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Copenhagen close to failure on aviation and shipping emissions

Call for EU to fight back on deal that could be key to billions in climate finance for poorest countries

With less than two days to go, the Copenhagen climate negotiations have yet to identify a feasible way forward to reduce emissions from international aviation and shipping.

Emissions from the international shipping sector have grown by more than 85% since 1990, international aviation emissions have grown by over 50% during the same period. Left unchecked, emissions from the two sectors will double or triple by 2050. A failure to reach an agreement here on these so-called 'bunker' emissions will jeopardise the chances of keeping global warming well below 2 degrees in 2050.

"Negotiators have so-far failed to see beyond their own narrow or group interests," said Bill Hemmings of Transport & Environment. "They are currently hemmed in by stale political positions. Attention is focusing on an extremely weak text being circulated by Norway. This is unfortunate and regrettable."

Excluded from commitments in the Kyoto protocol, responsibility for cutting emissions from the two sectors was handed to the UN's International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and International Maritime Organisation (IMO). But neither has come forward with a single binding measure in the twelve years since Kyoto.

"The European Union came to Copenhagen apparently determined to deliver on bunkers," said Peter Lockley, Head of Transport at WWF-UK, "There were signs that steps forward could be made, in the form of global reduction targets and an accelerated process in the IMO and ICAO to agree on reduction measures. The current so-called text represents an alliance of convenience, but the EU can and must fight back with the Least Developed Countries and others who still believe a stronger deal is not only necessary but possible."

Two possible ways of reducing emissions from aviation and shipping gathered support from a number of countries in the run-up to Copenhagen – a separate global Emissions Trading System for aviation and shipping and a climate levy on marine fuel. Both options are feasible and would generate substantial revenues, estimated at \$25-37 billion per year, which could go towards the global climate fund for developing countries that has been a major part of the Copenhagen discussions.

Developing countries, which would benefit enormously from the revenues generated by a levy or emissions trading scheme, seem unprepared to endorse measures, mainly due to concern that they will never gain access to the money it would generate.

"Norway's proposal sends responsibility for action on bunkers back to ICAO and IMO without any sense of urgency or commitment to absolute reduction targets other than a vague reference to keeping warming below 2 degrees," said John Maggs of Seas At Risk. "There is also no reference to the pivotal role that bunker revenues can play in climate finance. Norway's proposal risks continued inaction and political paralysis. The whole idea of raising the aviation and shipping issue in Copenhagen was to use the occasion of wider negotiations to break the political deadlock and agree a fast track to introduce reduction measures. That chance is now slipping away as is the likelihood of releasing billions of dollars of urgently needed additional climate finance."

In order to break the bunkers deadlock, Environmental NGOs call on:

- All delegations to act on the urgency of the situation and have Copenhagen link early global action to reduce bunker emissions to a significant program of climate finance for developing countries.

- The Copenhagen Agreement to set the level of ambition, the framework for revenue distribution and a fast track timeline to agree on global measures in ICAO and IMO.
- The United States to declare its willingness to use revenues from bunker mitigation as climate finance. Such a declaration from the USA would quickly trigger a developed country (Annex 1) offer of climate finance in return for global bunker mitigation.
- Emerging economies to agree to participate in a global bunker mitigation process or see regional measures imposed by the EU and USA without any access to the revenues generated.
- Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) to support bunker measures on the condition that routes to their countries will be exempted and revenues will flow to the most vulnerable states.
- Latin American countries to accept that any trade impacts will be low for them and, in any case, more than compensated by access to climate financing.
- OPEC to support bunker measures provided a proportion of revenues are used for clean technologies within the sector.

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