledge and promote the local control, use and management of energy, forests and water. Workers involved in carbon-intensive industries must be supported through a just transition to sustainable and decent employment.

Offsetting

Friends of the Earth demands offsetting is scrapped. Offsetting is profoundly unjust, fundamentally flawed and cannot be reformed.

It creates carbon lock-in in developed countries, delaying the action that is urgently needed. Offsetting is widely discredited for failing to guarantee additional emissions reductions and it has well-documented damaging impacts on communities. Offsetting transfers the responsibility for reducing emissions from rich developed countries to poorer developing countries.

Instead of offsetting, developed countries should be making domestic emissions cuts of at least 40 per cent by 2020 on 1990 levels as well as providing additional resources to developing countries – as per their obligations under the Convention. Failure to do so is not consistent with climate science and will not achieve an effective or just solution to the climate crisis.

Forests

To prevent dangerous climate change, conserve biodiversity and safeguard the sustainable use of forests, any agreement on forests must be designed to stop deforestation and degradation, not simply reduce or defer emissions.

Safeguards

Forest agreements must explicitly recognise and enforce the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including territorial and customary rights.

More than 1 billion people, including 60 million Indigenous Peoples are dependent on forests for their livelihoods, food and medicines.

Any agreement to stop deforestation must recognise that plantations are not forests and must implement policies that explicitly safeguard against plantation expansion.

Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) mechanisms should not be used to fund the replacement of forests with plantations.

Forest funding

Forest funding mechanisms must not be based on the trading of forest carbon, but form part of the broader climate finance architecture, alongside the funding of other mitigation and adaptation activities.

Offset REDD proposals risk creating a land grab that would leave millions of people worse off, while allowing countries with high carbon intensity to continue consuming more than their fair share of carbon at an unsustainable rate. Such mechanisms discourage developed countries from moving away from carbon intensive infrastructure, risking our ability to avoid dangerous climate tipping points. This could directly cause the world's last remaining forests to die back from even small increases in global temperatures.

There are cost-efficient non-market ways to help prevent deforestation including bans and moratoria, effective local community solutions, and the establishment of a global forest fire-fighting fund. Tackling the drivers and underlying causes of deforestation is paramount. These drivers include agrofuels, soy production, excessive meat and paper consumption, industrial logging and destructive practices in mining, oil and gas.

Human rights

The effects of and responses to climate change are having a negative impact on the human rights of people across the world. To protect individuals and communities vulnerable to climate change now and in the future, human rights protections must be integrated into all aspects of climate agreements.

Mitigation of and adaptation to climate change has to take place in a way that respects, protects and promotes human rights.

To enable them to be part of the solution to climate change, individuals and communities must have access to information about policy responses to climate change as well as full, early, equal and effective participation and access to justice.

All aspects of the international climate agreements should be consistent with human rights safeguards in existing legal instruments, including those for Indigenous Peoples, women, children and young people and displaced persons.

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Friends of the Earth publications for the Copenhagen climate talks

- Financing climate justice
www.foei.org/publications/financing-climate-justice
- Europe's share of the climate challenge
www.sei-international.org/?p=publications&task=view&pid=1318
- A dangerous obsession: the evidence against carbon trading and for real solutions to avoid a climate crunch
www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/dangerous_obsession.pdf
- A dangerous distraction: why offsetting is failing the climate and people
www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/dangerous_distraction.pdf
- REDD myths: a critical review of proposed mechanisms
www.foei.org/publications/redd-myths
- Community-based forest governance
www.foei.org/publications/community-based-forest-governance
- Voices from communities affected by climate change
www.foei.org/publications/climate-testimonies

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland is part of Friends of the Earth International – the world's largest grassroots environmental network, uniting 77 diverse national member groups and some 5,000 local activist groups on every continent. With over 2 million members and supporters around the world, we campaign on today's most urgent environmental and social issues.



**Friends of
the Earth**

Making life better for people by inspiring solutions to environmental problems

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