

## **One Giant Leap**

Inspiring real action to tackle climate change:  
Campaign overview with draft legal text



November 2009

## About Sandbag and this campaign

Sandbag is a UK based not-for-profit campaigning organisation dedicated to achieving real action to tackle climate change and focused on the issue of emissions trading. Our aim is educate and inform civil society about emissions trading policy, to scrutinise how it is working on the ground and to lobby for improvements. In doing this we seek to involve civil society more in the operation and future development of emissions trading.

From our work to date we have identified that the effectiveness of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme has been significantly weakened by over-allocation and the effect of the recent recession. Since emissions trading at a company level, under the EU ETS, and a country level, under Kyoto, are linked, weaknesses in one impact on the other.

In order to secure a more robust company level emissions trading scheme we need a robust international framework in the post 2012 period. The effectiveness or otherwise of domestic EU policies such as the EU ETS also effect the levels of ambition we are able to take on in international agreements. It is therefore imperative that we understand how these two issues inter-relate.

One Giant Leap is Sandbag's campaign to increase the robustness and ambition of the post-Kyoto international framework by prioritising effort in the electricity sector of those countries with the largest power emissions.

We have received international public support for this campaign, most notably from volunteers within the global parkour and freerunning community, which – on September 26<sup>th</sup> 2009 – staged One Giant Leap rallies across 127 cities and 37 countries, setting a new world record for the largest event in the history of the sport.

**We would very much welcome hearing the views of others on this subject. Please email us on [info@sandbag.org.uk](mailto:info@sandbag.org.uk). For more information please visit our website: [sandbag.org.uk](http://sandbag.org.uk)**

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Registered Address: BWB Secretarial Ltd, 2-6 Cannon Street, LONDON, EC4M 6YH  
Trading Address: 4 Charterhouse Square, LONDON, EC1M 6EE.

# One Giant Leap: an overview

Sandbag's One Giant Leap campaign is calling for an effective new international agreement to tackle climate change.

We want a specific commitment from those countries with the greatest responsibility to act and the greatest potential to act.

## **What we want:**

Key countries agree to control emissions from the single largest source of carbon dioxide pollution: the production of electricity from fossil fuels. In doing so they will raise billions of dollars of investment in clean technology.

## **Why?**

A global agreement involving all countries and covering all emissions will be needed in the long run but in the meantime it is imperative that emissions are controlled and investment in cleaner forms of electricity is hugely increased.

Without hugely increased sources of clean electricity it will be impossible for people in developing countries to raise their living standards to those enjoyed in the West. It will also be impossible to reduce emissions in other sectors of the economy such as transport where energy from electricity is needed to replace fossil fuels.

## **How?**

The good news is that emissions in the electricity sector come from very concentrated sources – only 3,300 power stations are responsible for nearly a third of the world's emissions of carbon dioxide. By comparison the EU Emissions Trading Scheme covers 12,000 installations. Power emissions are therefore relatively straightforward to regulate. Only countries with highly developed power sectors and significant volumes of emissions would be required to take on targets.

In the EU power stations are already subject to tough reduction targets and as a result they are responsible for the vast majority of all purchase of overseas emissions credits in the Clean Development Mechanism. An international agreement based on the power sector would extend the coverage of targets to include all countries with emissions of over 100mt CO<sub>2</sub> per annum from their power sector. Countries would be able to choose the precise form and nature of the target, including growth targets for some countries if they deviate significantly from Business As Usual, but once set they would be converted into carbon budgets. Trading could be introduced to allow for the discovery of least cost solutions.

## **When and where?**

The most logical place for such an agreement to be brought to life is in the redrafted UNFCCC and associated Protocols being discussed in Copenhagen this year. A draft version of what the legal text might look like is included below.

For more information please visit: <http://sandbag.org.uk/onegiantleap> or email [info@sandbag.org.uk](mailto:info@sandbag.org.uk)

## **The Parties to this Convention/Protocol,**

**Concerned** that anthropogenic sources of greenhouse gases must be reduced to stabilise concentrations in the atmosphere at safe levels and that emissions to the atmosphere must peak and decline in less than ten years,

**Acknowledging** that countries face different circumstances and have differentiated capabilities and responsibilities but that all countries will benefit from a stable and safe climate,

**Recognizing** that emissions from the generation of electricity sector represent the single biggest source of fossil derived carbon dioxide emissions, accounting for nearly a third of annual global emissions,

**Recognizing** also that demand for electricity is likely to continue to rise and that the carbon intensity of that electricity must fall dramatically if global emissions are to decline,

**Recognizing** further that clean sources of electricity will be essential to reduce emissions from other sources including industrial processes and transportation,

**Acknowledging** that a relatively small number of countries, power companies and installations are responsible for the vast majority of emissions from this sector, that in general the sector is not exposed to international competition and therefore noting the relative suitability of the sector to be regulated via a sectoral agreement,

**Noting** that numerous commercially proven technologies for low emissions sources of electricity already exist and the enormous potential for increased deployment of such technologies,

**Noting** also that an increased demand for low emission technologies at a global scale will reduce costs and speed commercialisation of new technologies,

**Have agreed as follows:**

### **Article X**

All parties shall introduce policies and measures appropriate to their own circumstances to support the deployment of low emissions sources of electricity generation.

Parties with emissions from their electricity generation sector in excess of [100 m tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>] per annum shall commit to quantified reduction targets.

Targets may take the form of:

- (a) absolute emissions cuts relative to a historic baseline
- (b) absolute emissions cuts relative to a Business As Usual projection
- (c) a percentage reduction in carbon intensity of the electricity generated
- (d) an absolute value or ceiling for the carbon intensity of electricity generated

[On the basis of such targets Parties shall be given five yearly carbon emissions budgets for emissions from their power sector. The first budget shall cover the years [2018- 22].

Parties with targets are required to take action to keep emissions within budget. Any liabilities or assets against their emissions budgets can be reconciled using trading mechanisms, the precise form of which are to be determined in a subsequent meeting.

A Conference of the Parties may, at its first session or as soon as practicable thereafter, further elaborate guidelines for the implementation of this Article, including rules for trading, monitoring, verification, reporting and enforcement.

## Annex 1

### Countries with power sector emissions greater than [100 m tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>] per annum in 2007:

Country	Carbon Emissions (MtCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Energy Use (TWh)	Zero Carbon Energy	Carbon Intensity (MtCO <sub>2</sub> e/TWh)
Australia	223.87	227.67	7%	0.98
Canada	172.31	731.71	58%	0.24
China	3117.32	3264.35	16%	0.95
Europe (ETS Participants)	1607.42	3669.22	35%	0.44
India	637.59	719.52	18%	0.89
Japan	414.00	1031.83	34%	0.40
Mexico	101.95	220.44	19%	0.46
Russia	478.36	896.31	30%	0.53
South Africa	218.16	215.51	6%	1.01
South Korea	191.97	392.06	36%	0.49
Taiwan	137.02	218.23	3%	0.63
Turkey	100.46	148.62	27%	0.68
United States	2815.67	4186.91	25%	0.67

Source data: Carma.org, IEA World Energy Outlook 2008

# Discussion: A new Apollo-style mission

## **Harnessing human ingenuity**

Though we may have a limited amount of time left to tackle climate change there is no shortage of human ingenuity to apply to the problem. Copenhagen has to harness the enormous potential we have to respond to this problem and foster international co-operation. We need an Apollo-style mission to provide the world with clean energy.



## **A clear mission**

Our use of fossil fuels for energy accounts for three quarters of all manmade emissions of greenhouse gases. And yet access to energy has transformed our lives. The most flexible form – electricity – has revolutionised modern life leading to increased economic development and more comfortable lives for many people. Far from limiting our use of it we will need to use more in the future. Access to electricity will help to raise the living standards of the global poor and will be needed to drive our vehicles and industries. But it will need to be clean.

We're calling for a focus on the global electricity sector in the next international climate treaty because it is the single biggest source of carbon emissions and the easiest to regulate. Only 3,300 power stations account for nearly a third of the world's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and merely hundreds of companies control them. Action here would be enough to quickly bend the curve in global emissions and help to keep them on a declining path.

## **The solutions are out there**

The good news is there are plenty of solutions available - investment last year in non-fossil electricity technologies already exceeded investment in fossil fuel projects. The momentum is clearly there but action on the ground needs to be significantly increased, and that can only flow from sound policies at an international and national level.

## **Turning off the tap**

If we want to stem the tide of emissions we need to act quickly, with focus. It is time countries put aside their differences and started collaborating. Fortunately, a huge chunk of the world's emissions of carbon dioxide come from a relatively small number of countries and installations. Coordinated action need not be complex.

We want leaders in key countries to commit to turning off the tap of emissions by focusing their attention on their power stations. If the companies who operate these stations can be incentivised to clean up their act, by investing in improved efficiency and cleaner technologies, then we can make huge strides in reducing total global emissions. And this can

## Discussion (continued)

happen quickly – because this sector has the most developed and commercially proven alternative technologies with plenty more on the drawing board just waiting for sufficient investment to make them a reality.

### **With wealth comes responsibility**

The existing international climate framework has split the world into two camps, ‘Annex 1’ and ‘non-Annex 1’, but it’s time to look at the problem a different way. The fortunate thing about emissions is that they tend to correlate quite well with industrialisation. Generally speaking burning carbon leads to wealth. So, in reverse, this means high emissions means a relatively high capacity to do something about it.

The 12 countries with power stations that emit more than 100 million tones per year are all in the top 25 list of countries ranked by GDP in 2008. We are calling on these countries to sign up to a deal to limit emissions from their power sector, creating a global power sector ‘carbon budget’. Doing so will create a direct incentive on the power companies in their countries to invest in cleaner technology, causing many millions of pounds to flow into solutions.

### **Can it be done?**

People say such a deal would be too difficult to agree from where we are now, but this is simply not true. The huge resource that goes into successive UN negotiations must result in tangible outcomes that will directly spur action on the ground – otherwise they are not performing the task we need them to. A concrete deal with key countries agreeing to collectively repower their electricity sectors need not be complicated and will deliver real change on the ground. Nothing in the existing Convention should prevent such a positive vision being drawn up and agreed.

Other people ask, is action in just the power sector sufficient to tackle the problem? No, not in the long term but in the short term it is definitely the place to start since it can, on its own, bend the curve in global emissions. Everything we need to do to avert climate change and protect ourselves from its impacts is going to require energy. Clean electricity is going to be the core energy source of the future – get that right and everything else gets a lot easier.

Another ‘yes, but’ we hear is: it will just be too difficult for countries to introduce policies to meet their commitments – there just isn’t enough data, not enough resources. To this we say – look at our [global map of power stations](#) and tell us that it’s beyond the wit of man to develop an effective system. There are so few points on the map to deal with - only a quarter of the number of installations currently being regulated under the EU emissions trading scheme – and so many advancements in technology that can be applied to the task. Power stations are easy to spot and they do not move.

### **Is it equitable?**

But perhaps the hardest question people raise is how can we be advocating that countries like India, who have so many rural poor with currently no access to power, should be required to limit their emissions? To that we say: lower emissions do not need to mean less electricity. Spending less on centralised, polluting, inefficient, fossil fuel power stations will make it easier, not harder, to provide access to more people via decentralised local sustainable energy options. India has huge potential for renewable power and like many countries who

## Discussion (continued)

are just starting on the process of urbanisation and industrialisation it has a choice – it can take the clean development path or the dirty one – States like Tamil Nadu have already chosen the right path and India has itself indicated it is ready to apply emissions trading to the task of reducing the carbon intensity of its economy.

### **What Copenhagen must deliver**

Copenhagen will be a crucible in which huge numbers of ideas, documents, meetings and speeches will need to be transformed into a short legal document. This all-important text needs to invent our future.

**Electricity is a marvellous thing and we firmly believe everyone should have access to it. Emissions on the other hand need to be controlled. A new Apollo style mission to repower the world is exactly the kind of giant leap the world can and must take.**

Bryony Worthington,  
Sandbag Founder and Director

