



House of Commons
Energy and Climate Change
Committee

**The road to UNFCCC
COP 18 and beyond:
Government Response
to the Committee's
Second Report of
Session 2012–13**

Third Special Report of Session 2012–13

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 16 October 2012*

HC 633
Published on 24 October 2012
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£0.00

The Energy and Climate Change Committee

The Energy and Climate Change Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department of Energy and Climate Change and associated public bodies.

Current membership

Mr Tim Yeo MP (*Conservative, South Suffolk*) (Chair)
Dan Byles MP (*Conservative, North Warwickshire*)
Barry Gardiner MP (*Labour, Brent North*)
Ian Lavery MP (*Labour, Wansbeck*)
Dr Phillip Lee MP (*Conservative, Bracknell*)
Albert Owen MP (*Labour, Ynys Môn*)
Christopher Pincher MP (*Conservative, Tamworth*)
John Robertson MP (*Labour, Glasgow North West*)
Laura Sandys MP (*Conservative, South Thanet*)
Sir Robert Smith MP (*Liberal Democrat, West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine*)
Dr Alan Whitehead MP (*Labour, Southampton Test*)

The following members were also members of the Committee during the parliament:

Gemma Doyle MP (*Labour/Co-operative, West Dunbartonshire*)
Tom Greatrex MP (*Labour, Rutherglen and Hamilton West*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the internet at www.parliament.uk/parliament.uk/ecc.

The Report of the Committee, the formal minutes relating to that report, oral evidence taken and some or all written evidence are available in a printed volume. Additional written evidence may be published on the internet only.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Sarah Hartwell-Naguib (Clerk), Jenny Bird (Senior Committee Specialist), Luanne Middleton (Inquiry Manager), Katie Phelan-Molloy (Senior Committee Assistant), Jonathan Olivier Wright (Committee Assistant), Jonathan Strawson (Committee Support Assistant) and Nick Davies (Media Officer).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Energy and Climate Change Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 2569; the Committee's email address is ecc@parliament.uk

Third Special Report

On 25 July 2012 the Energy and Climate Change Committee published its Second Report of Session 2012-13, *The road to UNFCCC COP 18 and beyond* [HC 88]. On 20 September 2012 the Committee received the Government's response to the Report from Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP, Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change. It is appended below.

Appendix: Government Response

In light of the wide-ranging nature of the Committee's recommendations, this is a joint response, led on by the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC), the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for International Development (DfID), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT).

I welcome the Committee's recognition of the UNFCCC as the primary forum in which to further global action on climate change. It is an established multilateral forum with the participation of all countries, including the most vulnerable, and has a sound and improving delivery architecture. It therefore offers the best chance for agreeing an international legally binding deal covering all parties, which is needed to achieve our goal of keeping global average temperature rise below 2 degrees.

We are aiming for an international legally binding agreement applicable to all. There is a spectrum between internationally legally binding and voluntary. At one extreme would be a top-down carving up of atmospheric space, assigning legally binding targets to countries. The Kyoto Protocol did not go this far – countries put forward offers and there was negotiation on the level of targets. At the other end of the spectrum would be countries simply taking whatever action they choose. The current regime is stronger than this because we have the pledges made after Copenhagen and anchored into the UNFCCC in Cancun in 2010. These are voluntary in the sense that they are not part of a Treaty. But they are politically binding and are in the context of an agreed goal of below 2 degrees. It is asserted in the report (e.g. paragraph 45) that the Durban Platform is voluntary, however it is important to note the two parts of this Platform. Firstly, the work programme on pre 2020 mitigation ambition, which is in the context of a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol with commitments for some, and an evolving regime of measurement, verification and reporting and accounting for other 2020 pledges, albeit they are currently insufficient. This is a transition phase to the other part of the Platform, being negotiated in parallel, which will apply post 2020 and which all Ministers agreed in Durban should be to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties.

Significant progress has been made in the EU to reduce emissions and to increase the proportion of energy from low carbon sources. While the economic downturn has helped countries meet emission reduction targets, their delivery is also the consequence of the

