

MEDIA ADVISORY – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gordon Brown's post Copenhagen rhetoric likely to turn a tragedy into a catastrophe

Four days after the Copenhagen summit ended without an agreement, NGOs are warning that Gordon Brown's finger pointing and the growing media hum about the need for 'major reform of the UN process' are the first steps in a process whereby wealthy nations can unilaterally come up with "solutions" that will condemn millions to death.

In a live webcast on Monday 21 December 2009, Gordon Brown announced that "never again should we let a global deal to move forward towards a greener future be held to ransom by a handful of countries."

Far from dragging down the level of ambition however, many of the small group of countries that refused to sign the "accord" did so because it was so weak that it gave no chance of averting a climate disaster in which low lying islands disappear, coastal cities are submerged, and Africa is destroyed by heat and drought.

While none of the wealthy nations came to Copenhagen with any new offers on the table, countries such as Sudan, Bolivia and Tuvalu fought hard to raise the level of ambition by insisting 1.5°C must be the target in the deal. Despite references to a 2°C target, commitments to be pledged in the Copenhagen Accord put the world on course for a temperature rise of 3°C+.

Ethiopia and the Maldives were the only poor countries invited to the sessions where the Accord was drafted. Yet far from being a 'champion of this Accord', as has been claimed, President Nasheed of the Maldives was in fact critical: "I have sat with twenty-five countries over the last two days, and I have seen the huge gulf of difference in opinion... we tried very hard to have 1.5°C in the document. I am so sorry that this was blatantly obstructed by big emitting countries... I would be the first person to be unsatisfied with this document, but this is a beginning".

Said Nick Dearden of Jubilee Debt Campaign: "The procedural wrangling in Copenhagen was created by the way a small group of leaders blatantly sidelined the UN process to come up with their own deal; Gordon Brown and other world leaders cannot be allowed to use this as an excuse to pare down the negotiating process so that only those that can be bribed or bullied are incorporated."

"While providing the outcome rich countries want, such a process will not provide a solution to the climate crisis. It will simply offer more opportunity for climate negotiations to be co-opted by wealthy nations and condemn millions of people to death by climate change."

"We are disturbed to see the fingers of blame being pointed at China for the low levels of ambition in this deal because they struck out the reference to a 2050 target," said Kate Dooley of FERN. "Emissions need to peak and decline well before 2020 and so 2050 targets are quite meaningless. The low levels of ambition in Copenhagen were mainly due to the lack of deep, binding short-term cuts in emissions which are required from the US, the EU, and others".

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Gordon Brown is quoted from The Guardian, December 21st 'Miliband hits out at China for hijacking climate deal'
2. The pledges listed in the various leaked drafts of the Accord are a collection of existing commitments made from different countries before Copenhagen. Many countries, such as the US, have confirmed they will not be changing their pledge, which at 17 per cent below 2005 works out at only a 4 per cent cut on 1990 levels. Overall, the developed world pledges add up to 12-17 per cent reductions by 2020 on 1990 levels, far short of the 45+ the developing world is asking for.

3. The NGOs supporting this press release include:
 - FERN, UK and Belgium
 - The Gaia Foundation, London
 - The Corner House, UK
 - Jubilee Debt Campaign, London
 - Econexus, London

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