

Green China - Racing to the Future

Chinese NGOs' Position Paper for the 2010 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancun

While millions of individuals around the world are taking action to address the challenges of climate change, international negotiations on climate change have been slow, mainly due to the lack of political willingness in many countries. We have already missed a historical opportunity in Copenhagen, and now a breakthrough in Cancun is urgently required.

On the eve of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun, 60 civil society organizations in China sincerely call on all states to meet the challenges of climate change and negotiate as soon as possible a fair, ambitious and legally binding treaty. In Cancun, we sincerely call on all states to agree on a balanced package and to further build consensus on crucial issues such as finance to achieve a breakthrough. We believe that we can turn climate change into a historical opportunity for each nation to join in the global low-carbon challenge.

China is taking action

The Chinese government has set a binding goal to reduce its carbon emissions per unit GDP by 40-45% from 2005 levels by the year 2020. The government is also conducting pilot projects to build low-carbon cities and undertaking capacity building for national communications.

Under the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), further efforts will be made to tackle climate change, including climate legislation. Energy efficiency, environmental protection and renewable energy will be set as strategic new industry sectors and supported through measures including taxation, finance and administrative regulations.

China continues to strengthen the adaptation capacity of vulnerable regions, the agriculture and forestry sectors, water resources, and coastal regions. China has begun a second national assessment of climate change and is gradually improving the national adaptation strategy. The country has also enhanced comprehensive efforts for capacity development and institution building to address climate change .

Chinese enterprises also are taking initiatives to explore new ways of conserving energy and reducing their carbon footprints. A number of enterprises have taken the lead in developing management strategies for carbon emissions and see energy conservation as an important aspect of corporate social responsibility.

Chinese civil society organisations are working to address climate change in their respective fields . They are involved in raising public awareness, promoting individual action, providing policy recommendations, participating in policy-making, monitoring policy implementation and information disclosure, and providing adaptation programs for impoverished and vulnerable areas.

We urge the parties to the negotiations that:

1. In accordance with the mandate of the Bali Roadmap, all countries should set a common goal to address climate change under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. All parties should follow recommendations from the latest scientific findings and agree on long-term reduction targets accordingly. Developed countries should take the lead and accept their responsibility to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the limited available global atmospheric space for carbon emissions;

2. Developed countries must commit to cut their greenhouse gas emissions levels by at least 40% from 1990 levels by 2020. Most of the reductions should come from domestic sources, and a cap should be set on exported reductions via market mechanisms;
3. Based on the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities,” developed countries must offer financial support, technology transfers, capacity building, etc. to help developing countries to better mitigate and adapt to global climate change;
4. Developing countries should actively implement mitigation and adaptation measures at home and develop their own emissions control targets. Through international cooperation they should gradually increase the transparency of their actions to address climate change. Collaboration among developing country parties should also be strengthened to effectively combat climate change;
5. The international community should work together to achieve a truly fair, ambitious and legally binding global treaty no later than 2011 at the South Africa convention, which will benefit developing countries and disadvantaged populations. Developed countries should accelerate the establishment of a new finance mechanism that mainly consists of public funds and is supplemented by the market and the private sector. Financial pledges should be delivered as soon as possible and additional, adequate and predictable financial support and technology transfers should be ensured. Finally, capacity building for developing countries, especially ones very vulnerable to climate change, should be advanced to enhance their ability to respond to climate change.

Climate change is a global issue that requires global action. Chinese NGOs call on the governments of all countries to take action addressing climate change.

1. Collective/cooperative action:

Explore global low-carbon sustainable development pathways through equitable cooperation; improve energy structures and energy efficiency; ambitiously develop renewable energy such as solar and wind; increase funding for research and development as means of lowering the costs of low-carbon energy sources and creating more green jobs.

2. Care for people in vulnerable regions:

Reduce the impacts of climate change on people in vulnerable regions by actively improving poverty alleviation policies and enhancing agricultural investment policy, disaster alert and relief systems and insurance policies; empower people in such regions with strengthened capability and resources to adapt to climate change.

3. Emission cuts to be initiated by communities with high emissions:

Encourage low-carbon lifestyles in communities with high-carbon footprints through raising awareness, creating economic incentives, implementing legislation, and supporting technological innovation.

4. Transparency in data monitoring:

Improve data collection and monitoring/verification of greenhouse gas emissions data through international cooperation and public engagement

5. Equitable policies and market incentives:

Create market incentives encouraging energy efficiency and emission reduction in industries; utilize market mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of emission reduction policies; social equity should be taken into consideration by these policies.

6. Integrity of environmental policies:

Prevent and alleviate negative secondary social and environmental impacts caused by climate policies, market

incentives, and technology development.

7. Support civil society actions and monitoring:

Guarantee and encourage the involvement of the public and civil society in the making and implementation of climate policies; empower the public, NGOs and youth to raise awareness, educate, build capacity, innovate, and participate in the political process.

China is currently the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases as well as one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Chinese NGOs support the government to increase its current efforts and play a more proactive role in the global action against climate change. We would like the government to show more consideration and concern for the most vulnerable people in climate policy making and ensure the role of the public and civil organizations in monitoring policy making and implementation. History has provided China with a unique and valuable opportunity to play a leading role and leapfrog towards a low-carbon growth model in the race to a green future.