

Posted by Joan Russow
Wednesday, 12 December 2018 11:15 -

A People's Submission on Canada, Climate Change and the Copenhagen Accord
Ecosocialism or barbarism There is no third way Posted on January 29, 2010 C
limate and Capitalism readers are sharply critical of this letter and statement, sent on January
28, from Climate Action Network Canada, to Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the United
Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Dear Mr. de Boer,

On behalf of the people of Canada, we are making a "Peoples Submission" to the Copenhagen Accord. We realize it is exceptional for you to receive a national submission through a nongovernmental organization. However, the present circumstance in Canada is exceptional. The views and aspiration of the majority of Canadians are not reflected in the views and actions of the present government.

The Canadian people have been very clear in their continuing support for the Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We also support Canada adopting science based emission targets and contributing our fair share to a mitigation and adaptation fund.

We want the international community to know Canadians will one day live up to our obligations.

Please accept this "Peoples Submission" as an indication of the real values and views of Canadians.

Sincerely,

Graham Saul

Executive Director

Climate Action Network / Réseau action climat Canada

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A PEOPLE'S SUBMISSION ON CANADA, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE COPENHAGEN ACCORD

Submitted January 28th, 2010 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This submission is made on behalf of Canadian citizens who overwhelmingly desire that our government take real action on climate change. We submit that in order to contribute its fair share to a meaningful global climate change agreement, Canada should take the following actions:

1.
Canada should commit to a science-based emissions reduction target of 25 per cent below 1990 levels by the year 2020 – “further strengthening” the government’s current target of 3 per cent below 1990 by 2020, as required by the Copenhagen Accord.
2.
Canada should provide its fair share (3 to 4 per cent) of long-term climate financing to assist the most vulnerable and poorest countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to unavoidable climate change impacts. The Copenhagen Accord commits developed countries to “a goal of mobilizing” US \$100 billion per year by 2020. Canada should go further by supporting a collective financing target of US \$195 billion per year by 2020.
3.
Canada should also provide its fair share (3 to 4 per cent) of short-term climate financing to assist the most vulnerable and poorest countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to unavoidable climate change impacts. This is equivalent to CAD \$320 to 420 million per year in new funds, over and above our Official Development Assistance commitments, from 2010 to 2012. This financing would be a first step towards the long-term financing commitment noted above.
4.
Finally, Canada should recommit itself to fulfilling its legal obligations under the Kyoto Protocol (an emissions reduction target of 6 per cent below 1990 levels during the period 2008 to 2012), and working with the international community to come to an agreement in 2010 on stronger commitments under the Protocol, post-2012.

Background

The Copenhagen Accord, states the following in paragraph 4...

“Annex I Parties [industrial countries and Economies in Transition] commit to implement individually or jointly the quantified economy-wide emissions targets for 2020, to be submitted in the format given in Appendix I by Annex I Parties to the secretariat by 31 January 2010 for compilation in an INF document. Annex I Parties that are Party to the Kyoto Protocol will thereby further strengthen the emissions reductions initiated by the Kyoto Protocol.”

Because January 31st has been identified as a key decision point, we would like to take this opportunity to express our concerns about the Copenhagen Accord and the Canadian Government's complete failure to deal with the climate change crisis.

The position of the Harper government is in direct opposition to positions supported by the Canadian public, most provinces and the Canadian Parliament. The Government has not sufficiently considered the majority viewpoint that Canada needs to take serious action to tackle global warming rather than sit on the sidelines doing nothing.

Our submission does not imply support for the Copenhagen Accord, and we strongly condemn any attempt to establish a new negotiating process outside the UNFCCC based on the Accord. The Copenhagen Accord was undoubtedly the most controversial outcome of the Copenhagen climate conference. Divisive from its inception, the Accord remains the subject of great debate and has uncertain political implications.

Procedurally, consensus on the Accord was impossible, so the United Nations Conference of the Parties only “takes note of” the Accord. It is effectively outside of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is not clear how many countries have endorsed the agreement, but essentially the Accord was pushed by major industrial polluting countries in order to give some semblance of success in Copenhagen. The Accord is a greenwash not supported by the 192 countries party to the UNFCCC or the 184 countries party to the Kyoto Protocol.

The Accord's ‘pledge and review’ system for developed countries’ emission reduction targets, and the absence of a science-based aggregate target, threaten to lock in the low levels of commitment that were seen in Copenhagen, rather than provide a route towards a fair, ambitious and binding global agreement.

The United Nations is the most accountable, transparent, and inclusive forum for delivering a

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global climate change deal. The two-track process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with negotiations proceeding under working groups on the Kyoto Protocol and Long-term Cooperative Action, will proceed into COP16 in Mexico in December 2010. We urge the Canadian government to renew its commitment to the UN process in the lead-up to the G8 and G20 summits that Canada will host in June of this year.

The Copenhagen Accord has fundamental flaws which include the following:

- No substance / No timeline – The Accord completely failed to achieve an agreement that could prevent catastrophic climate change in the coming years; it failed to delineate the nature of the agreement that would have to be achieved; and it even failed to adopt any timeline for the achievement of such an agreement. At two and a half pages in length, the document is an insult to the effort of the nations who have been negotiating since the Bali conference in 2007 in the hopes of obtaining a meaningful agreement in Copenhagen.
- Not legally binding – One of the major strengths of the Kyoto Protocol is that it is legally binding. Environmentalists and most countries argued strongly that the Protocol should be maintained, strengthened and extended as a fundamental structure going forward. Although the Accord recognizes that both negotiating tracks under the UNFCCC (the Kyoto Protocol and the Long-term Cooperative Action) will still proceed into COP16/CMP6 in Mexico, some countries, notably Canada, appear to think they can use the Copenhagen Accord as a basis for killing the Kyoto Protocol.
- No aggregate industrialized country target – An ambitious outcome from any climate change agreement will depend initially on industrialized country targets. The Accord fails to identify a science-based aggregate (i.e. collective) target for reduction of industrialized country greenhouse gas emissions. With no aggregate target, and no negotiating process where individual country targets must be agreed by all, reduction commitments are completely arbitrary and voluntary. There is thus no guarantee of reaching the science-based target implied by the 2 degree C limit above pre-industrial levels that is mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Accord. The Accord also fails to require 1990 as a base year for reduction targets, thus ensuring further uncertainty, inequity, and confusion.
- Inadequate financial commitment – A fair and just outcome in any climate change agreement depends on clear, adequate financial commitments from industrialized countries for adaptation and emissions reduction in the developing world. Climate Action Network International estimates that industrial countries will have to provide long-term climate financing of at least

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\$195 billion USD annually by 2020 to provide adequately for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. The Copenhagen Accord does not even come close to this level of financial support. The Accord specifies at Paragraph 8 that developed countries will provide fast start financing “approaching USD 30 billion” for the three-year period from 2010 to 2012. Paragraph 8 also mentions “a goal of mobilizing jointly USD 100 billion dollars a year by 2020”. However, we note that this long-term goal not only fails to stipulate an adequate amount of financing, but that a vague “goal of mobilizing”, through a wide variety of public and private, bilateral and multilateral sources, does not constitute a firm financing commitment. o

Having said this, with the resumption of negotiations under the United Nations’ existing two-track system, Canada’s position on climate change, as put forward by the Harper Government, is in need of radical reform. It is in direct contradiction to positions supported by parliament, most provinces, and public opinion.

The Position of Canada’s Parliament:

Over the past two years, a majority of Members of Parliament (MPs) have consistently voted for more ambitious objectives than this government. For example, a resolution was passed by the House of Commons in November that called on the Canadian government to commit to a more ambitious objective in Copenhagen of reducing global warming pollution to 25 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 and contributing its fair share of financing to assist developing countries with adaptation and adoption of clean energy technologies.

The government has prorogued Parliament, again depriving elected Members of Parliament of an opportunity to democratically debate the outcomes of Copenhagen, including the controversial Copenhagen Accord, by the submission deadline of January 31, 2010.

Provinces:

More than 80 per cent of Canadians live in provinces with significantly more ambitious climate change agendas than the federal government. British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland all have much more ambitious targets than the federal government. Many cities within Canada are also taking notable action at the municipal level.

Canadian citizens:

Polls show that half of Canadians are not satisfied by our Prime Minister’s performance in

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Copenhagen. Polls also show that the majority of Canadians believe the government's target is not ambitious enough and 75 per cent of Canadians are embarrassed by the government's inaction on climate change.

Over 150,000 Canadians have signed the KYOTOplus petition which calls for emission cuts of 25 per cent below 1990 by 2020; an effective national plan to reach this target; help for developing countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change; and a fair, ambitious and legally-binding second phase of the Kyoto Protocol.

This statement, including footnote references, can be downloaded in PDF format.

Related posts... (auto-generated)

- Canadian Left Views on Climate Change
- Comparison of the People's Agreement and the Copenhagen Accord
- Bolivia Rejects U.S. Blackmail on Copenhagen Accord

Posted in Canada & Quebec, UN Meetings

8 Responses to A People's Submission on Canada, Climate Change and the Copenhagen Accord

1.
Jeff White January 29, 2010 at 5:44 pm #

Some perspective on the above demand for Canada to set a reduction target of 25 per cent below 1990 levels by the year 2020:

25 per cent is at the low end of the necessary reduction targets for the imperialist countries as set out by the IPCC. Their target range, based on their very conservative projections, is 25 to 40 per cent below 1990 levels in order to hold global average temperatures to a 2% rise.

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At this point, Canada is unlikely to be able to reach even a 25 per cent reduction by 2020, without a massive restructuring of the economy and society (i.e. a socialist revolution). As of 2010, we are already at 34% above 1990 levels.

2.

Joan Russow January 30, 2010 at 10:33 am #

While the criticism of Harper and his Conservative government, and of the Copenhagen Accord are important, the measures proposed in the above submission, are way below what is being advocated by progressive states such as Bolivia.

Implementation of UNFCCC; TIME TO BE BOLD |

At COP 15, on December 17 and 18, presentations were made, by the head of states, to the Assembly. The majority of heads of states were calling for the global community to maintain the rise in temperature to well below 1.5 degrees. Sadly, it was clear at COP 15 that the demands of the majority of states were disregarded. On December 7, Papua New Guinea had proposed that, rather than descend to the lowest common denominator, the Parties should strive for Consensus with a fall back of 75%. Unfortunately, this proposal was summarily dismissed by the Chair.

If one counts the G77 representing 130 developing states along with some low lying states or small island states which were not members of the G77 along with some of the member states of the European union, then possibly over 75% of the signatories of the UNFCCC would have been prepared to sign and ratify a strong, legally binding agreement. While it could be argued, on the one hand, that this agreement would be irrelevant because the major greenhouse gas producers would have not signed on, but on the other hand, citizens in the major greenhouse gas producing states could use the agreement to pressure their governments to make commitments to stronger emissions reductions. Hopefully that in COP 16 in Mexico, the demands of the majority will be respected.

Signing of the Copenhagen accord currently in front of heads of states would undermine the actions necessary to make the drastic cuts necessary to fulfill the legal obligations under article 2 of the UNFCCC to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system."

Would your state, sign this document, if at least 75% of the states agreed to sign and ratify a strong statement

We affirm that

The UNFCCC is ratified by 194 countries – representing near universal membership – it commands near universal support and its legitimacy is unquestioned. The UNFCCC stated: “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere must be at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. This level equates to a target of below 1 °C, which is the point at which global systems on land, water and air will be so affected as to create vicious feedback cycles and destabilize many ecosystems and human societies.

and That

Because of the global urgency, there must be the political will to strive to contain the rise in temperature to less than 1 °C above pre-industrial levels, and the parts per million to 300 ppm. Strict time frames must be imposed, so that overall global emissions will begin to be reversed as of 2010. There must be a global target of 30% below 1990 levels by 2015, 50% below by 2020, 75% by 2030, 85% by 2040 and 100% below by 2050, while adhering to the precautionary principle, and differentiated responsibility principle [the emission debt owed by Developed countries to developing countries has to be seriously addressed].

and developed country parties agree to acknowledge their emissions debt to developing countries, to cancel their existing debt of developing countries, to implement the long-standing obligation of .7% of GDP for overseas development, to ensure new funding for climate change reparation. In addition, developed country parties will renounce war and reallocate military expenses.

3.

Cory Morningstar January 30, 2010 at 11:44 am #

CAN states: Canada should commit to a science-based emissions reduction target of 25 per cent below 1990 levels by the year 2020 – “further strengthening” the government’s current target of 3 per cent below 1990 by 2020, as required by the Copenhagen Accord.

And this;

Over 150,000 Canadians have signed the KYOTOplus petition which calls for emission cuts of 25 per cent below 1990 by 2020; an effective national plan to reach this target; help for

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developing countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change; and a fair, ambitious and legally-binding second phase of the Kyoto Protocol.

These targets are not fair and ambitious. They are incredibly outdated and they are now nothing more than a slap in the face to those most vulnerable. They fly in the face of true climate justice. This target is from an outdated campaign and should be abandoned immediately. This target itself is an embarrassment to Canadians. The targets CAN supports are not at all based on the current science. What a crime that such a weak, passive statement is being sent representative of so many NGOs.

In Copenhagen, the G77 & Bolivia called for targets of 1C, 52% by 2017, 65% by 2020, 80% by 2030 & well above 100 by 2050 (by developed countries). There can be no denying of what targets those most vulnerable have asked us to support. During COP15 CAN was in the room when Lumumba Di-Aping asked all NGOs, including CAN to support these targets. So why is CAN not supporting the targets needed for those most at risk to simply live.

<http://canadianclimateaction.wordpress.com/eyes-wide-shut-tcktcktck-expose-from-activist-insider/>

Integral NGOs will support/endorse this peoples submission:

<http://canadianclimateaction.wordpress.com/2010/01/30/endorsement-implementation-of-unfccc-time-to-be-bold/>

We reviewed the recent CAN International Copenhagen policy paper.

This is not a policy paper designed to prevent global climate catastrophe. It is in fact a global suicide pact.

CAN states (international policy paper):

1. It is a non global emergency policy (even though the paper says the survival of humanity and ecology is at stake)
2. States that 2C is the danger level. At 1.5 we lose small island states.
3. There is no mention of gov't imposing a price on carbon and no carbon pricing is given to

achieve goals.

4. The failed Kyoto process is the only assumed process.

5. No mention of carbon taxing – without which nothing can work.

6. No clear submission that we are beyond dangerous climate interference now, though it is inferred.

No statement we at catastrophic danger (like John Holdren has been saying since 2006)

7. The introductory paragraph (and the paper) does not document the dangers; No mention runaway or Arctic methane feedbacks – the greatest danger to the survival of life on Earth.

No mention of Arctic at all.

There is no mention of the catastrophic dangers to agriculture – the greatest danger to survival of huge populations and humanity (excluding

Arctic)

8. Delaying global peaking up to 2017 has no rationale and is a crime.

9. Delaying something approaching virtual zero emissions till 2050 is insane certain catastrophe.

CO2 emissions are cumulative so to stop further increase in atmospheric CO2 zero must be targeted and fast.

10. Delaying reaching atmospheric 350CO2 eq to 100 years from now is insane.

So long as CO2 is above 350ppm global warming and ocean acidification will continue.

10 No clear submission of a zero carbon emissions policy target – this receives one mention .

11. No mention of non CO2 GHGs

12. No mention of black carbon soot.

Relevant extract***

Consequently, a Copenhagen agreement must be guided by the following principles:

Consistency with a climate trajectory which gives us a high probability of keeping warming well below the dangerous level of 2°C.

Greenhouse gas concentrations would need to be reduced ultimately to 350ppm CO₂e, likely in the 22nd century. Global emissions must peak within the 2013 – 2017 commitment period and rapidly decline to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050;

The combination of nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) supported by developed countries⁴ and mitigation action undertaken autonomously in developing countries, should lead to a substantial deviation from business as usual emissions growth while ensuring developing countries just transition to a carbon free economy.

Adaptation;

The most recent scientific studies and observations show that climate change is happening now and its impact on the planet, people and nature is increasingly severe. Even the most robust greenhouse gas reduction efforts will limit but not avoid dangerous climate change, which is already and increasingly exacerbating existing poverty, food insecurity, and ecosystems degradation.

Mitigation;

Developed Countries (Annex 1) The challenge now is to work together – cooperatively, effectively, urgently – to tackle climate change, while also recognizing the historic and current

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contributions of developed countries to climate change and its harmful effects. Developed and developing countries can and must play their part in preventing dangerous climate change in a way that reflects equity and their fair share of effort to ensure a safe and stable climate system.

4.

Joan Russow January 30, 2010 at 1:39 pm #

I also think that we should address the response to Harper at the World Economic Forum, as well as the flawed Constitutional practice of permitting a Prime Minister, particularly from a minority government, to sign on to an Accord without taking it to Parliament.

Harper, and his regressive policies on climate change are even out of sync with the World Economic Forum

Harper, and his Conservatives are falling in popularity not only in the polls in Canada, but also with his economic colleagues in Davos.

In the Don Tapscott's, Globe and Mail piece, "Carpe diem , Stephen Harper. Davos was underwhelmed",

<http://www.pej.org>

Tapscott described Harper as "the dirty old man of the climate world." and provided a link to a November 30, Article in the Guardian, Copenhagen conference: The countries to watch, which assessed, Harpers performance in Copenhagen:

"Canada

In stark contrast to its cuddly international image, Canada is the dirty old man of the climate world – missing its Kyoto emissions reduction target by a country mile (by 2007, it was 34% above its target) and showing no signs of reigning in its profligacy.

Friends and foes Roundly criticised by developing countries for being way off the pace, now there are calls to suspend it from the Commonwealth.

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What they're offering A pathetic 3% cut on their 1990 emissions levels by 2020 – an offer mired in thick black tar.

What they most want No curbs on its ability to mine those lucrative tar sands in Alberta for oil (a far more carbon-intensive process than regular extraction).

Least likely to say “Look, when you set a target, you've got to stick to it, OK?””

The Guardian could have added that, in Copenhagen, Harper's Conservative minority Government was the recipient, from the NGOs, of the “Colossal Fossil” award for being the state that was most obstructionist, and it was one of the few governments that did not have the courage to face the International media. In addition, Harper was perhaps the only state leader that was there but did not address the Plenary. He claimed that the reason was that he was dining with the Queen of Denmark; but one wonders what they were doing at midnight – the time slotted for Harper's Conservative Minority Government to address the Assembly.

The Globe article also pointed out: “In fact, Mr. Harper further damaged Canada's reputation on this issue, and undermined his approach to global co-operation in a panel discussion after his speech.

When questioned about Canada's position on climate change initiatives, he said that countries needed to take into account the economic costs of being green. To be sure, Canada, as an energy producer has more complex issues than European countries. But some members of the audience were disturbed by the remark.

Liberal MP Scott Brison told me that Prime Minister Harper was ‘the only leader at Davos who didn't understand the opportunities for economic growth and jobs in becoming a green nation. Environmental laggards will become economic laggards in the emerging global carbon-constrained green economy.’ (Don Tapscott, Globe and Mail)

it should be noted that what is described as Canada's position is essentially Harper's Conservative minority government's Position. In several votes in Parliament, since Harper's government was in power, the majority of the members of Parliament voted in favour of stronger environmental policy on climate change but the majority vote was not binding on the government. Few of Harper's international colleagues would be able to fathom the absurdity of the Political system in Canada. First of all the practice that Harper, with a minority government can govern without forming a coalition. The Prime Minister, in Canada, under the Constitution, has the power to (or not to) sign, ratify or adopt international agreements without being required to put the agreement on the floor of the House of Commons. (To provide, however, enabling

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legislation to ensure compliance, the Prime Minister must go to Parliament.

Other states must also be puzzled about Harper's use of the office of the Governor General, (i) to dissolve Parliament, in 2008, to avoid an investigation by a Parliamentary Committee on Ethics and Access to Information, into allegations of fraudulent funding schemes during the 2006 election; (ii) to prorogue Parliament in 2008 to evade a non confidence vote and the forming of a Coalition of opposition parties and (iii) to prorogue Parliament in 2009 to avoid an investigation into Harper's Conservative minority government into the treatment of Afghani detainees. It should also be noted that while a previous Liberal Prime Minister appointed the current Governor General, and while she, theoretically, cannot be "removed", Harper does have the power to appoint a new Governor General, which has the same effect as removing her.

At the moment, Harper's government is at 31% in the polls.

So the question arises, should Harper be able to speak for Canada or should he qualify his remarks by stating that he is speaking on behalf of his minority Conservative government.

The majority of Canadians do want Canada to seriously address the issue of climate change, and support the end of the production in the tar sands.

<http://PEJ.org>

5.

Joan Russow January 31, 2010 at 10:05 am #

UPDATE: January 30 Harper submitted his copycat emission reduction targets to the annex 1 table to the Copenhagen accord:

In Copenhagen, at 3am on December 19, 2009 there was a table 1 list of developed country emission targets. On the 3am table 1, Harper had listed his target as 20% below 2006 level by 2020, and the US had listed its target as 17% below 2005 by 2020, both of which would have been about 3% below 1990 levels by 2020. Both these targets were conspicuously below the other developed state targets. All the other developed states, except Australia – which used 2000 as the baseline – used the 1990 level as the baseline. The European Union made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% [or 30% if other developed states would move] below 1990 levels by 2020.

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In Copenhagen, at 4 am, on December 19, 2009, Adrienne Arsenault, from CBC, reported from Copenhagen and showed table 1 of the Copenhagen accord, as being blank.

WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN 3AM AND 4AM?

Perhaps Harper and Obama were so ashamed that they insisted that their meagre commitments had to be removed.

Or was it just Harper that was concerned because Harper had made a serious error in not completely emulating Obama.

Today January 30 to rectify this situation, Harper has submitted his greenhouse gas commitment to be included in Table 1 of annex country commitments:

Harper's commitment now is 17% below 2005 by 2020.

6.

Jeff White January 31, 2010 at 11:51 pm #

17% below 2005 by 2020?

Total Canadian GHG emissions are estimated to have been 747.5 megatonnes (Mt) in 2005

A 17% reduction would mean 620 Mt by 2020.

This compares with 1990 emissions levels of 592 Mt; thus Harper's 17% "reduction" is actually a target of almost a 5% increase over 1990.

7.

Gerard February 1, 2010 at 8:49 pm #

I am so dissappointed in Canada – the symbol of the virtuous natural world and natural living of my childhood.

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8.

Jeff White February 5, 2010 at 12:31 am #

Sorry, I was relying on outdated emission figures still available on the government's website.

Canada's annual GHG emissions since 1990 were recalculated a few years ago. The official 2005 figure is now 731 Mt, so the Harper government target for 2020 is 606.7 Mt, which is 2.5% above the 1990 figure of 592 Mt.

<https://climateandcapitalism.com/2010/01/29/a-peoples-submission-on-canada-climate-change-and-the-copenhagen-accord/>