



Policy Briefing Paper

KAIROS Policy Briefing Papers are written to help inform public debate on key domestic and foreign policy issues

No. 22 December 2009

Canada's Climate Challenge What's at stake in the Copenhagen climate change talks

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, between December 7-18, 2009 represents a critical turning point in mobilizing the political will for a transition towards a low-carbon future. Canada's challenge is to bring credible and constructive policy positions to this historic event.

Over the past year, KAIROS has joined with other member organizations of Climate Action Network (CAN) in the KyotoPlus Campaign, which focuses on how Canada addresses climate change domestically and extends the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012.

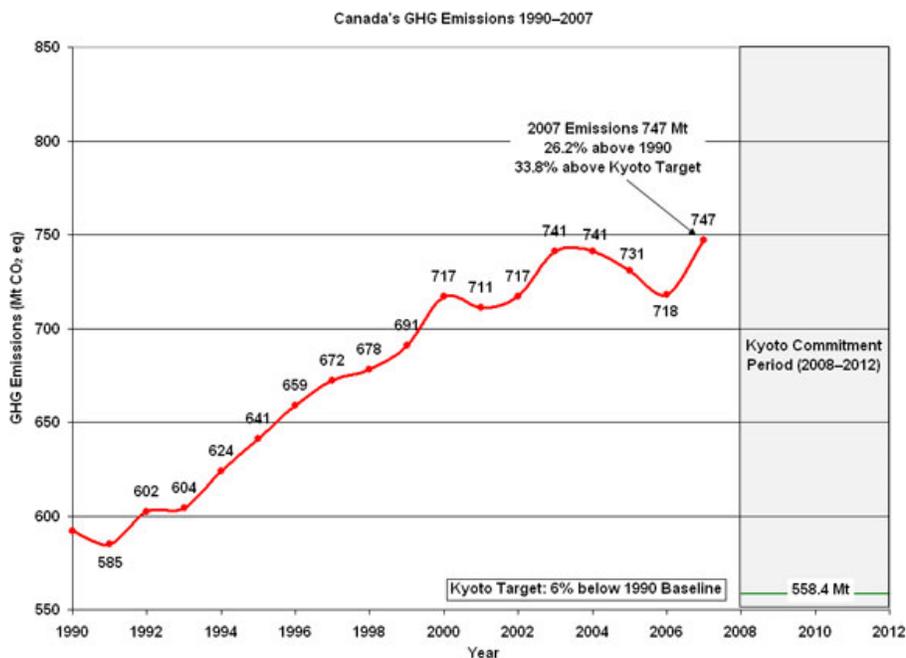
This briefing paper outlines the major policy issues at stake in Copenhagen and our expectations of where progress can be made and what obstacles must be overcome. It examines how the three major demands of the KyotoPlus petition might play out in Copenhagen.

KyotoPlus Call for Action #1

Canada must set a national target to cut greenhouse gas emissions at least 25 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020.

In order to mitigate against the worst effects of climate change, the most recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), calls for industrialized countries like Canada to adopt greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets of 25% to 40% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, the Chrétien government committed to reduce Canada's GHG emissions to an annual average of 6% below 1990 levels on average over the years 2008-2012.



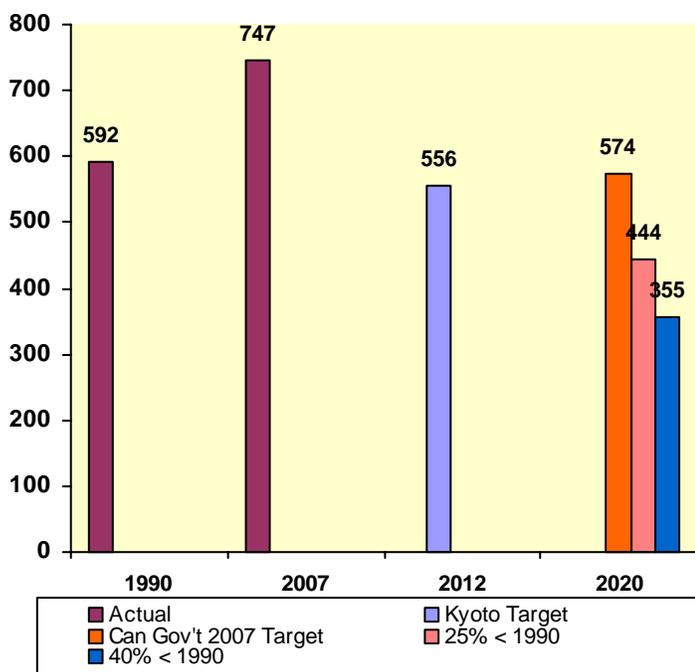
Canada's past performance in implementing the Kyoto Protocol ranks as the worst of any industrialized country. In 2007 Canada's GHG emissions were 26.2% above 1990 levels and 33.8% above the Kyoto target of 558.4 million tonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent.

In 2007, the Harper government an-

nounced a greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction target of 20% below the 2006 level by 2020, and 60-70% below the 2006 level by 2050. Using the internationally recognized base year of 1990, this target actually works out to a reduction of 3% below 1990 levels, a far cry from what is needed to seriously tackle climate change.

At Copenhagen the debate on GHG reduction targets will be framed, in part, by the positions that the United States and the European Union have announced. On November 25th, 2009 President Obama announced that the U.S. “is prepared to put on the table a U.S. emission reduction target in the range of 17% below 2005 levels in 2020... [with] a goal to reduce emissions 83% by 2050.” If Canada were to adopt this target, Canadian emissions could be 2.5% **above** 1990 levels in 2020 and still meet the target.

**Actual Canadian GHG Emissions and Target:
(Mt CO₂e)**



The European Union has announced a target of 20% cuts from 1990 levels by 2020, rising to 30%, if other industrialized countries will agree to the higher target. Quebec has pledged to reduce its GHG emission to 20% below 1990 levels by 2020.

Canada must commit to the target set by the IPCC for reduction targets of 25% to 40% from 1990 levels by 2020. In order to meet the lower 25% target Canada's emissions in 2020 would have to be 41% lower than they were in 2007.

Canada must start to take responsibility for its emissions and restore its reputation as an environmental leader by adopting the KyotoPlus targets as a minimum of what is required. The longer Canada puts off real action, the more difficult and expensive it will become to make the needed changes.

KyotoPlus Call for Action #2

Canada must implement an effective national plan to reach this target and help developing countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change.

Canada's Environment Minister Jim Prentice acknowledged in late October 2009 that Canada would not have domestic GHG regulations in place prior to the Copenhagen summit, as he had promised on several occasions earlier in the year. Minister Prentice has also hinted that the government is seriously considering a double-standard in GHG regulations, which would see only intensity targets for the oil and gas sector, i.e. reductions in emissions per unit of production, that are less stringent than hard caps on total emissions from all other sectors of the economy.

KAIROS believes that one of the cornerstones of climate justice is that the industrialized countries of the global North must make substantial, absolute GHG emission reductions in the immediate term. For Canada, an effective national plan must include various policy and regulatory initiatives, such as hard caps on industrial emissions, a carbon tax and other regulatory reforms that will spur energy efficiency (e.g. vehicle emission standards, building codes).

Regulatory reform must be coupled with targeted public investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and creating an infrastructure that will set us on the path to a carbon-free economy by 2050. Canada can achieve social justice aims and reduce its carbon footprint through strategic investments that take into account social and environmental goals at the same time, such as creating new social housing that integrates sustainable building practices and expanding public transit infrastructure into low-income communities without hiking fares for transit riders.

These measures would also put Canada on the path to building an environmentally sustainable green economy. Canada must make the shift from a carbon-based mode of production to the efficient use of low-carbon sources of energy. In doing so, it will create long-term meaningful jobs for Canadians.

The international components of Canada's climate change plan are equally important in taking responsibility for Canada's historical contribution to climate change and Canada's ability, as a country, to pay for the global solutions that are required.

To date, Canada has made very modest contributions to the UN-sponsored Climate Change Adaptation Fund. In October 2008, Canada committed \$100 million for climate change adaptation in the global South. Canada has also directed some of its Official Development Assistance (ODA) towards climate adaptation. Since Canada contributes 3.7% of total ODA from all industrial countries, it should contribute a similar proportion to the new UN Fund that is over and above its ODA contributions

Estimates of the amount of funding developing countries need for adapting to the impacts of climate change range from US\$61 billion per year according to the World Bank to US\$160 billion a year according to environmental groups. The European Union has estimated climate change financial costs for developing countries at US\$150 annually by 2020. European heads of state have agreed that US\$75 billion of that amount should come from public contributions, with other funds raised through sales of carbon emission permits.

Canada must contribute between 3-4% of the global financing for climate change adaptation, which will likely work out to \$2.2 to \$5.7 billion annually. The Canadian contribution should be over and above our contributions to ODA, which amounted to \$5 billion in 2008, and be raised without relying on carbon markets.

During the Bangkok preparatory discussions for the Copenhagen conference, Canada defended a market-based solution, saying it was a "false argument" to suggest that the public sector should be the main source of finance. Market-based solutions allow Northern countries to raise money by auctioning off or selling emission permits to companies who then invest in offset projects in the South. Canada should abandon this approach because, since its inception, the carbon market has proven to be ineffective in lowering carbon emissions and raises many equity issues with our partners in the Global South (see KAIROS Policy Briefing Paper No. 20 [Pricing Carbon: A Primer](#)).

The UNFCCC conference is the appropriate place to negotiate climate financing. Canada's contributions to adaptation in the developing world must be channeled through a UN-managed fund that is accountable to and comprised of both donor and recipient countries. The World Bank and other international financial institutions

lack transparency and accountability to the full UN membership and therefore are not appropriate vehicles for climate financing. Moreover, the World Bank funds fossil fuel extraction projects more extensively than renewable energy. Over the three fiscal years 2007 through 2009 the World Bank funded US\$6.6 billion worth of fossil fuel projects, while it spent only US\$5.4 billion on renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

KyotoPlus Call for Action #3

Canada must adopt a bold, strengthened second phase of the Kyoto Protocol at the pivotal United Nations climate conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, December 2009.

Recent international negotiations in the lead-up to Copenhagen, held this fall in Bangkok and Barcelona, revealed that some industrialized countries appear to be "plotting the death of the Kyoto Protocol." The Kyoto Protocol is important in order to preserve the core provisions and basic justice framework that such countries are trying to avoid, namely international oversight, science-based internationally agreed-upon targets, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility that is embedded in the Kyoto Protocol.

It is essential that the Kyoto Protocol form the basis of the post-2012 climate change agreement. Despite its over-reliance on carbon trading and international offsets through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the Kyoto Protocol contains three essential principles that must be carried forward into the second commitment period beyond 2012:

1. Developed countries (also known as Annex 1 countries), who have a much higher per-capita emissions and a historical responsibility for climate change, should be subject to binding absolute emission reductions in line with the scientific projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
2. Developing countries are to reduce their emissions below business-as-usual through new effective technology deployment and cooperation but are not subject to absolute targets.
3. The least developed countries (LDCs) are not responsible for reducing their emissions and should be the recipients of major assistance in adapting to the effects of climate change. The IPCC report has demonstrated that these poorest countries will be hardest hit by climate change

even though they have done little or nothing to create it.

A ‘blank slate’ approach to the post-2012 period, which does not build on the Kyoto Protocol, is clearly designed to take these principles off the table. Developing countries consider these provisions in the Kyoto Protocol to be essential. Losing them would push back the prospect of a global agreement even further. Therefore, it is essential that countries, like Canada, negotiate the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol in good faith.

Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In addition to the three policy demands of the KyotoPlus campaign, Indigenous Rights is another priority for KAIROS in the upcoming climate talks. Both the physical impacts of climate change, as well as the mechanisms being discussed for mitigation and adaptation, directly affect the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples around the world.

At the climate change talks in Poznan, Poland, last year, Canada – along with the United States, Australia and New Zealand – blocked the inclusion of any references to the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the final text on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) in developing countries. Over the past year, Australia has reversed its decision, and both the United States and New Zealand are reviewing their positions. Canada continues to actively oppose the Declaration as a human rights standard, including blocking reference to it in other international treaties such as the Copenhagen process.

The rights of Indigenous Peoples must be recognized and respected in any agreements reached under the UNFCCC, especially those concerning deforestation.

Carbon Markets

KAIROS’ Southern partners have expressed profound concerns over the priority the Kyoto Protocol gives to market mechanisms as a source of funding for both mitigation and adaptation efforts. Since the Protocol was signed, we have witnessed how corporations are increasingly influencing the positions of countries in the negotiations. Our Southern partners are demanding an end to tackling climate change with market-based solutions, such as carbon trading that turns the Earth’s carbon dioxide absorption capacity into a marketable commodity. These approaches, they say, are “false solutions.”

KAIROS’ Southern partners believe that it is impossible to have infinite growth on a finite planet. Instead they call for a different economic and social paradigm in which the Global North takes responsibility to change consumption patterns, fossil fuels are left in the ground, communities reassert control over resources, food production is localized, the rights of indigenous and forest peoples are respected and the Global North recognizes and makes reparations for the ecological debt that they owe to the peoples of the South. They believe that these are the real solutions that need to be globalized in order to reach an equitable and just transition to a zero-carbon future.

“The carbon market is simply the purchase of carbon absorption capacity and the consequent sale of emission rights of CO2... This new and flourishing market is not aimed at reducing the burning of fossil fuels – which are the main cause of global warming – but to the contrary, it will allow further consumption.”

Oilwatch International Declaration: Climate Change: The Challenge to Sustainable Development

KAIROS believes that public policy in Canada should recognize that treating the Earth’s carbon absorption capacity as a form of tradable private property allows fossil fuel extraction to continue and distracts from the urgent task of tackling unsustainable consumption patterns.

Conclusion

KAIROS will be providing updates on these issues throughout the Copenhagen talks and will measure the progress of the Canadian delegation based on the expectations outlined above. KAIROS has also produced Briefing Papers on issues related to the climate talks such as Carbon Capture and Storage and Pricing Carbon. To access these please go to:

<http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/publications/online-resources/>

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives unites eleven churches and religious institutions in work for social justice in Canada and around the globe.