

# THE G8 AND CLIMATE CHANGE - TIME TO SET AN EXAMPLE

## WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

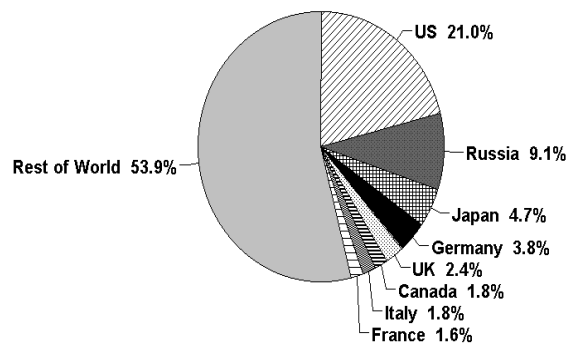
*'the largest share of historical and current emissions of greenhouse gases has originated in developed countries, ... per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low,...the share of global emissions originating in developing countries will grow to meet their social and developmental needs'*

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

*'Developing nations already account for a significant portion of total emissions, and their contributions are expected to account for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions by 2025'*

Global Climate Coalition web site - Statement of Purposes and Principles

Figure 1: G8 CO2 Emissions 1992



*'The global climate change treaty proposals unfairly target certain countries'*

National Association of Manufacturers, January 1997.

## ACCEPTING A FAIR SHARE

Most industrialised countries are failing to fulfill their commitments under the Climate Change Convention and at the same time are deflecting attention from their responsibility for emission reductions by pointing at the rising

emissions in developing countries.

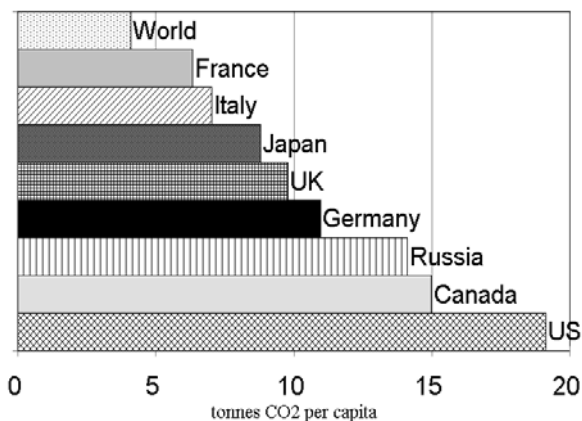
Nobody is denying that in the future, emissions from developing countries are going to grow. However, industrialised countries are **clearly responsible for the bulk of current and past emissions**. As Figure 1 shows, G8 emissions

currently account for almost half of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (with the 8 countries accounting for only 12.2% of the world's population). The US alone is responsible for

more than one fifth of global emissions (with just 4.6% of the global population).

emission cuts which in all 3 cases will be fortuitous, based on industrial restructuring and, in the case of the UK, liberalisation in the electricity sector, which has resulted in a switch from coal to gas. There have been few specific climate change measures and national programmes have seen much 'window-dressing'.

Figure 2: Per Capita CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 1992



Fairness and **equity** issues are particularly well reflected in per capita emissions. Per capita emissions in industrialised countries are far higher than those of developing countries and the world average (figure 2). **Average G8 per capita emissions are 7.5 times those of China and India.** Even the lowest G8 per capita emitter (France) still boasts per capita emissions 3.5 times those of China and 13.8 times those of India. An **equitable** solution to the climate change problem thus clearly **first** requires emission reductions from the industrialised countries before putting obligations on developing countries.

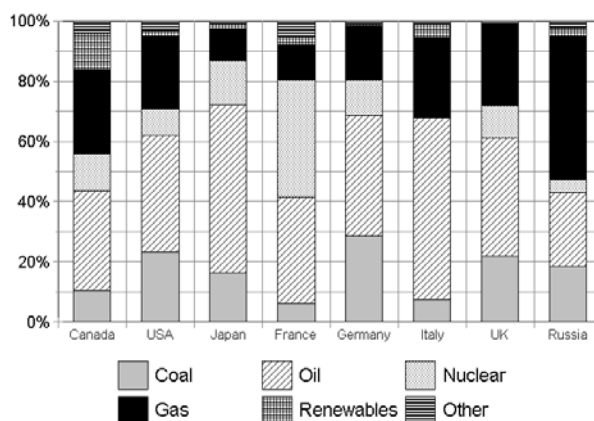
Apart from being the **world's largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter**, the **US also has by far the worst per capita emissions** out of the eight countries, almost 3 times those of France and almost 5 times the world average. Yet, the US continues to be the country most obstructive to progress in the climate negotiations, especially through its insistence on including developing countries' emissions in the Kyoto protocol.

Emission trends and projections reveal that **most G8 countries are likely to miss the emission stabilisation guideline for 2000 set by the Climate Change Convention.** Only Germany, Russia and the UK are projecting

Projected CO<sub>2</sub> emissions change 1990-2000

	percentage change
Italy	+13.8
Canada	+10.6
France	+3.8

Figure 3: Primary Energy Supply 1994



USA	+3.0
Japan	+2.3
UK	-4 to -8
Germany	-9.6
Russia	-15.1

Source: UN FCCC

In all G8 countries, fossil fuels, in particular coal and oil account for a high proportion of energy supply (figure 4). **This reliance on fossil fuels will have to be phased-out** if emission reductions to avoid dangerous climate change are to be achieved.

A switch to **renewable energy sources**, with ultra-efficient natural gas applications as an interim option, is urgently required, as are

**massive improvements in energy efficiency.**

Industrial lobby groups have argued heavily against early action to combat climate change. Associations such as the Global Climate Coalition (GCC), which counts amongst its members large multinational oil and chemical companies as well as vehicle manufacturers (e.g. Shell, Exxon, Texaco, Mobil, General Motors, Ford, Dow Chemicals, Union Carbide), have tried for years to scupper the international climate negotiations, first by attacking the science, more recently by distorting the economics.

The GCC's arguments rely on the results of economic models which are fundamentally flawed (see Friends of the Earth International Climate Briefing 3). They also make statements bordering on the ridiculous through the blatant misuse of statistics.

On the web site of the Global Climate Coalition, the following statement can be found:

*A slowdown of G7 nation carbon emissions growth has historically been associated with a slowdown in the economic growth of non-G7 nations. Over the 1971 to 1990 period, a 1% per year change in G7 nation carbon has coincided with approximately a 0.4% change in the non-G7 nations' growth of GDP. Based on this historic relationship, a 1% decrease in G7 emissions would be associated with a 0.4% slowdown in non-G7 nation economic growth rates.*

Between 1971 and 1990, there has also been a 3.7% increase in G7 GDP. If we used GCC logistics, it would then follow that every 1% emissions cut would be accompanied by a 3.7% increase in GDP. CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions could thus be the best recipe ever for increasing economic growth in G7 countries! And yet the GCC tells us that 'large and rapid reductions in emissions will adversely impact developed countries' and pleads for 'sound economic analysis'.

**INDUSTRY'S LOBBYING TACTICS**

As this example illustrates, sound economic analysis is not the GCC's strength **and there are some inherent contradictions in its arguments.** The GCC's lines of argument have been discredited on various occasions but yet they appear to have a significant influence on the position of some countries, in particular the US.

Another argument often used is that it would be better to wait for new technologies to develop. However, as the IPCC has clearly demonstrated, we don't need to wait, there are already plenty of technological opportunities to **act now. This will benefit both national economies and the global environment.**

Policy-makers have to stop listening to the rogue statements made by the GCC and other industrial lobby groups. **Scientific evidence makes a clear case for action. Sound economic arguments point towards the benefits of action in terms of increases in jobs and quality of life.**

**WHAT IS NEEDED FROM KYOTO**

Friends of the Earth International is lobbying with other NGOs for legally binding emission targets to be set at the Kyoto Climate negotiations, as a first step towards the avoidance of dangerous climate change. We believe Kyoto has to achieve:

- legally binding commitments for industrialised (Annex 1) countries to reduce the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases;
- a 20% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions over 1990 levels by 2005 by Annex 1 countries (proposed AOSIS protocol) as a first step towards the stabilisation of atmospheric concentrations;
- separate legally binding reduction targets for all other greenhouse gases

not controlled by the Montreal protocol;

- a commitment to review reduction targets at regular intervals;
- an effective compliance and monitoring
- 2010 as the first target year for emission reductions;
- a 'basket-approach', as emissions of some non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases are hard to verify;
- joint implementation with parties which have not signed up to binding reduction targets;
- complex differentiation formulae (which will only delay the negotiations) or inadequate per capita targets.

#### LONG-TERM NEEDS

- avoidance of 'dangerous' climate change, i.e. temperature increase below 0.1°C per decade, 1°C overall above pre-industrial level;
- equity: a convergence of per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This will require substantial reductions from industrialised countries from 1990 levels;
- a sustainable energy system, based on renewable energy and efficient applications.

#### WHY WE NEED A TARGET FOR 2005

More and more countries seem to be shying away from setting a reduction target for 2005, instead advocating 2010 (or even later) as the first year for which reductions should be achieved. This is unacceptable. A 2005 legally binding target is needed for the following five reasons:

- to avoid the risk of dangerous climate change, action is needed sooner rather than later;

scheme.

#### WHAT MUST NOT BE AGREED

- a 2010 target would give governments an excuse to delay action even further;
- to convince developing countries that Annex 1 countries are serious about emission reductions;
- to provide industry with an early signal that it needs to change its investment patterns now;
- to provide an incentive for immediate large-scale investments in energy efficiency and renewables.

#### CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ Action is required **now** and there must be no further delay. Already nine years of inaction have passed since the Toronto Conference in 1988, when a 20% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2005 was first called for.
- ▶ Complex mechanisms essentially serve to delay the negotiations. Hence, FOEI believes that there is a need for a simple, short-term target for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The 20% target of the AOSIS protocol should be seen as a first step towards substantial emission reductions.
- ▶ Such a reduction is feasible, as there are many 'no-regrets' measures available. An emission reductions protocol provides a gateway to a more sustain-able future, with efficient and renewable-energy based energy and transport systems. An equitable sharing of resources between North and South must be a guiding principle.

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Friends of the Earth Climate Campaign

*Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) is a federation of organisations from all over the world who are campaigning to protect the environment. FoEI is registered in Amsterdam under number V535338. International Secretariat: P.O Box 19199, 1000 GD Amsterdam, The Netherlands.*