



Climate Action Network Canada Réseau action climat Canada

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA ON CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY AND THE G8

June 4, 2007

Re: Call to adopt the G8 proposal to keep global average temperature rise below two degrees Celsius (2°C)

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

Canadian environmental groups, humanitarian groups and faith groups have consistently expressed their mounting concerns about climate change and its effects on development, and have called upon the Government of Canada to take urgent action. There is now indisputable scientific evidence that climate change is a human-induced phenomenon and that its effects are being felt in many parts of the world, including in Canada, and especially in the world's poorest countries. In September of last year, several Canadian international development organizations called upon your government to take the necessary actions to reduce its contribution to global climate change and to assist vulnerable populations in the developing world to cope with the changes that are already occurring.

However, the actions by your government to put in place legislation, regulations or policies remain very far from adequate to ensure that this country protects people and the planet and does its share in reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) that lead to global warming. The absence of Canadian leadership is noticeable in international discussions seeking solutions to this global problem.

The impacts of climate change have real implications for Canada's investments in development assistance. Increasingly, aid resources are being diverted from development and long term poverty reduction goals to respond to emergencies caused by climate-related disasters. Further, development gains that have been achieved are being wiped out by the accelerating numbers of floods, droughts, hurricanes, cyclones, rising waters and coastal erosion due to climate change. The poor, who are already struggling to maintain their livelihoods, are particularly vulnerable to these risks.

We know from the best science available that greenhouse gas emissions – largely from industrialized countries – have already contributed to an overall global average temperature increase of close to one degree Celsius (1°C). Increasing evidence reveals that this is more than many ecosystems and human communities can withstand. The observed impacts of such global warming are already indicating dire consequences which will only intensify with further temperature increases.

It is imperative that the world community firmly agrees to limit total global average temperature rise to as far below two degrees Celsius (2°C) as possible, relative to the pre-industrial level.

Until now, Canada has not taken a clear position in support of a 2°C global temperature increase limit. We ask your government to tell Canadians exactly how much warming you believe is too much for people, the economy, and ecosystems. Environment Minister John Baird has been asked that very question. He has declined to offer his views, stating that the government's objective was to bring about a measurable decrease in GHGs unconnected from any strategic national target. Nor has he been

willing to discuss the economic impacts for Canada and the rest of the world of allowing global warming to exceed 2°C.

There is an opportunity at the upcoming G8 meeting in Germany for world leaders to commit to stronger efforts to stop climate change. We urge you to demonstrate your leadership on behalf of the people of Canada and to accept the host's proposal for an agreement to keep global temperature rise below 2°C. We believe that a clear signal is needed from the G8 leaders to the rest of the world that those who have contributed most to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions are prepared to take action to limit the impacts of climate change.

World leaders must commit to an agreement that:

- **limits global average temperature rise as far below 2°C as possible**
- **sets binding targets to reduce GHG emissions to make the above possible**
- **establishes frameworks and mechanisms for adaptation that deliver sufficient and accessible funds and support to the most vulnerable countries and communities, beyond the obligation of donors to meet the UN target of 0.7% of Gross National Income for ODA**

Climate change is not simply an environmental or an economic issue; it is also a moral, ethical and humanitarian issue. Above all, it is a justice issue. Canadians require their government to act with courage and rectitude in the face of major threats and humanitarian crises. You have said, in another context, that Canada does not back away from its commitments and obligations to the world. Never before has it been so urgent to demonstrate this commitment through our compliance with international agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Millennium Development Goals, and by supporting Canada's relationships with our development partners. Their future well-being and our own are interconnected as we live together on this small planet. Canada cannot opt out of global warming. We must now be prepared to act boldly.

We pledge to do our part by educating Canadians and promoting climate justice.
We ask that you act on our behalf at the G8 meeting in Germany and beyond.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

David Coon, Chair, **Climate Action Network-Réseau action climat Canada**
Gerry Barr, President-CEO, **Canadian Council for International Cooperation**
Kevin McCort, Interim President and CEO, **CARE Canada**
Jim Cornelius, Executive Director, **Canadian Foodgrains Bank**
Morag Carter, Director, Climate Change Program, **David Suzuki Foundation**
Sidney Ribaux, coordonnateur général, General coordinator, **Équiterre**
Beatrice Olivastri, CEO, **Friends of the Earth Canada**
Steven Guilbeault, Climate Change and Energy Campaigner, **Greenpeace**
Mary Corkery, Executive Director, **KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives / Initiatives oecuméniques canadiennes pour la justice**
Anthony Scoggins, Manager of Programs, **Oxfam Canada**
Matthew Bramley, **Director, Climate Change, Pembina Institute**
Omega Bula, Executive Minister, Justice, Global & Ecumenical Relations, **The United Church of Canada / L'Église unie du Canada**
Faris Ahmed, Director, Canadian Programs, **USC CANADA**