



WWF-UK

Registered office
Panda House, Weyside Park
Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1XR

Tel: +44 (0)1483 426444
Fax: +44 (0)1483 426409
info@wwf.org.uk
wwf.org.uk

PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

UN Climate Negotiations, Durban, South Africa

17 November 2011

Summary and recommendations

- **The international climate negotiations of COP17 in Durban, South Africa, run from 28 November to 8 December 2011. Observers do not expect Durban to deliver a global climate change treaty, but the conference must deliver a ‘balanced package’ that lays the foundations for a future legally binding deal. This requires political will, trust, and international leadership.**
- **The major challenges at Durban are to secure the future of the Kyoto Protocol and give certainty on the legal form of a future climate treaty that includes both developed and developing countries, respecting the principle of equity.**
- **A comprehensive global treaty should be agreed by 2015, but in the meantime countries must establish low-carbon development strategies, reduce emissions and help developing countries adapt to climate change. The UK Climate Change Act is leading example of domestic action and a model for others to follow.**
- **In particular, by way of playing a leadership role in the Durban negotiations, the UK Government should:**
 - **commit to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, and work to secure a mandate for a legally binding instrument in protocol form by 2015**
 - **promote agreement on innovative sources of finance to capitalize the Green Climate Fund, including shipping and aviation ‘bunker fuels’**
 - **support ways to close the ‘Gigatonne Gap’ between the current low level of global ambition and the level of action needed to keep global average temperature increases to no more than 1.5°C**
 - **insist on global common accounting rules so that the non-KP developed countries fulfil their agreed obligation to comparability of effort.**

Background

Nearly 20 years ago, at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, governments acted in acknowledgement of the overwhelming scientific case for anthropogenic climate change made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Discussions in Rio spurred the creation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a multilateral treaty that entered into force in 1994 and has now been ratified by 195 Parties. This treaty places an obligation on developed countries to stabilise their greenhouse gas emissions, and to provide capacity building, technological and financial support for developing countries to develop



President: His Royal Highness,
The Prince of Wales KG, KT, GCB, OM
Chair: Ed Smith
Chief Executive: David Nussbaum

WWF-UK a charity registered in England and Wales number 1081247 and in
Scotland number SC039593, a company limited by guarantee registered in
England number 4016725. VAT number 733 761821
100% recycled paper

sustainably and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. It lays down certain fundamental principles such as ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ which recognizes developed countries’ responsibility for CO₂ emissions, and the need for developing nations to cooperate in addressing this planetary challenge.

In 1997, this regime was strengthened by the Kyoto Protocol, which set an emission reduction target for each developed country, to be achieved in a series of commitment periods, the first running from 2008-2012. Since 2006, negotiations to enhance the implementation of the UNFCCC have continued under two tracks – one on the post-2012 (second) commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, and one on enhancing cooperative action under the UNFCCC. In practical terms, the Kyoto Protocol track seeks to define the targets and modalities for developed countries for the post-2012 phase, while the Convention track negotiations seek to formalize developing countries’ emissions reduction actions, and make provision for adaptation, technology transfer, and finance. Negotiations have advanced across five building blocks: mitigation, adaptation, technology, finance, and ‘shared vision’.

Recent history

Negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009 failed to reach a comprehensive multilateral agreement despite the presence of more than 100 Heads of State and Government, and the non-legally-binding ‘Copenhagen Accord’ was merely ‘noted’. In an atmosphere of bitter acrimony, the questions of whether and how the countries of the world would come together to address climate change were left essentially unanswered. This unsatisfactory outcome was compounded by the failure by Parties in Copenhagen to agree a forward work plan under the UNFCCC, breeding uncertainty and a loss of trust in the multilateral process. COP16 in Cancún did much to rebuild trust, making good progress on technical issues and establishing crucial architectural elements necessary to achieve the objectives of the Convention, such as the Green Climate Fund. Yet Cancún ducked the hard questions, and it falls to Durban to face up to the major political challenges of the UNFCCC.

COP17 in Durban

COP17 in Durban will be a tipping point in the UN negotiation process on climate change. Government leaders can either build on the progress achieved at COP16 in Cancún and act to prevent runaway climate change, or they can allow short-term national interests to continue us on a path towards a 3° - 4°C warming world. The path our leaders choose will be critical and they need to be reminded that they will be making these choices while on African soil – a continent particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Durban is the last real opportunity for countries to provide certainty on a future climate regime. The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012. The world’s citizens, businesses, developing countries, and media are waiting for a clear signal about what countries will do in a second commitment period that will help save the planet and its people.

The agenda for Durban is very full. The biggest, most politically pressing issues are:

- legal form and the future of the Kyoto Protocol
- sources of climate finance, including aviation and shipping ‘bunker fuels’
- shared vision and closing the ‘Gigatonne Gap’
- common accounting rules (‘MRV’)

Legal form

The Kyoto Protocol (KP) is currently the only binding international commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, providing a clear framework for industrialized country action. As such it is critical – yet the first commitment period expires in one year, and there is no agreement on a second period. There is no time – or need – to renegotiate the fundamentals of its architecture. WWF expects all developed countries in the KP to agree to a second commitment period and inscribe their new emissions reduction commitments for 2013-17 within the KP framework. It is equally clear that the Convention track needs to deliver on the promise of the Bali Road Map and agree on a firm time-bound mandate in Durban for a comprehensive, if differentiated, legally binding agreement (treaty) which will come into force well before 2020. All developed non-KP parties (including the USA) should inscribe their comparable emissions reduction commitments in a Durban COP agreement. All developing

country parties should also inscribe their voluntary commitments on the basis of the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

What the UK should do: support ratification of a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and work to secure a mandate for a comprehensive legally-binding instrument by 2015, including a timetable for negotiations; with the EU, commit to a second commitment period for 2013-17; encourage other KP Parties to commit, including Japan, Russia and Canada who have publicly resisted a continuation of KP; work with developing countries to address concerns about equity in a future legally binding agreement.

Sources of climate finance

One of the successes of Cancún was the creation of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), intended to ensure sufficient financing of actions to reduce emissions and help developing countries to prepare for and adapt to climate impacts. Yet the GCF will be an empty vessel until short- and long-term finance sources are agreed. Parties must commission the Board and Secretariat of the GCF to start work immediately, and capitalize the fund so that the first flows of funding arrive in 2012. Capitalization should include time-bound commitments to financing for the 2013-15 period, scaling up rapidly from fast start funding levels to at least the existing commitment of \$100 billion/year by 2020. This will be met from predominately public funding, mostly through developed country government budget contributions in the short term.

Parties must also decide on new and innovative long-term sources of climate finance. Promising sources include carbon pricing measures to address emissions from shipping and aviation, financial transaction taxes (FTTs), special drawing rights, and auctioning of emissions allowances. COP17 must deliver a structured, time-bound and focused work program under UNFCCC to prioritise and mobilise a range of innovative sources, building on the positive signals from the UN Advisory Group on Finance, the IMF and the G20.

What the UK should do: push for agreement on the operations of the Green Climate Fund; make progress on innovative sources of climate finance, including raising climate finance from the aviation and shipping sectors and through Financial Transaction Taxes (FTTs).

Aviation and shipping 'bunker fuels'

WWF considers financing from aviation and shipping mechanisms as particularly promising sources of climate finance. Aviation and shipping are responsible for 6% of global emissions, expected to double or triple by 2050, yet agreements on how to tackle these non-national emissions have proved hard to reach since their mention in the KP in 1997.

In 2011 the International Maritime Organization (IMO) brought forward proposals to simultaneously reduce shipping emissions and generate long-term finance flows for the GCF with a rebate mechanism to ensure 'no net incidence' on developing economies. Industry, the G20 and WWF support this progress. In Durban, Parties should urge the IMO to act, and give guidance on the design and implementation of measures for a global levy on shipping bunker fuels.

Aviation is one of the fastest-growing sources of GHG emissions (3-4% per year), and aviation bunker fuels have great potential as a source of climate finance. WWF would like to see a speedier, time-bound process to reach a robust global solution to address these emissions, including the principle of 'no net incidence'. The EU Emissions Trading Scheme is a first step in this direction. WWF believes ETS revenues should be earmarked for climate mitigation and adaptation, and in particular for actions in developing countries. In Durban, parties should send a strong political signal to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) that it must urgently address emissions in a way that generates climate finance.

What the UK can do: heed the firm recommendation of the UK Climate Change Committee and endorse a global levy or other carbon tax on shipping bunker fuels through the IMO, which will help to drive down emissions; continue to push for a global agreement to include aviation and shipping emissions; uphold and defend aviation in the ETS as an important first step towards achieving a global agreement. The UK Treasury should also commit, alongside other European countries, to deliver a substantial proportion of ETS revenues for climate protection.

Shared vision and closing the ‘Gigatonne Gap’

The world is not on course to keep warming below 2°C. A United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report last year found that current emissions pledges fall far short of a carbon budget consistent with a ‘likely’ chance of limiting warming to ‘below 2°C’, let alone the lower and less dangerous limit of 1.5°C that over 100 Parties are calling for. This gap is equivalent to 5-9 gigatonnes of CO₂ by 2020. Durban presents opportunities to close loopholes that would help to reduce the ‘gigatonne gap’, such as ensuring land use and forestry accounting in developed countries properly accounts for absolute atmospheric emissions, promotes domestic action rather than offsetting, and removes ‘hot air’ emissions lower than targets, mainly in the former Communist countries whose economies (and emissions) collapsed after the agreed 1990 base year.

Durban must lay the foundations for ambition to match the best available science, and produce a shared vision to achieve the UNFCCC’s objectives of stabilizing GHG concentrations and preventing dangerous climate change. This vision should include global mitigation goals for an absolute target and a peak year for emissions. In line with the best science, WWF advocates a peak in global emissions by 2015, and a global 2050 emissions reduction goal of at least 80% below 1990 levels. Over the next three years, the IPCC 5th Assessment Report and the 2013-2015 science review agreed in Cancún will provide vital analysis, so Durban should agree a periodic review of emission goals in light of new scientific evidence. These reports should provide the factual basis for negotiating new targets for the 2018-2022 commitment period.

What the UK can do: support and advocate positions that close loopholes and reduce the gigatonne gap; continue to advocate a stronger EU target of at least 30% CO₂ reduction by 2020.

Common accounting rules, review and compliance

Common standards of accounting – for carbon and climate finance – are essential to trust and integrity in UNFCCC, but guidelines on Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) have proved contentious. COP17 must adopt common accounting rules for developed country emissions targets, and settle the accounting issues related to land use, carbon markets, carry-over of ‘hot air’, and inclusion of new gases. These guidelines must account for absolute changes in emissions and close loopholes that take emissions off the balance sheet. This should be matched by progress on common accounting for developing countries in the Convention track, so that the efforts of the USA and other non-KP countries can be compared to those of KP Parties in an international rules-based system with integrity and transparency at its core.

Durban must define in detail the elements of climate finance in order to develop a robust global reporting and accounting system. The respective reporting and review processes (ICA and IAR) need to be confirmed in time for the 1.5°C science review. In particular, Parties must empower expert technical panels by 2013 to evaluate compliance, adjust inventory data, assess support, and provide much-needed capacity building for developing countries.

What the UK can do: insist that non-KP developed countries fulfil their agreed obligation to comparability of effort through accounting based on the KP rules.

Conclusion

As one of the more progressive developed country Parties within the UNFCCC process, a key global economy and Member State of the EU, the UK Government can play a crucial at Durban. The UK must push for an ambitious but balanced package that includes a second commitment period under KP and a mandate for a global deal by 2015. COP17 can provide certainty on a future climate regime that gives us the best chance of a safer, fairer future. Africa and the world will be watching.

Contact	Tom Viita, Public Affairs Officer
Email/Tel	tviiita@wwf.org.uk 01483 412 372 / 07824 821 175
Date	17 November 2011

1961-2011: 50 years of conservation. WWF works in over a hundred countries to protect the natural world, tackle climate change and promote sustainable consumption.

For more briefings: [http://wwf.org.uk/what we do/working with government and parliament/parliamentary briefings/](http://wwf.org.uk/what-we-do/working-with-government-and-parliament/parliamentary-briefings/)