

CONTRACTION & CONVERGENCE

WHAT IS C&C?

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Introduction

- **Contraction & Convergence (C&C) is an international policy framework for dealing with global climate change developed by the London-based Global Commons Institute (GCI). It reconciles US demands for participation by developing countries with their demands for equitable treatment without forfeiting environmental integrity.**
- C&C is supported by Sir John Houghton, Chair of the science working group of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; the governments of China, India, the Africa Group, France, Belgium, Sweden and the Non-Aligned Movement; the Chairs of COP3 in Kyoto and COP6 in the Hague; UNEP Chief Klaus Topfer; the UK-based Chartered Insurance Institute; the European Parliament; and numerous others. A full reference list is available at <http://www.gci.org.uk/refs/C&CUNEP11d.pdf>.
- It is also described by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Third Assessment Report as, "taking the rights-based approach to its logical conclusion". Perhaps even more relevant in the present situation is that Contraction & Convergence is wholly consistent with both the stated position of the current US Administration and the 1997 US Byrd Hagel Resolution of the US Senate. (See separate briefing paper, *C&C and the Byrd Hagel Resolution*).

Contraction & Convergence: The Concept

- Contraction** Under C&C, all countries would collectively agree a target for a stable atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, such as 450 parts per million. This answers the objective of the 1992 UN Climate Convention, which is to "stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". A 'global emissions budget' would then be calculated, derived from the target atmospheric concentration figure. The atmospheric concentration target would be reviewed annually so that it could be revised with new science findings.
- Convergence** Once the "contraction budget" has been decided, as set out above, the next question becomes how to share out the slices of this carbon "cake" between countries. Under C&C, the allocations of emissions entitlements between countries would converge by a specific date (such as 2020, for example) towards country allowances proportional to national population as at a specified baseline year. This approach is based on the realisation that one simple and logical allocation formula will be needed in order to distribute entitlements between more than 180 countries.
- Emissions trading** Full international emissions trading would be possible so that countries with low per capita emissions could sell their spare permits to countries unable to manage within their shares. This would allow an efficient and flexible approach, as called for by the US, and would also give developing countries an incentive to invest the proceeds in clean technology since this would give them more permits to sell.
- Sustainable growth** C&C does not place a straightjacket on growth per se by its limitation on fossil fuels. Instead it averts catastrophic losses - Munich Re estimates suggest that on present trends the cost of climate-related damages will exceed Gross World Product by 2065 - by promoting the development and growth of zero carbon energy technologies necessary to achieve prosperity and make development sustainable.

