



Climate Action Network Canada Réseau action climat Canada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Warsaw climate talks signal missed opportunity amid some small signs for hope

[Warsaw, Poland. November 23, 2013]: The UN climate negotiations wrapped up in Warsaw today with mixed results, even after over 24 hours overtime. Countries have been exposed at the climate negotiations in Warsaw as beholden to vested interests, such as the dirty fossil fuel lobby, after they once again missed an opportunity to put the world on a certain pathway to securing a comprehensive climate action plan in 2015, according to Climate Action Network Canada.

Warsaw has seen Japan reduce its carbon pollution reduction target and diverse countries, including the USA, Singapore and India, block efforts to explore ways to fairly divide climate action between countries. Many more countries are hiding behind the blockers, happy to exploit the lack of progress. For example, Canada has been quieter than usual in the open talks, hiding behind bullish ally Australia but word in corridors was that behind closed doors the Canadian delegation continued to take an obstructive stance.

“We have seen Canada and other developed countries blocking important parts of the negotiations in Warsaw. We should instead focus on the urgency. The climate crisis requires urgent action, tough compromise and enhanced cooperation,” said Marc Lebel, Coordonnateur Climat-Énergie, AQLPA

“Warsaw did not provide a clear plan to fairly divide the global effort of responding to climate change and a timeline of when that will happen, which is needed as countries progress towards the 2015 deal,” added Christian Holz, Executive Director of Climate Action Network Canada.

The intransigence of many countries has led to unprecedented levels of frustration within civil society. Hundreds of members of civil society, from the youth, faith, and environment movement, including Canadian environmentalists, have fasted for the duration of the negotiations to call for climate action. The fasters are acting in solidarity with the Filipino climate commissioner, Yeb Saño, who called for countries to “stop the climate madness” at the opening of the talks just after his country was devastated by a typhoon. Haiyan was just a taste of the kind of extreme weather we can expect to increase if carbon pollution doesn’t peak in the next few years, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

“At the time when climate impacts are hitting communities around the world, we have seen the true nature of international climate politics: economic interests keen to maintain the status quo have been the hand pulling the puppet strings of governments in these negotiations,” Climate Action Network International Director Wael Hmaidan said.

“A mass movement has now developed of people from throughout the world who will fast for a day every month until a deal to save the climate is agreed, in Paris, in 2015,” Hmaidan said. The movement emerged as many groups, including some CAN members, chose to walk out of the talks on Thursday.



Climate Action Network Canada Réseau action climat Canada

With many countries, cities and states to hold elections next years, civil society will go forward from Warsaw to issue a clarion call for citizens around the world to demand climate action from their governments. Attention will first turn to the EU, which must in March agree a strong carbon pollution reduction target for 2030.

Next year will see climate change rocket back to the top of the international political agenda. The United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has put world leaders on notice to bring bold pledges and action to his Climate Summit, in September.

On finance, a key issue at the Warsaw talks, the picture was mixed (some called the talks a “finance COP” referring to the expectations and the fact that for the first time ministerial discussions would be exclusively focus on finance for a section of the talks). The adaptation fund achieved its \$100 million fundraising goal, and more money will flow to countries that can stringently prove they are reducing emissions from deforestation. But, no clear deadline was set to make the first payments into the Green Climate Fund and the road towards the \$100 billion a year by 2020 commitment is murky, with no timelines, pathways, and sources outlined. Thus leaving developing countries without a predictable flow of funds to take climate action. Here again, Canada’s position was very unhelpful with a strong insistence that no new money would be forthcoming any time soon. Given the dual function of finance as responding to a clear and important need as well as serving as a trust-building measure, this failure has negative overall impacts on the talks.

Despite countries failing to bring the necessary mandate for change to Warsaw, the negotiations did add to the chorus of voices heralding the end of the age of coal, according to Holz. Just this week, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Christiana Figueres, reminded the dirty energy lobby that most of the known coal reserves must not be burned, destroying the Polish Government’s attempt to brand the fuel as climate friendly. Ontario’s coal phase also contributed to the sense that the beginning of the end of dirty coal is here. Figueres comment adds to those of the IEA, OECD and even businesses such as PwC, who are also calling for most fossil fuel reserves to remain untouched and for governments to put a price on carbon.

“Despite the outcome of this particular round of UN climate talks, the UNFCCC is still the best venue for international collaboration on solving the global climate crisis which, before long, will affect us all,” Holz said. “And one should remember that the UN climate process works just as it is supposed to: capturing the collective political will of the world’s governments. Most delegations, especially those from industrialized countries such as Canada, came to Warsaw empty handed and without a mandate from their capitals to negotiate a new climate deal with the urgency and ambition required for the task. In the Canadian case this can be directly linked to the Harper government’s aggressive support for reckless tar sands expansion: Since the envisioned scale of tar sands extraction is utterly incompatible with meaningful action on climate change, it is to be expected that Ottawa would instruct its envoys to these talks to hold up progress.”

“Countries need to go home and spend some time listening to their people, rather than the dirty energy lobby and come back to the negotiating table next year with a serious approach



to solving this problem and securing a climate agreement in Paris, in 2015,” Holz said, “Poll after poll shows that Canadians want their federal government to take a lead on climate action and strongly support Canada’s signature to a global climate deal but the Harper government is utterly out of touch with the Canadian population on climate change. This can only change once Canadians have reclaimed their federal government from the oil agenda that currently determines its priorities.”

The Warsaw Outcome:

- A missed opportunity to put the world on pathway towards a comprehensive climate action plan in 2015 that would keep the climate safe
- CAN welcomes the establishment of the “Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage” as an important signal to take serious the threats for vulnerable developing countries. However, in its mandate, scope and power it lags behind the needs of these countries, why the outcome can only be regarded as a first step and needs to be transformed into a strong mechanism.
- No progress was made on clear plan to fairly divide the global effort of responding to climate change and a timeline of when that will happen
- On finance, a key issue at the Warsaw talks, the picture was mixed. Some European developed countries, including Germany and Switzerland, send a signal of trust by helping the Adaptation Fund reach its USD100 million fundraising goal. While this can now be used to fund concrete adaptation projects in vulnerable developing countries, it is still only a drop in the ocean given the huge adaptation costs.
- More money will flow to countries that can stringently prove they are reducing emissions from deforestation. A process for ensuring governance, and protecting indigenous people and biodiversity was established
- But, no clear deadline was set to make the first payments into the Green Climate Fund and the road towards the \$100 billion a year by 2020 commitment is murky, with no timelines, pathways, and sources outlined. Thus leaving developing countries without a predictable flow of funds to take climate action.
- Some simple accounting rules were agreed in regard to the information countries put forward on their climate action commitments



Climate Action Network Canada Réseau action climat Canada

For more information, contact:

Dr. Christian Holz, Executive Director

Climate Action Network Canada - Réseau action climat Canada

Email: cholz@climateactionnetwork.ca

Toll Free: +1 855 CLIM NET (254 6638) ext. 24

Local phone in Warsaw: [+48 795 665 642](tel:+48795665642)

About Climate Action Network Canada – Réseau action climat Canada:

Climate Action Network Canada – Réseau action climat Canada (CAN-Rac) is the Canadian node of Climate Action Network International. CAN-Rac is a national network comprised of over 90 member organizations from across the country, representing aboriginal, faith-based, labour and environmental NGOs. CAN-Rac is the only organization in the country with a mandate to promote the climate movement as a whole, rather than the interests and programs of any one organization.

About Climate Action Network International:

Climate Action Network International (CAN) is a worldwide network of over 850 Non-Governmental Organizations in more than 100 countries, working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels.

About AQLPA:

AQLPA is one of the oldest and largest environmental groups in Quebec. Founded in 1982 to fight against acid rain, AQLPA expanded its mandate in 1992 to fight against all forms of air pollution. Its president, André Bélisle, has received several awards in recognition of the work done by the Association.