Danish Government Slammed for Bias and Secrecy in Role As President of UN Climate Conference

COPENHAGEN – As climate negotiations open in Copenhagen, civil society organizations around the world issued the following statement strongly criticizing the Danish government for acting in a biased, manipulative and nontransparent manner in its role as President of the Conference of the Parties:

We, the undersigned civil society groups, express our concern over the actions of the Danish government in its role as President of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties.

The historic Copenhagen Climate Conference has yet to begin and a lengthening list of concerns is being raised by governments and by members of civil society:

- We criticize the undemocratic practices adopted by the Danish Prime Minister of convening small and exclusive groups of countries before the Copenhagen meeting, excluding the vast majority of countries whose futures are at stake in the negotiations.

- We criticize the Danish Prime Minister’s decision to produce draft “Copenhagen Accords” before the meeting has even started. These have been circulated to a select few governments, excluding others. They have been produced in spite of on-going negotiations under the UNFCCC and prejudge the outcome of good-faith negotiations among all Parties.

- We further criticize the texts on the basis that they systematically ignore the demands of developing countries and overwhelmingly reflect the position of Denmark and other developed countries on key issues. They seek to shift the burden of addressing climate change from those who caused it to those who suffer its worst effects.

- We criticize the Danish Prime Minister’s consistent disregard for the concerns of developing countries by downgrading expectations for Copenhagen to a “political agreement” and by falsely stating that the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012.1

These actions are inconsistent with the duty of the Danish Government in its neutral role as President of the Conference of Parties. They are an attack on the democratic processes of UN negotiations. And they are an affront to the interest of small and poor countries in the negotiations.

Further actions of this kind threaten the trust that is the very foundation of a fair and effective deal in Copenhagen. They undermine the capacity of the Danish Government to play a constructive role in the negotiations. Left unchecked, they threaten a Copenhagen collapse.

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1 See Danish PM upbeat on new global climate deal, 2 November 2009, Reuters at http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSL2439624?usg=AFQjCNGsH4mDunG9UcH0oAc9y5OmTP1MRA and address by Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen at the Pre-COP Consultations, Copenhagen, 17 November 2009.
Copenhagen must mark an historic turning point. Parties have placed their trust in Denmark’s good reputation as a fair and impartial player. We therefore call for:

- The COP President to serve in an even-handed and unbiased manner;
- A fair, open and transparent process; and
- The full participation of all countries in an inclusive manner.

The imperative in Copenhagen is not to seal a deal at any costs – but to provide the opportunity for the nations of the world to work together to secure one that is fair and effective.

We call on Denmark to support such a process. The world is watching.

**Quotations from representatives of organizations signing the statement:**

Raman Mehta from India said:
"The global community trusted the Danish government to host a fair and transparent process but they have betrayed that trust. Most importantly, they are betraying those who are disproportionately impacted by climate change and whose voices are not being heard. This unfair behaviour strikes a blow to all efforts to achieve justice and equity in the climate change negotiations process.”

Meena Raman from the Third World Network said:
"The Danish government’s biased actions threaten the trust that is the very foundation of a fair and effective deal in Copenhagen and, left unchecked, these actions will cause the collapse of the Copenhagen process. The whole world is watching.”

Palle Bendsen from NOAH/Friends of the Earth Denmark said:
"Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen is betraying the long-held and sacred tradition of Danish hospitality and decency. Danes cannot expect to be crowned a hero of the climate negotiations with this unfair behaviour. There’s more at stake than the Danish government’s public image – the lives of millions and the future of our planet are on the line.”

**Signatory Organizations:**

- Asia Indigenous Women’s Network
- Centre for Civil Society Environmental Justice Project, South Africa
- Center for Enclaves and Active Non-Violence, Austria
- Concerned Citizens Against Climate Change
- ETC Group
- Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal
- Friends of the Earth International
- Friends of Siberian Forest, Russia
- Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Phillipines
- Global Forest Coalition
- Indigenous Environmental Network, North America
- International Forum on Globalization, USA
- International Rivers, USA
- National Forum for Advocacy, Nepal
- National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, India
- Presencia Ciudadana Mexicana A.C., Mexico
- Rainforest Foundation UK, United Kingdom
- Red Mexicana de Accion frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC), Mexico
- Red Mexicana de Afectados por la Mineria (REMA), Mexico
- Society for New Initiatives and Activities, Italy
- Tibet Justice Center, USA
- Third World Network
- Union de Grupos Ambientalistas, Mexico
- Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
- World Development Movement, UK

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