Friends of the Earth
Les Amis de la Terre
Amigos de la Tierra

Friends of the Earth International
Climate Change Briefing

GLOSSARY - THE JARGON OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS

Annex I countries: Annex I to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), lists 35 developed (industrialised) countries that agreed to limit their emissions of greenhouse gases.

Annex B: Annex B to the Kyoto Protocol lists agreed reduction targets (the QELRCs) for 38 developed countries. The list of countries is nearly identical to the list in Annex I of the FCCC except that it adds Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, and Monaco while dropping Turkey and Belarus .Annex B is different to Annex I because it contains individual obligations.

Annex A: Annex A to the Kyoto Protocol lists the 6 greenhouse gases and groups of greenhouse gases (GHG) that are relevant for the Kyoto targets. It also lists sources and sectors of GHG emissions.

ARD activities: Afforestation, reforestation and deforestation - activities falling in the land use change and forestry category (LULUCF). These can be used to meet the Kyoto targets (QERLR) of Annex 1 countries..

Assigned amount (AA): The total amount of emissions of greenhouse gases for a particular country, measured in carbon dioxide equivalent, that are permitted during the period specified by the Kyoto Protocol (the so called first commitment period, 2008-2012). The AA is a country's budget of greenhouse gas emissions for that period. It is calculated by taking a country's 1990 emissions and subtracting (or adding) the agreed percentage of reduction (or limitation) specified in Annex B. There are specific rules for counting emissions. **Base year**: Targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions are defined in relation to emissions in a base year. In the Kyoto Protocol, 1990 is used as the base year for most countries and most greenhouse gas emissions. Countries with economies in transition (mostly the former Soviet Union) may be permitted to select an alternate base year and all countries are allowed to use 1995 as the base year for some of the minor greenhouse gases.

Carbon cycle: Carbon circulates naturally from the biosphere to the atmosphere and back, this is called the carbon cycle. Normally, there is a certain balance in carbon uptake and release. This balance has been disturbed by massive additional emissions from burning fossil fuels.

Carbon dioxide (CO_2): Is the main greenhouse gas, a combination of carbon and oxygen. CO_2 is the byproduct of any combustion process, like energy production using fossil fuels, car engines or the burning of a forest. The concentrations of CO_2 in the atmosphere have risen from 280 ppm (parts per million) to 360 ppm since 1900. The scientists agree that increases above the target of 450 ppm might result in a massive disruption of the global climate.

Carbon dioxide equivalent: A measurement that allows summing the different greenhouse gases (GHG) according to an estimate of their relative effect, over time, on the climate. The amount of emissions of each gas is multiplied by a "global warming potential" (GWP) factor of that particular gas. The measurement takes CO_2 as a basis for the comparison with other GHGs.

Clean Development Mechanism (CDM): According to Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol,

the 'purpose of the CDM shall be to assist Parties not included in Annex I in achieving sustainable development ... and to assist Parties included in Annex I in achieving compliance with their commitments (QELRC)'. Thus, industrialised countries can finance emissions-avoiding projects in developing countries, receive emission credits for that (called Certified Emission Reductions, CERs) and count them towards their QELRC .

Commitment: The Quantified Emission Limitation and Reduction Commitment of an individual country, established in Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol (see QELRC below).

Commitment period: A time period in the future to which States' greenhouse gas emission targets (QELRC) apply. Emissions during the commitment period would be compared with these targets and the commitments have to be achieved by the end of the commitment period. The first commitment period is from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2012. The Protocol says that the Parties must start negotiating the next commitment period by 2007.

Compliance: International Agreements call the mechanisms and rules for controlling whether their rules are observed "compliance". The Kyoto Protocol asks Parties to establish a system to control them, the compliance body. The details of this are under negotiation.

Conference of the Parties (COP): The supreme body of the UNFCCC. It meets once a year to review the Convention's progress. The word 'conference' is both used in the sense of 'meeting' but also in the sense of 'association', as the COP is the main body of the UNFCCC, and can take all decisions necessary to make the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol work.

Emission Inventories: Data on all relevant greenhouse gases, based on estimates and/or input figures (for example for coal and oil). These are crucial to determine whether a country is actually reducing its emissions and ultimately whether it will meet its target (QELRC). Each Annex 1 country is required to submit a complete inventory annually according to guidelines prepared by the IPCC so that they are comparable and transparent.

Emissions Trading (ET): The Kyoto Protocol establishes a mechanism whereby Parties with commitments (Annex 1) may trade their emission allowances (i.e. part of their Assigned Amount) with other Annex 1 Parties. This trading scheme is likely to involve private companies. The trading units are called "Assigned Amount Units" (AAU).

Entry into force : The Kyoto Protocol will enter into force on the ninetieth day after ratification by at least 55 Parties to the FCCC, including enough Annex I Parties to represent at least 55% of the total Annex I carbon dioxide emissions in 1990. This means that some Annex 1 countries plus the USA must ratify or all Annex 1 countries (including Russia, the Ukraine and Japan) except the USA. This gives the USA the opportunity to threaten with non-ratification should demands not be met by other Parties.

EU-bubble: The internal arrangement between the 15 EU Member States which determines how they divide up the average 8% reduction commitment they have under the Kyoto Protocol. The EU and all Member States will be Parties to the Protocol. The targets for the EU are the following:

Country	Target in % Reduction from 1990
BELGIUM	-7.5
DENMARK	-21
GERMANY	-21
GREECE	+25
SPAIN	+15
FRANCE	0
IRELAND	+13
ITALY	- 6.5
LUXEMBOURG	-28

NETHERLANDS	- 6
AUSTRIA	-13
PORTUGAL	+27
FINLAND	0
SWEDEN	+4
UK	-12.5

Flexible Mechanisms: Refers to the three "market based" mechanisms: Joint Implementation, the Clean Development Mechanism and Emission Trading established under the Kyoto Protocol. These provide the Parties with "flexibility" to achieve their targets (QELRC) - hence the name.

Fossil Fuels: Fuels derived from organic compounds containing carbon and hydrogen that were laid down in the Earth's crust during past geological periods by formerly living plants and animals. These include coal, petroleum (oil) and natural gas. Coal is the most carbon intensive fuel (emits most carbon dioxide per unit energy when burned), followed by oil and natural gas.

Global Warming Potential (GWP): This is a scientific way of comparing the effect of different greenhouse gases (GHG) on the atmosphere. All greenhouse gases are compared to carbon dioxide (which therefore has a GWP of 1). Over a time horizon of 100 years Methane has a GWP of 21, Nitrous Oxide has a GWP of 310. Other GHG are even more powerful (potent).

Greenhouse Gases (GHGs): The major GHGs responsible for causing climate change are: carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O). The Kyoto Protocol also addresses groups of greenhouse gases such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulphur hexafluoride (SF_6).

G77 - Group 77+China: This is the group of developing countries, a political body which meets to coordinate positions and actions of developing countries and China within the UN FCCC process.

Hot air: When participating in emissions trading, Annex 1 countries can buy and sell emission credits to count against their targets (QERLR) But where do the seller's emission credits come from? Two countries likely to have credits for sale are Russia and Ukraine, whose economies have contracted since 1990. Put simply, they have fewer factories burning less fossil fuel. These emission savings are called "hot air" as they do not stem from real improvements in the economy. They are "paper credits" because they would never have occurred anyway. The amount of hot air available is very large, and if it could be sold, for example to the USA, there would be almost no need for the USA to take measures at home to reduce emissions from fossil fuels.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): This was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Programme and comprises scientists from all over the world. It is recognized as the most credible existing source of information on climate change. The IPCC responds to specific requests for information and clarification from the Convention's (UNFCCC) bodies.

Joint Implementation (JI): The Kyoto Protocol establishes a mechanism whereby a developed country (Annex 1) can receive 'emissions reduction units' (ERU) when it finances projects that reduce emissions in another Annex 1 country. JI is laid out in Article 6 of the Kyoto Protocol.

JUSSCANNZ: These are a group of Annex 1 countries including Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the US whoo coordinate their positions in the UN FCCC process and are normally the ones trying to prevent strict rules that would make them take real action at home. Iceland, Mexico, and the Republic of Korea also attend. JUSCANNZ was very active before COP3 and is now largely replaced by the Umbrella Group.

Kyoto Protocol: International agreement made between over 80 States in 1997 in the Japanese Town Kyoto which obliges industrialised countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2% in the period between 2008-2012 (commitment period). The Kyoto Protocol was adopted by States that have ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, (UNFCCC) which was adopted in 1992 at the UN Earth Summit (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro.

Loophole: Ways to undermine the reduction targets (QELRC) provided to countries in form of rules in the Kyoto Protocol defining how they can achieve their QELRC. Environmental organisations call the use of sinks, "hot air", the CDM and some accounting and methodological tricks loopholes because they reduce the environmental effectiveness of the Kyoto Protocol - if they are not filled, it will do less for the atmosphere.

LULUCF - Land use, land use change and forestry: Activities falling into this category usually concern the use of sinks to meet a country's reduction or limitation commitment. Annex 1 countries can account such activities (i.e. whether carbon has been stored or released by such activities) when trying to meet their commitments. This accounting (in Annex 1 countries) is very complex and restricted to "human induced" activities or even certain categories such as afforestation, reforestation and deforestation (ARD activities). How LULUCF activities are treated under the Protocol and whether they can be used under the CDM is very contentious. This whole issue has been called the biggest "loophole" of all.

QELRC (QELRO): "Quantified emission limitation and reduction commitment (or obligation)." The quantified commitment for greenhouse gas emissions negotiated in Kyoto and listed in Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol. The QELRC for each country is expressed as a percentage (93% for the United States, 92% for the EU, 93% for Japan) that defines the average annual permitted emissions during the commitment period when compared with emissions during the base year 1990.

Sink: A pool (reservoir) that takes up and stores carbon within the carbon cycle. For example, if there is an exchange of carbon between the ocean and the atmosphere, the ocean is the sink. Common sinks include the ocean, soils, forests and other vegetation. Under the Kyoto Protocol, developed countries can include changes in emissions from ceratin activities in the land-use change and forestry sector, when calculating whether they will meet their targets. Calculating the effects of sinks is methodologically complex and still needs to be clarified.

Source: Any source of greenhouse gas emissions. Common human sources include: fossil fuel combustion for the production of energy or in transport, solid waste decomposition, land use change, some industrial processes. Forests also emit greenhouse gases and can therefore strictly spoken also be sources.

Umbrella Group - The JUSCANNZ group with Russia and the Ukraine in addition. This group is now the most powerful counterpart to the EU and G77.

UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - this name refers both to the document itself, but also to the body/regimes that were formed under this Convention and now act as forum for the negotiations for the Kyoto Protocol. The Convention entered into force on 21 March 1994 after ratification by 50 signatories. Until today, the treaty has been ratified by 181 countries which are therefore called 'Parties to the Convention'.

CONTACT

FACE UP TO CLIMATE CHANGE!

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