

# Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FRDO-CFDD)

## Opinion on the Copenhagen climate summit

- On own initiative
  - Prepared by the working group on *energy and climate*
  - Approved by the general assembly on 27 November 2009
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- [1] The FCSD<sup>1</sup> advocates that the Copenhagen summit should lead to an agreement under which any dangerous anthropogenic disruption of the climate<sup>2</sup> can be prevented and is pleased that the shared vision that has emerged on this subject refers to the need to stabilise global temperature in such a way that the rise in temperature will be limited to two degrees above the pre-industrial level. The FCSD points out that this vision should be adjustable in line with the ongoing development of knowledge about climate change and its consequences. The fact is that recent scientific data suggest that climate change may well occur faster and more abruptly than initially thought.
- [2] The FCSD is of the opinion that this agreement in Copenhagen should:
- fit in with the United Nations Convention on Climate Change;
  - be multilateral and global in nature;
  - be legally binding;
  - where necessary, be subject to review in order to remain relevant;
  - be based on the most recent scientific data, in particular those included in the latest IPCC evaluation report which is *the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment of climate change to date*<sup>3</sup>.

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- <sup>1</sup> In drawing up this opinion, the FCSD has used a number of its earlier opinions as a basis:
- opinion on the document entitled "Draft national climate plan 2009-2012 of Belgium – Overview of the measures and state of progress on 31 December 2008" (2009a03, 5 February 2009)
  - opinion on evaluation of Belgian climate policy: procedural aspects (2006a10, 23 May 2006)
  - Third opinion on a strategy to prevent climate change after 2012: Belgian component of the European framework (2005a08, 25 November 2005)
  - (First) opinion on a strategy to prevent climate change after 2012 (2004a012, 26 November 2004)
- <sup>2</sup> As the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate provides in its Article 2: *the ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.*
- <sup>3</sup> See FCCC/SBSTA/2007/L.20/Add.1/Rev.1: *The Conference of the Parties recognises that the Fourth Assessment Report represents the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment of climate change to date, providing an integrated scientific, technical and socioeconomic perspective on relevant issues.*

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- involve and commit all important players worldwide: industrial countries, growth countries and developing countries;
    - As they have historic responsibility, the industrial countries will by 2020 have to show the example by accepting higher reductions of their emissions; the emerging countries should likewise by 2020 undertake to adopt clear, measurable and verifiable goals to control their emissions.
    - By 2050, efforts will have to be made to guarantee for every person on the planet the same right of access to the natural resources required to meet essential human needs: the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions should proceed towards a fair allocation of emission rights worldwide.
  - see that the competitiveness of our companies is not jeopardised and that there is no encouragement of distortion of competition and relocation of energy-intensive industrial activities;
  - guarantee a fair transition enabling workers to have a decent job and income, sources of added value and social cohesion. A fair transition should be based on developing sustainable and decent jobs; at the same time, the existing volume of jobs should be retained or increased in the various regions across all sectors;
  - ensure the financing of the funds set up to enable the developing countries, and in particular the most vulnerable among them, to adapt to the consequences of climate change but also to develop their economies in a way that contributes to protecting the climate within a context of sustainable development; to this end, the industrial countries should among other things financially support the mitigation and adaptation policy in the South, facilitate the transfer of their technology to the South and support the prevention of deforestation there. As provided for in the Bali roadmap<sup>4</sup>, these should be new funds over and above the international commitments for official development aid (0.7% of GNP);
  - be fair by taking account of the inequalities in terms of responsibility for climate change, the ability to prevent or attenuate it and vulnerability for its consequences;
  - make it possible for the developing countries to develop in accordance with their priorities in a way that is compatible with sustainable development and enables them to cope with the consequences of climate change.

[3] The Copenhagen summit should speed up the transition to a more sustainable development and low-carbon society.

[4] In order to ensure that Belgium can optimally prepare for this transition and enhance its credibility at international level a few months ahead of Belgium's presidency of the European Union, the FCSO recommends to draw up a genuine strategy involving the regional and federal authorities which:

- takes account of the need to reduce by 2050 the emissions of all industrial countries by a factor 5 to 20 compared with 1990;
- establishes a strategic transitional vision structured around the medium-term (2020) and long-term (2050) goals (*sustainable new deal*);
- ensures genuine coordination between the measures taken at the various policy levels, including the levels competent for culture and education (vertical integration) and between the various federal policies (horizontal integration) that directly or indirectly affect the climate;
- guarantees effective *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluation of policies and measures, making use of harmonised methods to enable comparison and synthesis;

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<sup>4</sup> 4. Report of the 13th session of the Conference of the Parties, Bali 3 - 15 December 2007, Bali action plan (<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/fre/06a01f.pdf>)

- is fair and acceptable both from a social standpoint (transitional programmes concerning employment) and from an economic angle (including competitiveness);
- integrates the international dimension in climate policy (with regard to adaptation, mitigation, prevention of deforestation, technology transfer in particular to the developing countries) while at the same time being aware of the importance of the national efforts required;
- gives due attention to the possible domestic measures in accordance with the principle that it is necessary to first achieve lower emissions within Belgium that are less costly than the reduction obtained through flexibility mechanisms;
- provides the human, financial and other resources necessary to implement it;
- attaches greater importance to research and innovation that contribute to achieving the medium-term and long-term climate goals;
- stresses the essential role of the authorities in giving the right example (buildings management, procurement policy, etc.) and public funding of research and development and innovation;
- forms part of a participatory process involving representatives of civil society.