



## Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

### Briefing paper – Scottish Government Debate on Climate Change

#### Introduction

With the Kyoto Protocol due to expire by the end of 2012, the Copenhagen summit represents a crucial opportunity to commit to actions that help to protect us from the disastrous consequences of dangerous climate change.<sup>i</sup> While some countries have talked down the prospects of a deal, the Scottish Parliament has shown real leadership on this issue by passing the most ambitious climate change legislation in the world.<sup>ii</sup>

The legislation, by setting targets in line with the latest science, commits Scotland to fulfilling its moral responsibility. Importantly, it also demonstrates that politicians can come together, agree to act, and do what is necessary to tackle climate change. More than ever, this is needed in Copenhagen.

#### The Climate Change (Scotland) Act

The Scottish Act contains a number of important precedents. The inclusion of international aviation and shipping emissions; a climate change duty on public bodies; a 'domestic effort target' to ensure the majority of action is taken in Scotland rather than from buying carbon credits from overseas; annual targets to be set in line with a 'fair and safe cumulative budget'; consumption based emissions reporting; a sustainability duty; strong adaptation provisions; a commitment to a land-use strategy; carbon assessment of the Scottish budget; and strong energy efficiency measures are just some of the measures that makes the legislation world leading. Perhaps most importantly however, the Scottish Act contains a **42% target** for emissions reductions by 2020.

#### Copenhagen Climate Conference

SCCS believe that any deal must be both **scientifically credible** and **socially just**. This is not only because justice is a value that we espouse, but because our analysis is that a justice-based approach is a prerequisite to agreeing and delivering the solutions to the climate crisis we face. For these reasons we believe Copenhagen must ensure:

##### 1) Substantial emissions reduction targets for developed countries

The EU's position of a 20% cut with substantial allowance of 'offsets', increasing to 30% if there is a global agreement, leaves little chance of remaining within the 2 degree threshold.<sup>iii</sup> SCCS believes that a 'just target' should be set in line with what the science suggests we need to commit to; would acknowledge that developed countries are historically responsible for the position we find ourselves in; and would be sufficiently ambitious to stimulate the transformation needed to decarbonise our economies. As such SCCS believes that developed countries (known as annex 1 countries) must commit to an aggregate of **at least 40% emission reductions by 2020** from 1990 levels. A recent Stockholm Environment Institute report demonstrates that this is feasible and affordable for Europe, and what's more, given many of the measures required benefit the poorest sections of society greatest, for example through home insulation or improved public transport, would lead to a more cohesive Europe.<sup>iv</sup>

## 2) No offsetting

It is clear that developed countries need to make significant domestic emissions cuts now. A reliance on offsetting diverts attention from this, allows countries to carry on with business as usual, and has been shown to have negative social, economic and environmental impacts on developing countries.<sup>v</sup> SCCS believes **reductions from developed countries must not be achieved by buying carbon credits from developing countries** to 'offset' ongoing emissions in the industrialised world.

## 3) Substantial funding for developing countries

The impacts of climate change are already being felt by the poorest and most vulnerable around the world. At the same time, large swathes of the world live below the poverty line and don't have access to food and water. Due to these twin challenges, there is a pressing need for the developed North to provide mitigation and adaptation funds for the developing South. SCCS believes that the UK must contribute its fair share, based on its historical responsibility for carbon emissions, to a global fund of **at least €110 billion per year from 2010** to enable a healthy global economy and protect those who have done the least to cause climate change. It should be noted that these figures are a minimum; more recent studies have suggested the figure may have to be significantly higher.<sup>vi</sup> Any funds should be over and above international aid commitments and be delivered through the UN, not the World Bank.

## Conclusion

The year 2009 was billed as the most crucial yet in the fight against climate change. While it remains to be seen whether world leaders will fulfil that potential, the Scottish Parliament has certainly made its contribution by committing to a target of 42%. Across all political parties, it is right that we are proud of this achievement. Looking forward however, the focus will inevitably move towards delivery of our ambitious targets. Whether or not an agreement is made at Copenhagen, Scotland must continue to show global leadership by re-affirming our commitment to 42% and pioneering the policies needed to deliver it.

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Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a growing coalition of organisations campaigning on climate change. SCCS brings together environment, faith and development organisations, trade unions, community activists, and women's and students' groups.

**Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is a charity, registered in Scotland, no SC039643**

i It was agreed at Bali in 2007 that the Copenhagen summit would be the last chance to agree a successor to Kyoto. Given the time countries have had to reach agreement, there is little reason to believe that a delay would lead to a stronger deal.

ii See for example, the official COP15 website: <http://en.cop15.dk/news/view+news?year=2009&month=12&newsid=1615>

iii Given the allowance for offsets the 20% target actually only represents a 5% reduction on 2020 levels.

iv Europe's Share of the Climate Challenge, available online at: <http://www.sei-international.org/?p=publications&task=view&pid=1318>

v 'A Dangerous Distraction - Why Offsetting is Failing the Climate and the People' a Friends of the Earth International report, online: <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs-members/climate-justice-and-energy/why-offsetting-is-failing-the-climate-and-people>.

vi Based on the concept of 'greenhouse development rights' the Stockholm Environment Institute suggest €150- €450 billion per year is needed from the EU alone.