

PRESS RELEASE

Joint Statement from the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, the United Nations Environment Program, Ecofys, Climate Analytics, the Sustainability Institute, the European Climate Foundation and ClimateWorks

Copenhagen must deliver emissions cuts beyond the high-end of current proposals or risk missing the opportunity for a reasonable chance of keeping below 2°C

Recent independent analyses of current mitigation proposals on the table in Copenhagen by Nicholas Stern, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), Ecofys, Climate Analytics, the Sustainability Institute (C-ROADS), the European Climate Foundation and ClimateWorks (Project Catalyst), all point to the same conclusion: the negotiations must deliver the high-end of current proposals and stretch beyond them, if the world is to have a reasonable chance of containing warming to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, or the 1.5°C goal of many developing nations.

Copenhagen, 9 December 2009 – There is a narrow window of opportunity to have the possibility of achieving the global political and scientific consensus of avoiding global warming of more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels, or the 1.5°C goal of 100 developing nations. The concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is increasing everyday and, without significant reductions in emissions, will soon reach levels at which the consequent changes in the Earth's climate will have very serious and potentially disastrous and irreversible, impacts.

Research papers and analysis released in the past few days by several of the leading independent authorities on the question have looked at the impact of the current proposals made by countries at the Copenhagen Climate Summit. While there are differences in the details of the findings, the overall messages from these studies are clear:

1. To have a reasonable chance of limiting global warming to 2°C, or lower, action at the high-end of current proposals and beyond will be required. This means that *the global deal needs a clear commitment to go significantly above the most ambitious targets currently under discussion*, and hence stretch above those in the next 8 days of negotiations.
2. Such an agreement is possible; the levels of reduction required are both technically and economically feasible – what is required is the political will and leadership to lock-in these commitments in Copenhagen.

3. Achieving the high-end of the proposed reduction range and beyond, will also require strong financial and technology support for developing countries.
4. If achieved, such an agreement would be an historic step forward and keep hope alive that the world can contain long-term global warming to below 2°C or 1.5°C. If anything less than the high-end of current proposals plus significant additional reductions is achieved, then climate risks will be higher and it may not be possible to catch-up later – we may miss the window of opportunity.
5. Copenhagen is only the beginning of a journey – even if the high-end of current proposals plus additional reductions are locked-in, more work will be required. Each of the studies show that a gap in mitigation may remain after Copenhagen against 2020 requirements. It is thus essential that a Copenhagen agreement also include a “review and strengthen” clause where countries review progress against the latest scientific evidence and continue to adjust their commitments accordingly; the first such review should end no later than 2015 and draw upon the next assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, due for conclusion in 2014.

“A deal that puts us on the path to having a good chance of avoiding warming of 2°C, is possible – but the proposals on the table are not quite there . We need to capture the high-end of those proposals and more in Copenhagen, and then continue to ratchet-up commitments over time. We have an historic opportunity in Copenhagen to increase climate security and economic security for the world for generations to come.”

This statement is supported by and may be attributed to:

- Nicholas Stern, Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment
- Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Bill Hare, Director, Climate Analytics
- Niklas Höhne, Director Energy and Climate Policy, Ecofys
- Bas de Leeuw, Executive Director, Sustainability Institute, C-ROADS
- Andreas Merkl, Director of Global Initiatives at ClimateWorks and Project Catalyst leader
- Jules Kortenhorst, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and Project Catalyst core team member

Stern / UNEP Report:

<http://www.unep.org/pdf/climatechange/ActionAndAmbitionForGlobalDealInCopenhagen.pdf>

PIK / Climate Analytics / Ecofys Report: <http://www.climateactiontracker.org/>

The Ecofys/Climate Analytics/PIK analysis is based on the Climate Action Tracker using country studies (Ecofys), quantitative assessment (Climate Analytics) and the PIK-PRIMAP model and data (<http://www.primap.org/>)

Sustainability Institute / C-ROADS: www.climatescoreboard.org

ECF / CW / Project Catalyst: http://www.project-catalyst.info/images/publications/taking_stock.pdf

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