

Local Government Climate Roadmap

Strong and Comprehensive Post-2012 Global Climate Agreement

Copenhagen 2009
UNFCCC COP 15

Poznan 2008
UNFCCC COP 14

Bali 2007
UNFCCC COP 13

LOCAL ACTION FOR CLIMATE PROTECTION AND ADAPTATION – BRIEFING SHEETS

Briefing Sheet # 14

COP 15: what can we expect at global level?

Gino Van Begin, Deputy Secretary General, ICLEI, 24 November 2009

At the Climate Talks in Barcelona in November 2009, it became obvious that national negotiators will not kick-off the COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen with a draft for an international climate agreement, which Ministers and Heads of State could finalize at the end of COP15. So what now?

International climate negotiations 2007- 2009

In Bali in 2007, nations agreed to start climate negotiations in a two-track mode: one track (**AWG-KP**) on the renewal of the commitments under the publicly well-known 1997 Kyoto Protocol (entered into force in 2005, see Briefing Sheet #4 and #5) and another track (**AWG-LCA**) on the improvement and updating of the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

While the UNFCCC includes both developing and developed countries and in particular takes the USA under general climate obligations, it is the Kyoto Protocol that actually forces industrial states (37, with the exclusion of the USA who did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol), to reduce CO₂ emissions.

Similarly, nations agreed in 2007 that the legal format of the Copenhagen outcome would not be discussed until shortly before COP 15. They made this decision in the hope they would not get “distracted” by disagreements on the binding or non-binding character of the outcome of the exercise before even discussing its content.

During 2009, in particular national negotiators increased the number of their meetings and in parallel entered into real negotiation mode: meetings - referred to as Climate Talks - took place almost bi-monthly in April, June, August in Bonn, in October in Bangkok and November in Barcelona, with a view to preparing for the COP 15 Summit in Copenhagen. These meetings were accompanied by other high level meetings of the UN General Assembly as well as bilateral and multilateral Summits of global leaders.

The “content” and “packaging” of any of the outcomes of the Copenhagen negotiations have been the hot issue in the recent Climate Talks in Bangkok and Barcelona.

Bonn, Bangkok and Barcelona Climate Talks 2009

Commitment to long term cooperative action (AWG-LCA)

In the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA), national negotiators had come to a draft text compiling various proposals and options from all nations or groups of nations by August 2009. This draft text was then intensively discussed again “per chapter” in corresponding contact groups with a view to agree on content and to keep the text to an acceptable size. The results of their negotiations are recorded in so called “Non Papers” that concern mainly “Shared Vision on long term cooperation”, “Adaptation”, “Mitigation”, “Finance”, “Technology Transfer”, “Capacity Building”. The Report of the AWG-LCA that is the base for COP 15, includes the compilation of these Non-Papers (as of 20 November 2009).

Commitment to the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP)

In the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP), national negotiators have been struggling as too few nations come forward with ambitious commitments. As of today, the pledges made by industrial states (Annex-I Parties in the Kyoto Protocol) on their individual or joint GHG emissions reduction commitments for the post-2012 period, remain collectively far below the recommendations of 40% by 2020 based on 1990

levels in the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC. For example, currently EU27 committed to 20% by 2020, Norway to 40%, Japan to 25%, others are moving slowly. However, in the USA, it is expected that there will be no sufficient US Congress majority to ratify any renewed and robust Kyoto Protocol at this stage.

In this context, developing countries rightly fear the grave impacts of climate change in the near future. They fear that instead of complying with the commitments under the international law of the Kyoto Protocol, in the future industrial states will only commit to vaguer, long-term reduction objectives. Consequently, developing countries strongly disagree with any suggestion to suspend the Kyoto Protocol negotiation track in favour of discussing one climate agreement with long term objectives for all countries only.

Commitment to finance

At the heart of the negotiations resides the issue of finance. What will be the finance flow to developing countries in order for them to adapt to ongoing climate change and to take voluntary, nationally appropriate mitigation actions (so-called NAMAS)? In terms of public funding, only the EU offered numbers on funding in time for the Barcelona Climate Talks.

Even more important is the question of what the share between funding from the public sector (developed countries) and from the private market (carbon market) will be.

Indeed, there is a link between internationally agreed reduction targets, the commitment periods and the carbon market: the stricter the short term CO₂ reduction target, the shorter the next commitment period, the greater chances that industrialized nations would not agree collectively and the higher the carbon prices may be in a global carbon market. Higher carbon prices are in the interest of developing countries as they may trigger higher income for developing countries to ensure their low-carbon development.

COP15 - a package of decisions?

At the Climate Talks in Barcelona in November 2009, Yvo de Boer, UNFCCC Executive Secretary stated that COP 15 cannot adopt a legally binding agreement. The preparatory meetings between 2007 and 2009 did not result in an appropriate draft text in time for COP 15. More time is required and negotiations should continue after COP15.

At the same time, he emphasized that Heads of State and Ministers can and should adopt a package of decisions at COP 15 that keep “the momentum and flow” of current negotiations and provide a mandate to finalize the negotiations in 2010.

This package should include:

- A decision on a shared vision between developed and developing countries on long term cooperative action on climate, with a long term target and with principles of action for adaptation with
 - 1) reduction commitments from industrialized countries;
 - 2) agreed principles on voluntary mitigation actions by developing countries (NAMAS);
 - 3) multilateral or bilateral finance commitments from developed countries;
 - 4) principles regarding the share of costs between future mitigation and adaptation
- A decision on how the work has to be taken further and the overall governance mechanisms (institutional mechanisms, technology transfer, capacity building)
- A decision on the second commitment period for Kyoto Protocol.

Further information

- Official UNFCCC website: www.unfccc.org
- Local Government Climate Roadmap: www.iclei.org/climate-roadmap
- For information on why cities and local governments are key actors in climate change mitigation and adaptation, please see Briefing Sheet #9 at www.iclei.org/climate-roadmap/briefingsheets



www.iclei.org/climate-roadmap
Email: climate-roadmap@iclei.org



United Cities and Local Governments
Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis
Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos

www.cities-localgovernments.org
Email: info@cities-localgovernments.org

This series of Briefing Sheets is produced within the project “Local Governments’ mobilisation and backing for the development and implementation of a global and comprehensive post-2012 climate change agreement”, funded by the European Commission (Europe Aid) and the Norwegian Government. They shall be used to inform local government representatives about the roadmap to Copenhagen and current climate negotiations, as well as related local government climate activities. The Briefing Sheets represent solely the views of their authors and cannot in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the European Commission (EC) or as a formal commitment from the EC. This Briefing Sheet was compiled by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability.

© ICLEI & UCLG November 2009