

Cancun Must be a Major Step Forward in Climate Negotiations

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In a few days the next Climate Change Conference will start in Cancun, Mexico, and even if a comprehensive global agreement will not be signed, a package of decisions for climate protection must be delivered. After the setback in Copenhagen last year, it is of great importance to reach substantial progress to keep the climate talks on track in order to limit global warming.

At the G20 summit in Seoul last week, the major economies vowed to achieve a 'successful, balanced result' in Cancun; now they must walk the walk. Discussions need to be concluded on technology transfer, the architecture (scale, source and governance) of long-term financing for climate protection as well as the right conditions for an efficient monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV). Furthermore, the negotiations on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) are already at an advanced stage. The 194 Parties to the UNFCCC should agree to stop deforestation by 2020, as recently set in the strategy plan of the Nagoya Biodiversity conference.

To take a leadership role again, the EU must now commit to a strategic change and reduce its greenhouse gas emission by 30% by 2020. Instead of waiting for other countries to scale up their efforts, the EU should go ahead in its own economic interest, thereby also setting a good example and proving its credibility. The 20% target is almost reached and the pledges under the Kyoto Protocol will be fulfilled. Thus, the EU should not hesitate to agree on a second commitment period and encourage other countries to join. Such a step demonstrates that the EU takes responsibility and is willing to continue climate protection post-2012. However, progress is required under both the AWG-KP and AWG-LCA negotiation tracks, integrating the key achievements of the Copenhagen Protocol. A comprehensive, binding agreement is ultimately the only way to reduce the global emissions.

In addition, the EU should be fully transparent on the delivery of the fast-start funding to proof its credibility. The promised sum of 7.2 billion Euro from 2010-2012 needs to be 'new and additional' in order to help developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Especially the least developed countries as well as the small island states are threatened most by climate change and need the support of developed countries in terms of finance and technology transfer. With a reliable long-term framework for financing mitigation and adaptation efforts the developing countries will be more likely to increase their efforts and success in climate protection. If such an outcome will be reached in Cancun, this will clear the way for the more controversial issues to be discussed in the run-up to the COP 17 in South Africa.

Irrespective of the results of the Cop 16, the EU needs to continue its path towards a low carbon economy by 2050. Renewable energies and energy efficiency are an economic driving force. Even other countries, namely the USA and China, increase their investments in green technologies to change their energy supply and create more jobs. It is in the EU's own interest to keep up its efforts for a sustainable, climate-friendly development.

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