

## ROAD TO COPENHAGEN 2009

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### ARTICLE

#### ESTABLISHING CLIMATE JUSTICE

History often leaves room for speculations about what really happened. The UN climate summit in Copenhagen in December will not. The proceedings will be well documented for future generations to judge our political leadership and sense of solidarity.

This week the Swedish EU Presidency gathers Environment and Energy Ministers for an informal meeting in Åre, Sweden. The objective is to discuss the challenges of Copenhagen and how the EU can create an eco-efficient economy. As a common basis for discussions, the Swedish government has commissioned the report "A European eco-efficient economy: governing climate, energy and competitiveness".

The report makes interesting reading, basically verifying the 100-year-old economic theory of Joseph Schumpeter about innovation and competitiveness, i.e. those who invest in technological innovation are tomorrow's winners. That is all very well. But we would like to remind the EU ministers of the concept of sustainable development in the context of climate change, i.e. that it will not be possible to create an eco-efficient economy on a global scale unless we ensure climate justice.

The beauty of the concept of sustainable development is that it brings the future and the rest of the world into the picture. Sustainable development depends on finding innovative tools that can promote both European competitiveness and global prosperity while mitigating climate change. It means exploiting the potential of green technologies, investing in research to develop those technologies, and investing in education to produce tomorrow's scientists and inventors. It means social justice and gender equality. It means working for fairer world trade and remodelling our global financial systems so that they serve people rather than markets.

And it means using the talents and energies of people from all walks of life – politicians and NGOs, businesses and trade unions, women and men. This is what the Road to Copenhagen Initiative, which we co-chair, is about – offering a voice to these people in the climate negotiations. After nearly two years of discussions, we have identified three issues that are key if we are to manage climate change and achieve climate justice:

Firstly, it is clear that the poorest, those least responsible, will be most vulnerable and exposed to climate change. It is estimated that, at best, only 1 per cent of the resources required for adaptation by these countries are currently available. Copenhagen must therefore deliver a global agreement based on social and development needs, and the polluters' pays principle. These principles must be reflected in available funding for adaptation.

Secondly, developed countries must assume a leadership role in cutting their own emissions. And also commit to emission cuts that reflect the latest scientific projections. It will also be critical to secure the development and diffusion of appropriate, clean technology and to ensure the access to necessary financial resources for developing countries to adopt them.

Thirdly, governments must recognise that the economic crisis is a tremendous opportunity for the change we need. Investing in green technologies, infrastructure and renewable energy is a sustainable way to stimulate the economy, create new jobs, improve quality of life and take global responsibility.

The agreement in Copenhagen probably represents the world's last chance to bring climate change under control before it's too late. Climate justice will be a deal maker or breaker in Copenhagen. Few players inside negotiation circles expect developing countries to make significant moves before developed countries have clarified their positions on emission reductions, access to technology and financing. Narrowing the gap between North and South perspectives on climate change and development needs will be imperative for the conclusion of a new agreement.

In other words, Copenhagen must deliver on the human dimension of climate change. A new agreement must build on the principle of burden sharing and the polluter's pay principle in terms of improved access to adequate, sustainable technology and predictable, additional financial resources for developing countries both to ensure mitigation and adaptation.

Steps have already been taken in this direction, e.g. the recent proposal by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown to finance climate action in developing countries with \$100 billion per year by 2020. Such a signal is welcome. However, developed countries need not only pledge to additional financial contributions to existing official development assistance (ODA) commitments, but also commit to clear, ambitious and binding emission cuts based on fairness.

Copenhagen must be the end and the beginning. When historians look back on Copenhagen, let them say, that it was the end of hot air talking and the beginning of fundamental change. That our generation, the EU and the Swedish EU Presidency didn't fail our children, but that we had the courage of visionary leadership, and the will, to succeed.

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