

From the Chairman  
Lord Turner

4th Floor  
Manning House  
Carlisle Place  
London SW1P 1JA

Mr Aubrey Meyer  
Global Commons Institute  
37 Ravenswood Road  
London E17 9LY

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Dear Mr Meyer,

Thank you for your letter of May 29<sup>th</sup> and the earlier letter for which I apologise that you did not receive a reply.

My own feeling, and that of the Committee, which is described in Chapter 1 of the Committee's first report, is that:

- The world should aim for a reduction of emissions to something like 20-24 gigatonnes by 2050, and further reductions beyond. Obviously, there can be different points of view on whether this is enough. But it is certainly a "contraction" of the total level of emissions.
- In terms of the appropriate distribution of effort between different countries, we then said that:
  - There are a wide variety of different methodologies proposed for dividing reduction responsibility between different countries, and indeed for dealing with developing countries which are likely to first increase emissions and then subsequently reduce them, and it is not for the Committee (which is not directly involved with international negotiations) to propose a particular one.

- However, we note that if there are 9 to 9.5 billion people in the world in 2050, 20-24 gigatonnes implies something like 2.2 to 2.4 tonnes per capita.
- And that unless we can specify which countries are going to be happy to stay permanently below 2.2 – 2.4 tonnes per capita, there cannot be countries significantly above.
- Therefore, it is difficult to imagine a global deal which, whatever its precise details, doesn't entail something like a roughly equal per capita right to emit at some time in the future. And it is difficult to imagine that anything radically different from this should be seen as fair.
- Therefore it is reasonable for the UK to set its national strategies round a target of about 2.2 – 2.4 tonnes per capita. And since (turning to issues which are within the direct remit of the Committee) we are confident that the UK can achieve this level at a relatively small cost to GDP (1% to 3%), therefore we recommend unilaterally setting this target, accepting that at a later date in the face of new scientific evidence and the results of international negotiations, we might shift to a more stretching target.

This was our logic. We did not explicitly describe it as “contract and converge”, but I think within the normal use of the words, it could be described as that, since it involves “contraction” (a fall in the total global emissions) and “convergence”, a long-term tendency towards a roughly equal per capita level as both a practical and an ethical principle.

Therefore, when people ask us “do you agree with “contract and converge””, I say that while we didn't explicitly use that term, that is actually a fair description of the approach we have actually recommended. And as it happens, I think “contract and converge” is a very good phrase, and one I am entirely comfortable in endorsing.

But, whether or not this is justified, I am often told by people who are more involved in the international negotiations, that the term “contract and converge”

is a bit of a red rag to a bull in many American circles. That is what I was referring to when I said rather ungrammatically, "this has ended up in a highly emotive sense" (i.e., the emotion to which I refer is the emotion of opponents, not proponents) I am clear that the long-run approach has to be something like "contract and converge" (in the sense of the Committee's recommendations); but if there is a sensitivity about using the term, and negotiators think that they are more likely to make progress by using a different one, I am happy for them to downplay the words, while pursuing the substance.

I hope that explains our position and that our approach appears sensible to you. May I say, in conclusion, that I have always had great admiration for the role you have played in proposing the broad principle that "convergence" of per capita emissions will in the long-term be reached.

Yours sincerely,

Adair Turner

