

CIVIL SOCIETY ALLIANCES ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES

AN INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW OF ACTORS,
ACTIVITIES AND POLITICAL POSITIONS

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Brief Summary

Climate change has increasingly gained political and public attention in the last months. While many environmental NGOs have been working on climate change for many years in many industrialised countries, development NGOs are relatively new in this field. However, they more and more feel the concrete impacts of climate change in their projects. In turn, this has led to an increased political awareness with regard to climate policies. As a consequence, broader civil society alliances including environmental, development, faith-based and other types of organisations have developed in a number of industrialised countries in the past two to three years. This paper gives an overview of these developments and presents the basic political demands of these alliances.

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1 Introduction

Climate change is not only an environmental issue any longer. It undermines the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and generates new questions regarding security.¹ Also, climate change increasingly threatens economic investments, as the exorbitant damages caused by extreme weather events like hurricane Katrina illustrate.

At the same time, climate change and climate protection have numerous economic aspects, such as questions of wealth distribution, competitiveness or dynamics in innovation, both in industrialised countries and in emerging economies and developing countries.

While the drastic consequences of climate change are becoming more and more evident, civil society alliances have formed to raise pressure on politics and demand courage to take climate protection and adaptation to climate change seriously. Alongside the ecological issue, considerations of justice in development policy are increasingly becoming a focal issue of these alliances.

In an increasing number of industrialised countries, development and environment organisations, partly in co-operation with nature conservation, emergency aid and other actors, demand committed climate protection and solidarity with those who are the most affected. These activities could form a basis for a global climate movement claiming political progress appropriate to the size of the challenge. Growing support for the most affected in their efforts to adapt to the consequences develops to be the second key issue in climate justice besides the need for greenhouse gas emissions mitigation.

The paper presents the main actors as well as activities that have already been implemented or are being prepared by these alliances. It focuses on the core political demands formulated by these alliances in their respective countries. The majority of alliance members has decided to focus on greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments (mostly by 2020). Some alliance members also demand measures explicitly orientated towards development policy, such as increased funding for adaptation measures, or a promotion of disaster prevention.

This paper provides an overview of several emerging civil society alliances (of mainly environment, development and faith-based organisations) in a number of industrialised countries. The information has primarily been compiled from the respective websites of the described alliances, including comments from their representatives, and does not claim to be all-inclusive. Further information, corrections and suggestions are very welcome. Since the alliances evolve further, this is work in progress.

¹ WBGU (German Advisory Council on Global Change) 2007: World in Transition – Climate Change as a Security Risk. Berlin. http://www.wbgu.de/wbgu_jg2007_engl.html

2 Germany

Although a number of environmental NGOs have been very active in the climate change debate for a number of years, and some of the development NGOs have started to address the issue, there has not been any nameable civil society alliance on climate change until recently. Letters and position papers by a number of organisations were published around some singular events, in particular a press release prior to the Nairobi COP (2006) signed by around 15 organisations, and an open letter to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel right before the EU Spring Summit 2007, where important decisions on climate and energy issues were discussed and finally taken. The latter one was signed by 16 organisations, mainly development NGOs and some environmental advocates.

These activities had some kind of preparatory character to the civil society alliance which was launched in a press conference in the German capital of Berlin on 24 April: The Climate Alliance (Die Klima-Allianz), an alliance of back then 47 organisations, including all large environmental NGOs like WWF, Greenpeace, BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany) and most of the large development NGOs like Bread for the World (Protestant), Protestant Development Service (EED), or Misereor (Catholic). In addition, it is backed by the German Catholic Bishop conference, and also supported by the Protestant Church of Germany. Some regional, very important protestant churches even joined the alliance as official members. Human rights, the globalisation movement attac and youth groups likewise support the coalition. In early July, the alliance has grown to almost 70 organisations.

<http://www.die-klima-allianz.de>

Basic political demands of the Climate Alliance:

1. Some generally discussed international demands (below 2°C, minus 30% emissions by industrialised countries by 2020 and minus 80% by 2050, increasing mitigation responsibility of emerging economies);
2. Adoption of a minus 40% target for Germany by 2020 (compared to 1990), listing 18 measures in different sectors (e.g. a moratorium for new coal power plants, a tripling of combined heat-power-cold generation by 2020 etc.);
3. Underlining the need to increasingly integrate climate change in development policies (mitigation and adaptation). Increased additional financing is demanded (e.g. kerosene tax, auctioning of ETS certificates). Also, the need for more ambitious poverty reduction policies is underlined, inter alia as a means to reduce vulnerability towards climate change.

Contact person: Juergen Maier, German NGO Forum Environment and Development, chef@forumue.de

3 United Kingdom

3.1 *“Up in Smoke?” - The Working Group on Climate Change and Development*

About three years ago, the Working Group on Climate Change and Development has gone public in the United Kingdom with its first report „Up in Smoke?“ published in 2004. Based on the experience of their partner organisations, development organisations such as Oxfam, Christian Aid and Practical Action in co-operation with environmental organisations such as WWF and Greenpeace, described the drastic consequences of climate change. Since this first publication, further „Up in Smoke?“ reports with regional focuses have been published or are in preparation:

- Africa – Up in Smoke? (2005 plus update 2006)
- Up in Smoke? Latin America and the Caribbean (2006)
- Asia and the Pacific – Up in Smoke? (expected for December 2007)

The reports can be downloaded e.g. from:

http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/climate_change_top.aspx

Besides specific regional recommendations for action, which primarily address concrete challenges of adaptation to climate change (e.g. the mapping of social vulnerabilities to climate change, improved emergency relief and disaster prevention), the alliance mainly advocates the following political demands:²

Basic political demands by the "Up in Smoke“ group:

- Keeping global warming below the 2 degree limit;
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in industrialised countries by 60 to 80 % by 2050;
- “Peak” in global emissions by 2015 at the very latest;
- Strengthening the international climate policy framework on the basis of UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol;
- Increased support (including funding) of the most essential adaptation measures in developing countries;
- Sustainable poverty reduction based on renewable energies.

Contact person: Hannah Reid, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Hannah.Reid@iied.org

² Source of reference is "Africa – Up in Smoke?“ Update, presented at COP12 in Nairobi

3.2 "Stop Climate Chaos" Campaign

The campaign "Stop Climate Chaos", meanwhile supported by around 50 environmental and development organisations, demands more consistent climate policy from British politicians and informs the public about possibilities for action. With its slogan "I count", the campaign calls on individuals to become active in climate policy.

<http://www.stopclimatechaos.org>

<http://www.icount.org.uk>

The website gives advice and recommendations for action such as:

- E-mail and e-card actions to Prime Minister Tony Blair and members of parliament;
- Dissemination of pocket-sized booklets containing recommendations for action;
- Switching off stand-by equipment;
- Reduction of heating demand by wearing an extra sweater.

Basic political demands of the "Stop Climate Chaos" campaign:

1. Promote the international climate negotiation process on a political framework which:
 - is based on the 2° C limit;
 - results in a decrease of global emissions as from 2015;
 - includes compulsory emission reduction targets for industrial countries as a key element in the process.

This political framework should take into consideration the following two principles:

- A. Support of emission mitigation in rapidly developing countries;
- B. Access to clean energy for all.

2. Adoption of an annual carbon budget for the United Kingdom

Following the annual public finance budget, an annual carbon budget should be determined for the United Kingdom. It should be geared to an average annual reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 3% and should integrate all sectors.

3. The poorest countries should be capacitated to adapt to unavoidable consequences of climate change, particularly regarding biodiversity.

In line with the polluter-pays principle, and based on the following principles, the industrialised countries should intensify their support in particular of the poorest countries in adapting to climate change:

- Adaptation strategies should be integrated into national and international activities of development policy and poverty reduction;

- According to the „bottom-up” principle, poor communities should be enabled to implement adaptation measures on their own;
- Disaster prevention -as an effective and cost-efficient measure for improved adaptation capacity- must be promoted.

Contact person: Ashok Sinha, Director of the campaign, ashok@stopclimatechaos.org

4 Netherlands

In the Netherlands more than 40 environmental, development, emergency relief and nature conservation organisations formed an alliance and have been implementing a consumer-oriented climate change and sensitisation campaign – the HIER Campaign. In addition to the implementation of concrete adaptation projects in developing countries, the HIER activities include consumer information, as e.g. on energy-saving equipment and climate-conscious travelling. During the first phase, the HIER campaign and the HIER logo functioned as an independent platform of organisations where each organisation could conduct its own activities. Thus, it is the individual organisations which are the main actors in the campaign, and not the co-ordination office (see contact). By using the HIER logo, the climate change activities implemented by all of the organisations become more visible and recognisable. In April 2007, the 40 participating NGOs decided to intensify the campaign. The public is now called upon to become climate-neutral by reducing energy consumption wherever possible, and by compensating for the rest. All 40 participating organisations decided to become climate-neutral. The demand to the public is complemented by demands to the government and the business sector to make climate neutral living as simple as possible by offering more and cheaper products in the fields of efficiency, green electricity and compensation. The compensation projects focus on energy for the poor. So the public message is stop contributing to climate change and help the main victims.

<http://www.hier.nu>

Key political demands:

The HIER-Campaign primarily is a consumer-oriented campaign. The related political lobbying activities focus on three areas: emissions reductions, a strong role of nature in climate adaptation in the Netherlands, and much stronger (financial) support for climate adaptation in developing countries. The new government adopted most of the policy proposals, including the proposal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2020.

Main activities:

Broad project portfolio including:

- International projects in the fields of drought and water management, reforestation and capacity building;

- Nature conservation projects in the Netherlands;
- Consumer campaign on energy-saving lamps, efficient electrical products and passenger cars, green electricity and climate neutral products;
- Information campaign with VIPs (film premiere with Al Gore), website, co-operation with TV-channels, distribution of HIER logos as product label, as well as a climate photos contest

Contact person: Sible Schone, Climate office, sible@klimaatbureau.nl

5 Belgium

Recently, a climate coalition was constituted in Belgium. According to the website, it includes 39 organisations such as attac, Oxfam, WWF, Greenpeace and Catholic Workers' Youth. These organisations have become members of the coalition by signing a declaration. Until spring 2008, they intend to develop a big joint campaign which should be implemented during the following years. In its conception, the coalition explicitly refers to the Dutch HIER campaign.

<http://www.coalitionclimat.be>

Key political demand:

- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in industrial countries by 30% by 2020, and by 80% by 2050

In order to achieve this main objective, all organisations involved intend to develop a campaign that shall inform the general public about causes and impacts of climate change, provide concrete recommendations for changes of behaviour and action, and as well as it point out the „will to change“ towards the general public and responsible politicians.

By signing the declaration, the involved organisations furthermore declared their intention to launch initiatives and initiate change process within their own organisation, such as:

- Implementation of CO₂ reduction measures in their own organisation;
- Sensitisation of staff, sponsors and members for the necessary climate political action;
- Dissemination of information on coalition activities;
- Linking the organisations' activities with the coalition logo;
- Increasing attention for climate issues and the North-South dimension in each organisation's work (work programmes, publications etc.);
- Dissemination of activities and initiatives launched by other coalition members.

Contact person: Tom Cornu, Climate coalition Secretary tom.cornu@klimaatcoalitie.be

6 Italy

In mid-January 2007, a broad social alliance in Italy turned public with a "letter on climate, justice and poverty reduction" announcing political statements. Some 30 organisations signed the letter, as e.g. Greenpeace, Legambiente, terre des hommes, tradewatch, Save the Children and WWF, as well as three important trade unions. This might be the beginning of a more active climate political alliance. The letter was personally presented to the vice foreign affairs minister and the environment minister. The letter especially emphasised "the historic opportunity to adopt a more balanced lifestyle, and to solve Italians energy dependency, as well as the economic potential" committed climate protection could offer. The Alliance's key demands are as follows:

Key political demands:

1. On an international level:
 - Orientation towards the 2°C limit;
 - Agreement on a post-2012 agreement based on the Kyoto Protocol;
 - "Peak" in global emissions by 2015;
 - Purchase of CDM certificates in Italy only according to Gold Standard;
 - Intensified exchange in the fields of development, labour policy, trade and environment policy in order to promote sustainable development
2. On the Italian level:
 - Development of a national energy plan for emission reductions in all sectors;
 - Tax policy and incentive mechanisms favouring renewable energies and energy efficiency.

Contact person: Maria Grazia Midulla, WWF Italy, m.midulla@mclink.it

7 Spain

In Spain, WWF/Adena, Intermón Oxfam, OCU (consumer organisation) and CC.OO (trade union) established a climate movement called "Movimiento Clima" with the support of the Spanish environment ministry. The coalition's website provides information on the climate-scientific issues of climate change, as well as personal CO₂ saving possibilities which each user can commit him/herself to. Members were also active at the last UN climate conference 2006 in Nairobi, presenting political demands to the Spanish environment minister.

<http://www.movimientoclima.org>

According to its manifesto, the alliance directs its demands in three areas towards the governments of industrialised countries, enterprises, and the Spanish citizens.

Key political demands

Towards the governments of industrialised countries: reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2020, as compared to 1990.

Towards enterprises: changes in production systems aimed at increased energy efficiency and replacement of fossil fuel by cleaner energy forms

Towards citizens: call to take an active role in the fight against climate change by:

- increased awareness of the climate relevance even of small actions;
- request not to use more energy than is absolute necessary;
- dissemination of these message to family and friends;
- signing a personal climate protection commitment.

Contact person: Mar Asunción Higuera, WWF Spain, clima@wwf.es

8 Switzerland

In 2004, the big environmental organisations and in 2005, a broad range of more than 50 Swiss civil society organisations from the sectors of environment, church, development, consumer, unions, parties, and energy joined forces in the “Alliance for a responsible climate policy”. The organisations united in the alliance have a total of 1.8 million members (Switzerland has 7.4 million inhabitants). The common aim was to fight for the introduction of a CO₂-tax. Such a tax will now be introduced on heating oil and gas in 2008. In August 2006, the alliance produced a climate master plan pursuing a climate-compatible Switzerland. This alliance proposed an ambitious climate protection objective, a number of short-term and medium-term realisable practical ideas for political instruments, applicable for each economic sector. With the proposed instruments Switzerland could cut GHG emission by 65% through 2025.

<http://www.wwf.ch/klimafakten>

Key political demands in the climate-master plan:

- Limiting global warming to below 0.1° C per decade and below 2° C compared to pre-industrial levels;
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Switzerland by 30% until 2020 and by 90% until 2050 compared to 1990;
- Long-term per-capita budget of 1 ton CO₂ per year;
- Acknowledgement of the same emission rights for the world-wide population;
- Establishment of legal commitments aiming at a 2000-Watt society;
- Decrease of net imports of "grey greenhouse gases" (through net import of services and goods) to 57% until 2050 in comparison to 1990 and

- compensation of remaining grey emissions through Gold Standard certificates.

To achieve these objectives, a sequence of 80 political measures is proposed including among others:

- ecological tax reform (heavy shift from tax load onto fossil fuels and electricity);
- large number of incentives to promote BAT for appliances, cars, motors, buildings, etc.;
- Introduction of measures for regulated heat consumption or implementation of a minimal requirement for use of renewable energies in buildings;
- Emission trading including air traffic and flight compensations;
- Reforestation measures for CO₂ capture.

Contact person: Patrick Hofstetter, WWF Switzerland, Patrick.Hofstetter@wwf.ch

9 Czech Republic

Czech environmental organisations, including Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, currently prepare a three-year climate campaign. In consideration of the Czech EU presidency in 2009, the year designed for the adoption of a Kyoto follow-up agreement, it is planned to increase the standard of knowledge about the consequences of climate change (based on the fourth IPCC report) among population, politicians and media. Possibilities for action concerning renewable energies and energy efficiency play a central role. To this purpose, a national strategy and scenarios with concrete political measures shall be developed. A joint seminar with the participation of environmental groups and the major Czech organisations working on development and emergency relief already took place in March 2007.

Currently, discussions about possible joint activities take place among Czech development organisations. Economic actors from the area of low-emission technologies are considered another important partners.

Main strategic objectives:

1. significantly change the public and political discourse, e.g. the way how climate change is communicated and debated. Instead of a hostile environment where ambitious climate policy is far from reality, a positive attitude towards CO₂ reduction measures shall be built;
2. win government support for effective climate policies and enhance decision-makers' accountability both internationally (Czech Republic's position on post-2012 negotiations, role of the government in the 2009 EU presidency) and nationally (domestic measures).

Contact person: Klara Sutlovicova, Centre for Transport and Energy, cde@ecn.cz

10 Canada

In a letter to the Canadian prime-minister of September 2006, Harper Oxfam, CARE Canada, United Church Association and other relief organisations requested to take action in terms of climate change. While a majority in the Canadian parliament endorses the implementation of the Kyoto protocol, the prime minister has chosen an anti-Kyoto track. Meanwhile, the Organisation Canadian Catholic Bishops' Development and Peace also became associated to this alliance.

http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=21597

Key political demands of the letter:

- Implementation of measures by the Canadian government in order to fulfil the commitments undertaken by signing the Kyoto Protocol: violation of these commitments may be interpreted as a renunciation by the Canadian government to support the international fight against poverty;
- Measures to assist most vulnerable population groups in developing countries

A number of NGOs have started to work on a draft strategy for the Canadian Coalition on Climate Change and Development (C4D).

Contact person: Angie Dazé, CARE Canada, angie@care.ca

11 Australia

Recently, a round table on climate change and development took place in Australia, coordinated by the local Climate Action Network (CAN). Today, 15 organisations participate in "Climate Change and Development Roundtable", including e.g. WWF Australia, Caritas, Oxfam and World Vision. Main activities so far have been the elaboration and publication of two reports focussing on the consequences of climate change in the Pacific region; these reports deduct recommendations for action primarily for development work with countries from the region, and appeal to Australia's responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

<http://www.ccdr.org.au>

Key political demands:

1. In the field of development work:
 - Increase of ODA to 0.5% of GDP by 2009-2010 and to 0.7% by 2015;
 - Integration of climate change into all relevant areas of Australian development programmes (planning and evaluation);

- Change of ODA's energy priorities to renewable energies and energy efficiency, including increased funding of these technologies;
- Integration of climate change risk factors in development projects with main focus on drinking water management;
- Review of Australia's immigration programmes with regard to the support of people who are forced to resettle due to climate change;
- Promotion of disaster prevention and mitigation.

2. Emissions reduction in Australia:

- Adoption of a national framework to reduce greenhouse gases by 20% by 2020 compared to 1990, and by 60% by 2050;
- Active participation in international efforts to prevent dangerous climate change through binding measures, starting with the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol;
- Review of all government programmes which directly or indirectly support greenhouse gas emissions and therefore increase the whole region's vulnerability to climate change.

Contact person: Julie-Anne Richards, Climate Action Network Australian, coord@cana.net.au

12 USA

On 16 April, Friends of the Earth hosted a big summit on “Climate change and international development” in Washington with about 200 participants. It was followed by a strategy meeting to begin a collaboration of US environment and development groups to share information, develop advocacy approaches and move forward in a joint direction. It is envisaged to set up a network and probably develop some kind of joint statements, e.g. regarding climate justice in the G8 context.

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Germanwatch

We are an independent, non-profit and non-governmental North-South Initiative. Since 1991, we have been active on the German, European and international level concerning issues such as trade, environment and North-South relations. Complex problems require innovative solutions. Germanwatch prepares the ground for necessary policy changes in the North which preserve the interests of people in the South. On a regular basis, we present significant information to decision-makers and supporters. Most of the funding for Germanwatch comes from donations, membership fees and project grants.

Our central goals are:

- Effective and fair instruments as well as economic incentives for climate protection
- Ecologically and socially sound investments
- Compliance of multinational companies with social and ecological standards
- Fair world trade and fair chances for developing countries by cutting back dumping and subsidies in world trade.

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