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SUBMISSION RE NEW ZEALAND INDC FOR COP21

The Paris 2015 Agreement

Few believe that COP21 will produce a legally-enforceable treaty. That would require ratification by the US senate and is not within the realm of possibility.

Instead, there will be a political document which encourages all UN members to minimise their future emissions and promises vast reparations by developed countries for their past emissions.

To satisfy the demand for INDCs, each country will engage crystal balls to estimate their likely future emissions on a BAU basis. Because most of the technology (especially energy efficiency) driven by the decade-long era of high oil prices is likely to peak during 2015-20, most developed countries should be able to produce mildly optimistic figures.

The difficulty will be the target of 2°C. As the IPCC is no longer able to produce a "most likely" figure for climate sensitivity, science cannot fix the level of emissions required. The quantum will no doubt be set politically.

An important issue is whether President Obama (and his successors) will be able to enforce his wish-list targets. If developing countries use the China profile as their precedent, their targets will be disappointing. If they follow India, there must be doubt as to whether any agreement can be reached at all.

Negotiating Objective

Put at its simplest, the purpose of COP21 and, more particularly, COP 22-25, will be to pressure and coerce New Zealand to increase whatever nationally-determined figure it

produces next month. This will also be the continuing goal of endless UN-sponsored events and the huge lobbying power of green NGOs.

It makes no sense for the New Zealand government to put its best offer on the table before the negotiations even begin.

No matter what the figure is, it will be decried by lobbyists as being far too modest. In 2009, Copenhagen participants judged that we put forward the third most ambitious target (out of 194 countries) although it was about 75% less than the commitments urged by climate campaigners.

The target should be a conservative snapshot of the tonnages officials expect to apply on the target date, assuming both national and global climate policy remains unchanged. It should be accompanied by a transparent statement of the **principles** which will affect regular future reviews.

Principles

New Zealand will continue to do its "fair share" as part of a global effort to reduce CO₂ emissions. Its net emissions will –

- exclude enteric methane and agricultural N₂O (all figures and comparisons)
- be expressed on a per capita basis in a base year
- not increase, as a percentage of global net emissions
- decrease over time, as a percentage of 'rich world'¹ net emissions
- decrease in direct proportion to (but double the rate of) increases in global average temperature trends
- reflect the policies that (a) at least 75% of national electricity production shall be derived from renewable sources; and (b) a national flexible all-sectors ETS will continue to operate.

Conditions

- Other countries committing to similar targets
- The functioning of liquid and efficient international carbon markets
- LULUCF rules and other interpretations similar to those finally adopted for Kyoto

Agricultural gases

¹ Being countries with GDP/capita greater than \$30,000pa

No country is setting targets to reduce or penalise its food production and it would be unfair to undeveloped countries to do so. Insofar as New Zealand production were to decrease, the shortfall would have to be made up in countries which have higher emissions per kilojoule of nutrients.

The argument for excluding livestock emissions is similar to that which has now been accepted for reducing ethanol blends and other biofuel schemes. Improving New Zealand's figures could only be at the cost of worse global outcomes.

Population – Base Year

Many developed countries (eg France, Japan, Russia) are experiencing sharp reductions in population with consequent falls in energy demand, but this is not reflected in national targets. Undeveloped countries rightly argue that "sharing the pain" should be measured on a per-capita basis.

Most countries that have already announced targets have adopted base years that suit their nationally-determined strategies. The 1990 base year is merely a European gerrymander and is ill-suited for New Zealand. December 2007 seems suitable as it allows continuity with the commencement of our Kyoto obligations.

Temperature Relativity

Climate policy is difficult in a democracy. Many believe that "the pause" in global temperature rise over the past 17 years has robbed the issue of much of its urgency. The willingness of the population to make sacrifices will expand sharply if and when global warming accelerates.

Non-Linear Progression

Linear progression to the 2050 target already adopted makes little sense, as technological progress will obviously be heavily weighted to the long end. As is pointed out in the unanimous report of the UK House of Lords Select Committee 2005-06, "the sooner the change, the higher the cost".

When reductions are dependent on new inventions and yet-to-be-developed technologies, the rate of results in the next decade will clearly be much lower than those gleaned in the 2.5 decades thereafter.

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