

Canadian Principles for a post-2012 Climate Change Agreement

Canada understands that the global threat of climate change requires a truly global solution. The scientific work of the IPCC tells us that we must stop the rise in greenhouse gas emissions and make significant cuts in emissions over the next 50 years if we are to prevent drastic consequences.

Canada believes that the Montreal Protocol, described by Kofi Annan as “perhaps the most successful international agreement to date,” is the best model for a post-2012 agreement. The Montreal Protocol requires all countries to reduce and then eliminate the use of ozone depleting substances. However, it requires developed countries to take action faster and provides assistance to developing countries in reducing their use of these substances. We believe that a post-2012 climate change agreement should be similar.

Specifically, Canada believes that a post-2012 climate change agreement should include the following components:

1. **Target Dates:** The agreement should set a target date for stabilizing emissions and should include goals for global emission reductions by 2050.
2. **Participation:** The agreement should include binding emission reduction targets for all major emitters. Developed countries should be required to take action more quickly but major industrialized developing countries should also have binding targets.
3. **Regular Review:** One of the reasons that the Montreal Protocol has been such a success is that its targets are regularly reviewed and tightened whenever possible. For example, in Montreal this year, countries agreed to move ahead the reduction targets by 10 years. A post-2012 climate change agreement should also include regular reviews.
4. **National Circumstances:** The agreement could include an addendum on national circumstances, allowing country targets to be adjusted so as to not unduly burden the growth of any single country.
5. **Sectoral Targets:** A sectoral approach may be more appropriate in some cases. This would level the global playing field and prevent a “race to the bottom,” as industries relocate to jurisdictions with lower emission reduction requirements. Under such an approach, countries could agree on specific targets for emissions reductions from highly globalized industries such as concrete and fertilizers.
6. **Role of Technology:** As green technology will be key to meeting the challenge of climate change, the agreement should include the elimination of trade barriers to green technology. Global emission reduction targets should create demand for technology. However, there will still be a role for government to fund basic research; various models should be assessed for their effectiveness in sharing and deploying technology.
7. **Market Mechanisms:** A clear price signal is an essential tool for achieving the necessary greenhouse gas reductions. Carbon markets can provide cost-effective incentives for emission reductions and can therefore be a major tool for joint action but those reductions must be real, measurable, verifiable and reportable.
8. **Reduced Deforestation:** The agreement should include a mechanism to provide credits for reduced emissions through reductions in deforestation, as more than 20% of global emissions result from deforestation.
9. **Adaptation:** No matter what action the world takes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the science tells us that some warming will occur. Adaptation will therefore be an essential part of the solution. Canada believes that countries should make climate integral to their development assistance programs and that it must be integral to the work of the World Bank and Multilateral Development Banks.

Canada believes that a new agreement, based on these nine principles, will allow the world to tackle this challenge together.