

Emissions gap looks set to increase if Government action doesn't step up: scientists

Bonn – 24 May 2012- Many Governments do not appear to be implementing policies to meet their 2020 emission reduction pledges, and could increase – not shrink, the gap between real emissions and what's needed to keep global temperature rise to 1.5 or 2 degC, according to the Climate Action Tracker, a joint project of Climate Analytics, Ecofys and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

CAT's analysis of current policies, released today, show that, in reality, the 'gap' in 2020 could be even larger than discussed in the UNEP Bridging the Emissions Gap Report (2011), as that report assumed that Governments would meet their Copenhagen and Cancun pledges.

The planet is heading to a temperature rise of at least 3.5 degC, but that could be even more if the 2020 pledges are not met. For a visual analysis of the impacts of such a temperature rise, see our Durban infographic <http://climateactiontracker.org/assets/CAT-Infographic-20111211.pdf>

"It's clear that many governments are nowhere near putting in place the policies they have committed to, policies that are not enough to keep temperature rise to below 2degC. We've already identified a major emissions gap and the action being taken is highly unlikely to shrink that gap – indeed it seems that the opposite is happening," said Bill Hare, Director of Climate Analytics.

In a best-case scenario, if governments implemented the most stringent reductions they have proposed, and applied the most stringent accounting, the remaining gap would only shrink to 9 GtCO₂e/year. The range estimated in the UNEP report (to which the Climate Action Tracker contributed) for the equivalent case is 3 - 11 GtCO₂e/year.

"Most of the policies we have analyzed are not yet concrete enough to be quantified, not yet implemented and/or not yet sufficiently ambitious to ensure countries achieve their pledge. This is a worrying trend," said Dr Niklas Höhne, Director of Energy and Climate Policy at Ecofys.

After seeing the presentations made at the UN climate talks in Bonn late last week, the Climate Action Tracker's latest update tracks some recent developments:

- The US now expects to have lower emissions in 2020, but mainly due to effects of the recessions and a shift from coal to gas, driven by low gas prices. The US's two new sets of regulations –on coal-fired power plants (implemented), and on fuel efficiency in vehicles (implemented up to 2016 and planned for 2025), would still leave it some 350 MtCO₂e short of its already inadequate pledge, a gap that is the size of half of Canada's annual emissions. The US Environmental Protection Agency itself has admitted that its standards for fossil fuel fired power plants "will result in negligible CO₂ emission changes, energy impacts, quantified benefits, costs, and economic impacts by 2020."
- Brazil's deforestation rates are currently at a record low, but the proposed new forest code, if adopted, could reverse this trend. It would unequivocally make it harder for Brazil to meet its ambitious emissions reduction target as well as its reductions in deforestation rates. Scientific analysis shows that the code could increase its

emissions gap substantially. President Dilma is expected to make a decision on the code tomorrow.

- While Mexico has introduced solid new framework climate legislation, it has yet to implement actual policies and measures to reach its pledge – at the moment it is set to achieve only 12% of its pledged 30% reduction from BAU by 2020.
- It remains to be seen whether Japan will use the opportunity of all of its nuclear reactors being shut down to decarbonise its electricity sector. First steps towards a support system for renewables with the just adopted feed-in tariff are encouraging.
- Korea's newly announced ETS means it could meet its pledge if the cap is set tightly enough and the remaining open rules are set in the right way. But the details have yet to be decided. Currently there are too many open questions to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme.

Contacts in Bonn:

Marion Vieweg, Policy Analyst, Climate Analytics: +49 178 234 8890

Bill Hare, Director, Climate Analytics: +49 160 9086 2463

Niklas Höhne, Director Energy and Climate Policy of Ecofys: +49 162 101 3420

Please go to <http://www.climateactiontracker.org> for the full update released today.

Live webcast of press conference: http://unfccc4.meta-fusion.com/kongresse/sb36/templ/ovw_live.php?id_kongressmain=217

On demand webcast will be available on the UNFCCC website: http://unfccc4.meta-fusion.com/kongresse/sb36/templ/ovw_onDemand.php?id_kongressmain=217

The Climate Action Tracker is an independent, science-based assessment that tracks the emission commitments and actions of countries. It is a joint project of the following organisations:

Climate Analytics

Climate Analytics is a non-profit organization based in Potsdam, Germany. It has been established to synthesize climate science and policy research that is relevant for international climate policy negotiations. It aims to provide scientific, policy and analytical support for Small Island States (SIDS) and the least developed country group (LDCs) negotiators, as well as non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders in the 'post-2012' negotiations. Furthermore, it assists in building in-house capacity within SIDS and LDCs.

www.climateanalytics.org

Ecofys – Experts in Energy

Established in 1984 with the vision of achieving “sustainable energy for everyone”, Ecofys has become the leading expert in renewable energy, energy & carbon efficiency, energy systems & markets as well as energy & climate policies. The unique synergy between those areas of expertise is the key to its success. Ecofys creates smart, effective, practical and

sustainable solutions for and with public and corporate clients all over the world. With offices in the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, China and the US, Ecofys employs over 250 experts dedicated to solving energy and climate challenges.

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Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

The PIK conducts research into global climate change and issues of sustainable development. Set up in 1992, the Institute is regarded as a pioneer in interdisciplinary research and as one of the world's leading establishments in this field. Scientists, economists and social scientists work together, investigating how the earth is changing as a system, studying the ecological, economic and social consequences of climate change, and assessing which strategies are appropriate for sustainable development.

www.pik-potsdam.de