

The Copenhagen Conference ended on 18 December with the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties 'taking note' of the *Copenhagen Accord*; a document that had been produced following intense negotiations between the United States, China, India, Brazil and South Africa. There were enormous expectations for Copenhagen. The meeting was described as the most important gathering since the Second World War. In Australia the outcome from Copenhagen has been established as the criteria for deciding the Government's 2020 emissions reduction target. In the first edition of the *Kinesis Climate Monitor* for 2010 we examine the outcomes of Copenhagen, the international reaction to the final *Accord* and some of the issues that remain unresolved.

ASSESSING THE OUTCOME

In the previous edition of the *Climate Monitor*, Kinesis identified six areas for measuring the success of the Copenhagen Conference. With the release of the *Accord* it is now possible to examine the outcome against the identified criteria.

1. Recognition of what we need to achieve

The *Accord* notes the importance of the 2°C target but does not spell out the actions that will achieve it other than stating that 'deep cuts in global emissions are required'.

2. Legally binding commitments from developed nations

Developed nations committed to implementing, either individually or jointly, quantified economy-wide emissions targets for 2020. There is no recognition of how large these targets need to be, what form these targets will take or which base year each nation should adopt. Nations have until 31 January to submit their 2020 target.

COPENHAGEN PLUS OR MINUS?

3. Commitments by major developing nations

Developing nations also agreed to submit a list of mitigation actions they will implement. There is no recognition of the form these mitigation actions will take. However, there was an agreement reached that developing nation's actions would be subject to 'domestic measurement, reporting and verification the result of which will be reported through their national communications every two years'.

4. Adequate finance

Developed nations committed to providing \$30 billion in funding between 2010 and 2012 with a balanced allocation between mitigation and adaptation. This funding will be scaled up to \$100 billion by 2020. It is unclear how this money will be raised and how the spending will be administered. However, nations did agree to establish an action based *Copenhagen Green Fund*.

5. Forest protection

The *Accord* failed to achieve a breakthrough on forest protection beyond highlighting the 'crucial role' of protecting forests and reducing emissions from deforestation and recognising 'the need to provide positive incentives to such actions through the immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD-plus'. There are no clear proposals or timetables for the implementation of these incentives.

6. Adaptation measures

The *Accord* recognises the challenge faced by all countries in adapting to climate change and states that enhanced action and international cooperation on adaptation is urgently required. Developed nations agreed to 'provide adequate, predictable and sustainable

financial resources, technology and capacity-building to support the implementation of adaptation action in developing countries'. The mechanism by which this support will be implemented is unclear and it appears that adaptation financing will be made primarily through the \$100 billion in funding that is identified in the *Accord*.

When comparing the contents of the *Copenhagen Accord* to the criteria for success set out in our past *Climate Monitor*, the final outcome has clearly fallen well short. However, the *Accord* cannot be judged until the details are provided by those states that are party to it. After all, it is currently three pages of text that over the coming months will be populated by commitments and numbers.

Countries are required to submit their emissions reduction targets or list of mitigation actions by 31 January. It is unclear what targets will be submitted on this date. Countries like Australia, Japan and the EU, which had announced that their final 2020 targets would be based on the outcome at Copenhagen, now need to determine what targets they will submit. The level of ambition achieved by the *Accord* will not be known until these final targets are submitted.

Further ahead, it is likely that negotiations and amendments will continue after January 31. The G20 meetings in Canada and South Korea and the next UNFCCC meeting in Mexico City will be important events that will determine what the ultimate outcome of Copenhagen will be.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To read the full text of the *Copenhagen Accord* see http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_15/application/pdf/cop15_cph_auv.pdf

NEGATIVE REACTION

Copenhagen resulted in a political statement, not a legally binding treaty. Whether a legally binding treaty was ever possible at Copenhagen, the purpose of the meeting, as dictated by the *Bali Roadmap*, was to negotiate a legally binding treaty to come into effect after the *Kyoto Protocol* ends in 2012. Not only was this not achieved, but as *The Independent's* editorial on 20 December 2009 makes clear; the *Accord* does not include any timetable to negotiate and sign a legally binding document by the end of the year. Further, the *Accord* leaves unanswered questions about the status of the *Kyoto Protocol* after 2012.

The *Accord* does not include any quantified emissions reduction commitments. Nations have until 31 January to submit their 2020 reduction targets or mitigation actions. Until this time the *Accord* lacks any concrete targets. The European commission's president, José Manuel Barroso, was blocked in his attempt to include long-term targets for reducing global emissions by 50% by 2050. According to *The Independent's* editorial the US wanted to include its own target for reducing emissions by 80% by 2050 but this was blocked by China which refused to include any targets in the *Accord*.

The UNFCCC process may no longer be viable.

The Guardian's editorial on 20 December 2009 stated that much of the failure at Copenhagen was due to a failure of process, rather than ambition and that the negotiations were marked by a chaotic process and failure to achieve consensus between the 192 countries that make up the UNFCCC. Andrew Light, from the *Centre for American Progress*, argues that the outcome of the Conference shows that the UNFCCC process may no longer be viable. Light states that as negotiations move forward to turn the *Accord* into a legally binding agreement, nations should explore the possibility that multilateral emissions reductions can be achieved in smaller arenas like the G20 or the Major Economies Forum. He says the 'world does not need 192 nations to come to an agreement on mitigating carbon emissions in order to get the job done. We only need those countries responsible for 85% of emissions to move forward on the pathways identified by the IPCC with a promise to the world to do so in a responsible manner'.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

± **Andrew Light's article** is available at: <http://climateprogress.org/2009/12/19/obama-hits-the-reset-button-on-the-foundations-of-international-climate-agreements>

± The editorial from the *The Independent* can be found at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/leading-articles/leading-article-copenhagen-our-lost-chance-1845710.html>

POSITIVE REACTION

World Leaders are engaged. Copenhagen brought together over 50 heads of state for direct negotiations, moving the issue beyond environment and industry ministers.

For the first time the world's two largest emitters have signed up to a commitment to reduce emissions. Lord Nicholas Stern has said that the inclusion of China and the US within the *Accord* represents an 'important breakthrough'.

Developing nations have committed to reducing emissions. David King has argued that one of the most important aspects of the *Accord* is the emergence of developing nations as crucial participants in climate change negotiations. The *Accord* was the result of negotiations between the US and China as well as India, South Africa and Brazil. The result of this is that the biggest polluters from both the developed and developing world have, for the first time, committed to a single document calling for reductions in emissions and limiting global warming to 2°C. Robert Stavins from Harvard University has written that the inclusion of these nations addresses the primary deficiency of the *Kyoto Protocol*.

The developed world has committed to providing significant funding to the developing world.

As the *Guardian's* editorial states, Copenhagen resulted in 'the first formal financial commitment by richer nations to help poorer ones adapt to the threat of climate change'. The target of \$100 billion in funding by 2020 represents a significant commitment. The *Accord* also includes a formal means of administering this finance, through the *Copenhagen Green Fund*.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

± **Lord Nicholas Stern's** editorial is available at:

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/mediareleases/Media%20Releases%202009/mr19Dec09Copenhagen.aspx>

± Analysis from **David King** can be found here:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/david-king-there-is-a-way-ahead-after-copenhagen-1845709.html>

± **Robert Stavins** article is available at:

<http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/analysis/stavins/?p=464>

± Editorial from *The Guardian* can be found at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/dec/20/leader-copenhagen-accord>

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