

The International Community Achieves Progress in Climate Policy

<http://www.social-europe.eu/2011/01/the-international-community-achieves-progress-in-climate-policy/> January 27, 2011



The year 2010 was a successful year for environment protection efforts within the framework of the United Nations. At the end of October the conference on the Convention on biodiversity in Nagoya, Japan, led to a successful outcome. The intense negotiations resulted in the 'Access and Benefit Sharing Protocol' (ABS), a strategic plan for 2011-2020 and the target of protecting 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas as well as 10% of marine and coastal areas. These results are important to reduce

the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Besides the safeguard of our natural capital, the fight against global warming is the major challenge in environmental protection. After the climate change conference in Copenhagen, there was little hope the 194 states would reach consensus in Cancun this year. But all nations – aside from Bolivia – supported the 'Cancun Agreements', an essential step on the way to a new Green Deal. The outcome includes the main achievements of the Copenhagen Accord: limiting the rise of the global temperature to 2°C, mobilising 100 billion US Dollar for long-term financing and a roadmap for the preparations of the COP 17 in Durban next year.

Furthermore, all important areas of cooperation between developing and developed countries are covered by the establishment of a Green Climate Fund, the Cancún Adaptation Framework, a 'REDD+' mechanism and a Technology Mechanism (including a Technology Executive Committee as well as a Climate Technology Center and Network). Even though some details concerning the structure and financing need to be clarified, the basis for enhanced collaboration was formed. In addition, the Mexican presidency succeeded in rebuilding trust among the industrial and developing countries as well as in the UN process, because they kept the negotiations inclusive and transparent.

Cancún laid the foundation to build upon in the next year. Still, a lot of questions are open and need to be answered: What future has the Kyoto Protocol? What legal form for a new deal is possible for all nations? Who will contribute to the financing of the adaptation and mitigation actions? Without doubt, the developed countries must fulfil their responsibilities and take over the major share of the efforts. A good start is to increase the mitigation target to assure that global greenhouse gas emissions will peak soon. The developed countries as a group should reduce their emissions in a range of 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020 to achieve the two degree target, but the current pledges just cover 60% of the overall necessary commitments. The gap of the remaining 40% must be filled in order to avoid a four degrees temperature rise and the associated impacts on nature and the environment.

The EU must take the lead and deliver on its promise to increase its own reduction target to 30% 'when the conditions are met'. The 'Cancun Agreements' present the right conditions and the EU should take advantage of the favourable situation, especially because a reduction of 17% has already been reached. The European Parliament favoured the higher target in its resolution on the climate change conference in Cancun and demands a more ambitious target for climate protection. Going ahead will be a clear

signal to the international community as well as to European businesses and consumers in Europe.

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