

Post 2012 Climate Change communication Input from Aprodev

Brussels, 17 December 2008

As the world's largest economic bloc, the European Union has a vital role to play in the global effort to prevent catastrophic climate change. Therefore, the EU's commitments for a post-2012 policy on climate change are extremely important. Aprodev, a network 17 church-related development NGOs in Europe, have previously contributed to the civil society consultation on climate change. However, considering the developments at COP14 in Poznan, as well as the decisions by the European Council and the council of environment ministers in December, we hereby submit a further input as a contribution to your present work in drafting a communication of the Commission.

In this letter we hope to make clear why:

- a dramatic increase in ambition of the EU must take place to ensure that catastrophic climate change impacts do not become a likelihood;
- this must include commitments to significant domestic cuts in emissions; commitments to significant support (finance, capacity building and technology transfer) for reduced emissions in developing countries; and commitments to support adaptation measures in developing countries;
- such commitments should be grounded in principles of equity, based on historical responsibilities for emissions and on capacity defined in terms of ability to pay, with the objective of not violating poor people's right to development; and why
- the forthcoming Communication on climate change must urgently make clear commitments and concrete proposals regarding the topics mentioned above.

People in developing countries are already suffering considerable impacts from climate change. The IPCC attributes this to manmade greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. For the poorest and most vulnerable people dangerous climate change is already a reality. Clearly, in this case the UNFCCC – and the EU which often drives the ambition of the UNFCCC – must limit anthropogenic interference in the climate to the lowest possible level. Since such dangerous impacts are already unavoidable, the EU and other Annex 1 countries must commit significant support to adaptation in developing countries, focussing particularly on the poorest and most vulnerable countries and people.

Keeping global warming well below 2°C is therefore a vital and important goal for the climate negotiations. The actual target discussed to reduce global emissions by 50% in 2050 is, however, not enough to limit warming to 2 degrees. According to IPCC, 50 % global emission reduction, which stabilises GHGs at 450 ppm, will only give a 50 % chance of keeping temperature rise below 2°C. Science produced after the IPCC report was published, confirms that such a goal is too conservative. In this context, we should also like to refer to the recent report of the Stockholm Environment Institute, co-authored by Anders Wijkman, MEP. The new data create additional challenges for all countries, especially for developed countries. The EU should take this into account and must raise its ambition to a far more precautionary level.

Aprodev recommends that the EU seeks an emissions path that peaks before 2015 and declines rapidly to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Such a path implies that the EU must commit to an urgent and rapid decarbonisation of its economy, to the order of a 40% cut on 1990 levels by 2020 and at least an 80% cut – but preferably more like 95% - by 2050.

According to the most current scientific assessments (e.g. Potsdam Institute, Germany), it will even be difficult to achieve the EU's 20% GHG reduction target by 2020 by using the tools of the climate & energy package only. A 30% cut seems way out of reach and we are afraid that this means that the EU position can no longer be described as "ambitious". Scientific calculations show that, if all Annex 1 countries were to follow the EU targets, the global average temperature would most likely rise with 3 degrees.

Keeping global warming below 2°C necessitates emission reductions in developed as well as in developing countries. According to the UNFCCC principles of "responsibility" and "capability", and based on the "Bali Action Plan", developed countries are obliged to support developing countries through measurable, verifiable and reportable actions in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions. In order to achieve such a global path, emissions will have to come down in a number of countries that do not have significant historical emissions but do have a heavy burden of poverty that needs to be overcome. Emissions reductions or avoided emissions will only be realised in such countries if industrialised countries like the EU Member States commit to support such actions in addition to their domestic emissions cuts. Only such additional support can unlock the deviation from

business as usual emissions in developing countries required by this global path without the injustice of shifting its burden onto the backs of those who are poor and are least able to pay.

Aprodev is not satisfied with the discussions and the decision with regard to the EU Climate and Energy package. The EU has lost a great opportunity to show leadership in climate protection. The delay in the full auctioning of emission certificates will make the transformation into a low-carbon economy more difficult. The large possibilities for EU members to meet their emission reduction obligations through buying of carbon credits from developing countries are not in compliance with the 25-40% reductions ranges that are proposed in the IPCC report and are mentioned in the Bali Action Plan. We urge the EU and its members to re-consider this decision.

Limiting climate change is required in order to reduce the impacts on global society. While industrialised countries, like the Member States of the EU, have the resources and the resilience to bear the short term costs of cutting carbon emissions and the costs associated with the impacts of climate change, this is not the case in many poor countries. Therefore, a long term climate goal only makes sense if it is placed in the context of actions that explicitly safeguard the right to sustainable economic, cultural and social development for the poorest and most vulnerable people – those who have contributed least to the problem we now face. The transition must be a fair and equitable one. A shared vision must include substantial financial, technical and capacity support for developing countries to ensure that they can both decarbonise their economies (mitigation) and cope with the impacts of climate change (adaptation) without significant additional costs that would undermine their development aspirations.

Aprodev believes that – in accordance with the UNFCCC statement that dealing with climate change calls on all countries to cooperate based on ‘common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities’ – all countries should be asked to take action on climate change that is commensurate with:

- their responsibility for climate change – based on the quantity of historical emissions they are responsible for; and
- their capacity to act – based on economic wealth;

We appreciated that the EU, in its interventions in Poznan, mentioned equity in conjunctions with responsibility and capacity. We are now looking forward to getting more clarity on how the EU envisages these concepts, and what implications they will have for policies related to the building blocks of the UNFCCC negotiations.

We have noted that the EU increasingly talks about equity, e.g. in the submission on adaptation and discussions regarding finance. We are interested to know more about how the EU is interpreting equity in this context. We strongly call for an equity concept that respects the development needs of the people. The Greenhouse Development Rights (GDR) framework, developed by EcoEquity, the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Heinrich Böll Foundation, with the support of Aprodev

member Christian Aid, gives an indication of how emission reduction efforts could be shared out globally on an equity basis. GDR is a way of making the concept of “equity” real. The concept defines a development threshold for each citizen. Below this line people cannot be obliged to finance climate protection activities. Special attention needs to be paid to people who live not only below the poverty line, but without financial capacity to benefit from development and progress, as described by the GDR framework. The right to development is closely linked with human rights and the rights of people and individuals.

We also note that the concept of historical emissions is widely accepted as a proxy for responsibility within the climate negotiations, and not unreasonably so. Industrialised countries have enjoyed the benefits of years of unfettered emission rights and delivered their development with the benefit of fossil fuel derived energy. Now that the carrying capacity of the Earth’s atmosphere is all but exhausted, industrialised countries must acknowledge the reduced scope for development that developing countries will face and should adequately compensate those countries for this. Any attempt to define responsibility solely in terms of current emission levels is likely to meet with considerable and justified opposition.

In Poznan we have also noted that the EU is disposed to consider finance possibilities as described in the Norwegian and the Mexican proposals. We appreciate this and we encourage the Commission to take a clearer stance on providing financial means so that negotiations can proceed with increased strength.

We are encouraged to note that the EU submission on technology includes some openings regarding scaling up of public funding for technology transfer, as well as for an institutional framework also proposed by the G77 plus China. However, we also note that there are no concrete proposals from EU so far. We call for further clarity and an ambitious position of the EU on creating the financial and institutional frames for efficient transfer of technology, including research, development, deployment, diffusion of technologies, as well as capacity building, related to both adaptation and mitigation. Special attention should be paid to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which struggle to attract foreign investment and capital. Therefore, solutions based on public finance should be developed in their case.

We also call on the EU to engage more actively in the IPR debate. It is obvious that IPR influence both development and diffusion of new technologies. Where IPR is identified as a barrier, initiatives need to be taken to facilitate further development and transfer of technology. The EU should engage constructively in a dialogue with the G77 on how to develop viable solutions.

The EU is a powerful body with the capacity to make a real difference in relation to the climate change negotiations. One of the biggest obstacles in the UNFCCC process is lack of trust. We encourage the EU to take on a leadership role and provide a good example in these talks. This can only be achieved by precise actions and clear statements stressing the need for an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen, which makes limiting temperature increase to a maximum 2 degrees

realistic. We therefore call on the Commission to ensure that its Communication in January is ambitious and reflects the need for equity, including precise steps, and that it offers a fair deal for developing countries regarding mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and finance, especially for LDCs and for the most vulnerable people.