

# A Copenhagen Agreement

The upcoming UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen presents an historic opportunity to strengthen the international response to global climate change. The aim in Copenhagen should be agreement on the fundamentals of a new multilateral framework ensuring that all major economies contribute equitably to the global climate effort. This interim agreement should establish the basic legal and institutional architecture of a post-2012 framework within which governments can then negotiate a final agreement containing specific national commitments.

The Copenhagen agreement should:

- Set an **ambitious level of effort**, including: a global goal of reducing emissions at least 50 percent by 2050; an aggregate target or range for developed country reductions in 2020; and a peaking year for developing country emissions;
- Outline a legal **framework for verifiable mitigation commitments by all major economies**, to include absolute economy-wide emission reduction targets for developed countries and policy-based commitments for developing countries;
- Determine the nature and level of new **mitigation and adaptation support for developing countries**;
- Establish basic terms for the **measurement, reporting and verification** of countries' actions and support; and
- Set a clear **mandate to conclude negotiations** on a final agreement by a date certain.

## The Ultimate Goal: A Ratifiable Treaty

Negotiations are proceeding on parallel tracks under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which includes the United States, and under the UNFCCC's Kyoto Protocol, which does not include the United States. The ultimate outcome could take many forms; the best would be a single comprehensive agreement under the UNFCCC.

Whatever its particular form, it is important that this final outcome be legally binding. Countries will deliver their strongest possible efforts only if they are confident that their major counterparts and competitors are as well. This confidence is best instilled and maintained through mutual and verifiable commitments. While the United States and other countries are moving to strengthen their domestic climate efforts, many are unlikely to be

ready by Copenhagen to take on specific international commitments. An interim agreement, however, would significantly advance the global climate effort by settling fundamental legal and design issues so that governments can then negotiate specific commitments in a ratifiable agreement post-Copenhagen.

## In the Interim: A Strong Framework Agreement

In Copenhagen, governments should aim for a balanced and comprehensive agreement provisionally establishing the basic legal and institutional architecture of a post-2012 framework and, in broad terms, the level of effort to be undertaken under a final agreement. This interim agreement can be adopted as a decision of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (and, possibly, the Kyoto Meeting of the Parties) and should include

a clear mandate to conclude a final legal agreement by a date certain. Other key elements of an effective Copenhagen agreement include:

**Ambitious Goals.** The interim agreement should recognize the imperative of limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius and set an aspirational goal of reducing global emissions at least 50 percent by 2050. For the mid-term, developed countries should collectively or individually declare the minimum emission reductions, or range of reductions, they will achieve by a set year (e.g., 2020), and developing countries should agree on a peaking year for their aggregate emissions.

**A Framework for Mitigation Commitments.** The interim agreement should clearly define the nature of mitigation commitments and how they are to be reflected in a final agreement (e.g., through “appendixes” or “schedules”). Consistent with the UNFCCC’s principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities,” it should allow varying forms and levels of commitments depending on national circumstance:

- Absolute economy-wide emission targets should be required of all developed countries.
- A wider range of quantifiable policy-based commitments should be allowed for major developing countries (e.g., sectoral emission targets, energy efficiency standards, renewable energy targets, sustainable forestry goals).

The agreement should launch and support a process, such as a “registry” process, to elaborate country-specific commitments for the major developing countries and to align support for them. It also should go as far as possible

in defining implementation rules, in particular for emissions trading and crediting and for the accounting and crediting of forestry and land use emissions.

**Support for Developing Countries.** The interim agreement must broadly establish the mechanisms, sources, and levels of support to be provided in a final agreement for adaptation, capacity building and technology deployment in developing countries. It should: set initial funding levels and a timetable for periodic replenishment; set criteria to determine countries’ contributions to and/or eligibility for support; rely on, rather than replicate, existing multilateral financial mechanisms; provide for stronger developing country representation in the governance of climate finance; and recognize the full range of multilateral and bilateral funding sources. It also should provide immediate support for developing mitigation actions and for high-priority adaptation needs in highly vulnerable countries.

**A Sound System of Verification.** The interim agreement must establish basic terms for the measurement, reporting and verification of countries’ mitigation actions, and of support for developing country efforts, as called for in the Bali Action Plan. Building on existing reporting and review requirements under the UNFCCC and Kyoto, it should require annual emissions inventories by all major-emitting countries (with a phase-in period and support for developing countries) and annual or biennial implementation reports subject to international review. The review process should assess countries’ compliance with their commitments and provide facilitative remedies in cases of non-compliance.

This is one in a series of policy briefs examining post-2012 international climate policy. The Pew Center on Global Climate Change was established by the Pew Charitable Trust to bring a new cooperative approach and critical scientific, economic, and technological expertise to the global climate change debate. We inform this debate through wide-ranging analyses that add new facts and perspectives in four areas: policy (domestic and international), economics, environment, and solutions.



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