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## ***Back of the Pack: Canada's climate change action and positions***

Any reasonable assessment of Canada's positions on climate change would find them weak compared to those of our international allies.

Canada is shamefully the only country to renounce its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, calling them "impossible."<sup>(1)</sup> The vast majority of Kyoto parties will be reaching their targets.

Canada's 2020 target for reducing emissions of greenhouse gas pollution (3 per cent below 1990 levels) is the weakest of any Kyoto party and very far from the 40 per cent reductions that the latest science says is required from industrialized countries. Australia and Japan have each strengthened their targets to -25 per cent, the EU's target is -30 per cent, and the UK, Sweden, Norway, and Germany all have targets of at least -40 per cent.

Though Canada agreed at the G8 meeting in July 2009 that industrialized countries as a whole should reduce emissions by 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050,<sup>(5)</sup> Canada's 2050 target remains at -51 per cent. Nobody in the government has revealed which country should be making up the difference for Canada doing much less.

The result of these positions is that Canada is not doing its fair share in limiting average global warming to no more than 2 degrees Celsius, also a position that Canada accepted at the G8. <sup>(3)</sup>

In contrast to *weak* positions on reducing global warming pollution, Canada has *no* position on financing climate action in developing countries. In Bali in December 2007, industrialized countries agreed to provide financial assistance to developing countries so they could curb their own emissions and adapt to climate change.<sup>(4)</sup> Canada has yet to express an opinion on how much financing should be delivered or what mechanism should be used to deliver it.

Other countries have either proposed or supported financing mechanisms. For example, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown suggested that \$100 billion per year would be required from rich, industrialized countries for the needs of the developing world.<sup>(5)</sup> This falls short of the estimated \$195 billion per year needed,<sup>(6)</sup> but is nonetheless a significant sign of leadership on this issue.

Canada's domestic inaction on global warming matches its woeful international positions. The Canadian federal government has yet to introduce any regulations for dealing with global warming pollution, including a cap-and-trade system for industrial facilities, fuel efficiency standards for vehicles, or

regulations on any other source of greenhouse gases. Consequently, Canada's pollution levels have gone up 26 per cent since 1990 and are still rising.(7)

Not surprisingly given this history, Canada has fared poorly when compared to other countries on their global warming record. In July 2009, Canada was ranked last in an assessment of G8 countries' action on climate change.(8) A wider evaluation of major countries placed Canada's action on global warming 59th out of 60 countries, better only than Saudi Arabia's.(9)

Despite this, the Canadian government has repeatedly accused poor, developing countries of being the global warming culprits. For example, Prime Minister Harper blocked an agreement on climate change among 53 Commonwealth nations that called on industrialized countries to accept binding GHG targets, explaining, "Canada's view is we need binding targets on all nations."(10)

(1) CBC News. "'Impossible' for Canada to reach Kyoto targets: Ambrose." (April 7, 2006).

(2) G8 declaration. "Responsible Leadership for A Sustainable Future." (July 2009).

Ibid.

(3) UNFCCC. "Bali Action Plan. Decision CP13." (December 2007).

(4) Reuters. "Rich must pay \$100 bln yearly on climate-UK's Brown." (June 26, 2009).

(5) Climate Action Network International. Fair, Ambitious and Binding: Essentials for a Successful Climate Deal. (November 2009).

(6) Environment Canada. National Inventory Report, 1990-2007. (April 2009).

(7) Allianz SE and WWF. "Canada ranked last in G8 on climate action." Press release. (July 1, 2009).

(8) Germanwatch and CAN-Europe. Climate Change Performance Index: Results 2009. (December 2008).

(9) Ottawa Citizen. "Harper gov't blocks binding commitment on climate." (November 24, 2007).