



Fact sheet: 10 frequently asked questions about the Copenhagen deal

1) Why is reaching agreement in Copenhagen important?

Mankind has already added enough greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to raise temperatures to a dangerous level, and this is already leading to increased incidences of drought, heatwaves and heavy storms. The purpose of an ambitious and effective international climate change deal is to avoid catastrophic climate change and to help the most vulnerable countries adapt. The world has only a very narrow window of opportunity to undertake a first dramatic shift towards a low-carbon society and to prevent the worst scenarios of scientists from coming true. The UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen this year will be the moment in history in which humanity has the opportunity to rise to the challenge.

2) Why is it so important that a deal be clinched this year?

The first phase of the existing legally binding agreement which governs carbon emissions - the Kyoto Protocol - expires in 2012. In order to take mankind into a sustainable and equitable future, an ambitious new deal needs to be agreed this year so that national governments have time to prepare for implementation beyond 2012, to follow on the first phase. Also see http://unfccc.int/files/press/backgrounders/application/pdf/fact_sheet_the_kyoto_protocol.pdf.

3) What has to happen at COP15 so that it can be termed a success?

The Copenhagen agreed outcome need not resolve all details, but it must provide clarity on four key issues: The first is clarity on the mid-term emission reduction targets that industrialised countries will commit to. Second, there must be clarity on the actions that developing countries could undertake to limit their greenhouse gas emissions. Third, it must define stable and predictable financing to help the developing world reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the inevitable effects of climate. And finally, it must identify institutions that will allow technology and finance to be deployed in a way that treats the developing countries as equal partners in the decision-making process.

Copenhagen is to result both in a post-2012 outcome as well as important decisions and start-up finance to immediately kick-start action on climate change in 2010.

4) Why is it appropriate to speak of the need to ‘seal the deal’ at Copenhagen?

Once the main political issues are dealt with, and, if need be, the deadline by which the legal agreement must be decided, the question about the legal form of a Copenhagen agreed outcome can be addressed. There are several proposals on the table. These include a) an amended Kyoto Protocol, b) a new protocol and c) a set of individual decisions on how to tackle climate change



immediately and post 2012.. The outcome can also be a combination of these options. Because the legal form of the agreed outcome is not yet clear, it is appropriate to speak of a “deal”.

5) How can Copenhagen improve on the Kyoto agreement?

The Kyoto Protocol was designed as a first small step in the fight against climate change. Copenhagen must be the ambitious and effective political response to what scientists are now saying is required. The Kyoto Protocol places a heavier burden on developed nations than on developing countries as it recognizes that developed countries are principally responsible for the current high levels of greenhouse gas emissions - and this principal will also apply to the Copenhagen outcome. The main difference is that the mid-term emission reduction targets that developed countries agree to must be in line with what the scientific community has set out as a beacon, so in the range of minus 25 and minus 40 percent over 1990 levels by 2020. And developing countries must engage in such a way that world-wide emissions decline by at least 50% by 2050.

6) Are developing countries expected to agree to emissions caps in Copenhagen?

No, industrialised countries are not asking major developing countries to accept binding mid-term emission reduction targets, or “caps”. The international community, in drawing up the broad parameters for a climate change deal in Bali two years ago, acknowledged that industrialised countries must accept binding emission reduction targets. Developing countries are asked to detail their actions to limit the growth of their emissions in line with their sustainable development needs. These actions would need to be supported through finance and technology from developed countries.

7) What is a main concern of developed and developing countries?

Whilst developing countries are clearly willing to make a contribution to mitigation efforts, one of their main concerns is that they will be forced into a deal which will harm their ability to grow economically and their aims to combat poverty. On the other hand, the Copenhagen agreed outcome must also address the concerns of industrialized countries which fear that they may have to subsidize competition in the developing world by being obliged to reduce their own emissions whilst developing countries are not legally bound to do so. So a key challenge of Copenhagen will be to ensure that the deal is equitable for the all.

8) Which is the role of the developing countries in the negotiations for a new agreement?

Developing countries are key to reaching agreement in Copenhagen. According to the IEA, global energy demand will grow 55% by 2030. In the period up to 2030, the energy supply infrastructure worldwide will require a total investment of USD 26 trillion, with about half of that in developing countries. Even if the group of industrialised countries stopped emitting greenhouse gases today, the emissions rise in developing countries would make it impossible to stay under a two degrees



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temperature rise under a business as usual scenario. At the same time, developing countries are the most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate change and will need significant funding in order to adapt.

9) What are the forecasted costs/funds needed to avoid the worst effects of climate change? Who should pay?

The precise amount of money that will be required over the coming decades to help developing countries adapt to the inevitable and reduce emissions is a moving target. A ballpark figure could be on the order of USD 250 billion in 2020. But starting to raise immediate finance is more important than determining its exact future size. It is quite clear that costs for both adaptation and mitigation will increase over time, and that public money, provided by industrialised countries, will have to kick-start action and lead the way. The essential issue is that mechanisms are put in place which allow public and private sector finance to be significantly scaled up over time so that funding for climate action in the developing world does not have to be renegotiated every year.

10) Is the current global recession likely to threaten a new global agreement on climate change?

Many pundits have been warning that the current economic woes could throw efforts to combat climate change off track. But even the financial and economic crisis is being used by countries such as China and the US as an opportunity to change direction and to shift towards the greening of their economies. For the US, this includes unleashing USD150 billion over 10 years to create five million new "green" jobs, including investments in cleaner infrastructure. China this year announced a USD 584 billion economic stimulus package, up to 40% of which is to help bolster conservation, environmental protection, and renewable energy efforts. All this has injected energy into the negotiating process.