

Outcome of Paris UN Conference on Climate Change – New Opportunities in Difficult Times

The Paris Climate Meeting has just finished. We have a comprehensive deal on climate for the first time extending considerably the World Climate Convention of 1992. Many observers will be not satisfied with the results but we, as organizations concerned with the issue of climate change and global action since decades, think that this is essentially the best deal possible, given the different interests, views and maneuvering spaces of responsible politicians in the world concerning this topic. So we are **happy about this result**. We also think it can be the basis to still **reach the 2°C aim** or to do somewhat better.

More information

In a sense, politics now closed the hole in the bottomless climate pit which prevented the private sector from really going on with the issue. Now we have a kind of cap, an upper limit of further CO₂ emissions, we now can work against a defined target. We expect this contract to reduce cumulative global CO₂ emissions until 2050 in comparison to not having a deal by maybe 500 billion tons of CO₂. That is not enough to achieve the 2°C aim, but it is still a lot, it is about half of the task to be accomplished. And having now a cap, we know what more is needed: Maybe to reduce another 500 billion tons by 2050. This is something the **private sector can do in voluntary programmes**, if politics supports this route. In particular, the private sector can and will invest money voluntarily and beyond legal obligations **to take emission rights out of service** and/or tighten this way or another the annual volumes for greenhouse gas emissions available to countries and governments via contractual arrangements.

This would mean **reducing the inflow of CO₂** into the atmosphere, maybe by 250 billion tons until 2050. The remaining 250 billion tons can be balanced with **negative emissions**, in particular via biological sequestration. This means to invest into reforestation, into increasing the humus content of soils and in protection and re-cultivation of wetlands. All these activities make sense in themselves. They all will also promote sustainability. They will, in particular, promote economic development, particularly in developing countries and least developed countries, in a way compatible with climate protection. This is what the world urgently needs: Economic progress in developing countries, compatible with sustainability, in particular investments along the 2°C aim. Needless to say that all these activities will also positively influence the **implementation of the SDGs** just agreed upon by the United Nations in a unilateral vote in September 2015.

In this, we need the private sector to bring in its competences and money voluntarily to close the gap. The private sector can do it and will be willing to do so to avoid the climate crisis but also to gain reputation, in particular by caring for **climate neutrality** of its own activities.

This is now a point to go forward - a big success for the UN system,
a big success for the world,
a challenge for the private sector.