

Issue Overview:

The Importance of International Engagement



On January 15, 2009, the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP) issued the *Blueprint for Legislative Action* – a detailed framework for legislation to address climate change. This brief discusses the importance of meaningful commitments from all major carbon-emitting countries to successfully address the problem of global climate change. It should be considered in the context of our *Blueprint*, which includes interconnected and interdependent recommendations on climate protection legislation.

As emphasized in the *Blueprint*, strong, credible action by the U.S. is a critical first step to encourage action by developing countries. USCAP believes that significant commitments can be achieved through ongoing international negotiations by building on important actions proposed by many developing countries.

- There are growing indications that major developing countries are ready to act on climate change, with Brazil, China and India all advancing climate plans within the past two years. In some cases these plans are already producing significant actions. In other cases, more work needs to be done to ensure that the ambitious goals these nations have set will be met. The U.S. should encourage and support strong policy commitments by developing countries.
- Every major emitting country must ultimately reduce its emissions in order to achieve the dramatic results needed to lower the risk of global climate change. Developed countries must begin to reduce their emissions now. The U.S. needs to work with developing countries to implement the systems and technologies that will enable them to reduce emissions as quickly as possible.

A strong international climate agreement must produce measurable, reportable and verifiable commitments. The current challenge is to turn the actions and policies of developing and developed countries alike into an agreement that gives all nations confidence that global climate goals will be met. This agreement should include binding, absolute economy-wide emission reduction targets for developed countries and a range of binding policy commitments for developing countries.

- The 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference launched the current round of climate negotiations. USCAP believes this international negotiation offers a platform for engagement with other countries to drive meaningful, verifiable action that can be scrutinized with confidence, and that the U.S. should engage fully in negotiating such an agreement.
- Developing countries need to be supported in both their mitigation and adaptation efforts and U.S. climate policy should provide funds for financing international priorities through various vehicles, including direct allocation of allowances and the use of auction revenues. The creation of a fully functioning CO₂ emissions market can facilitate this funding.
- Support for mitigation efforts can ensure stronger action by developing countries and provide lower-cost reduction opportunities for the U.S., helping build long-term markets for U.S. goods and services. It can also speed emergence of a broad-based international CO₂ emissions market.
- While offsets are important for cost control, U.S. climate policy must ensure that international offsets are of high environmental quality and complement real emissions reductions from developing countries. The criteria and process for determining and allowing high quality offsets, both international and domestic, must be clear and transparent.

To learn more about the USCAP *Blueprint for Legislative Action*, please visit www.us-cap.org.

The U.S. Climate Action Partnership is a non-partisan coalition composed of 25 major corporations and five leading environmental organizations that have come together to call on the federal government to quickly enact strong national legislation requiring significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. USCAP has issued a landmark set of principles and recommendations to underscore the urgent need for a policy framework on climate change.