

France - rising to the international climate challenge

In its responses to the warnings issued by scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on human responsibilities for climate change and to the urgent need for action, France gives priority support to national climate policies and to the two legal instruments for climate action adopted by the international community (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol).

France has made substantial cuts in its greenhouse gas emissions in the last few years: by 2009, with emissions 8.1% below 1990 levels at 517 MtCO₂eq, it had already exceeded its Kyoto target of stabilisation within the 2008-2012 period. France is thus contributing to the undertakings made by the European Union and its Member states under the Kyoto Protocol (-8% in 2008-2012 compared to 1990) but also under the EU Climate and Energy Package (-20% by 2020 compared to 1990). Implementing the Kyoto Protocol is only the first phase of a national policy designed to achieve the longer term goal of meeting the climate challenge at international level, which requires halving global greenhouse gas emissions in order to keep global warming under +2°C by the end of this century. For France, as a developed country, this means achieving a fourfold reduction in its own emissions by 2050, which is the target set by the Grenelle Environment Forum (Art. 2 of the Grenelle Programming Act of 3 August 2009).

In line with ongoing international climate negotiations, and primarily the recent Cancun Accords whereby the 195 Parties to the Climate Convention established the warming threshold at under 2°C with a provision to review this target in 2013-2015, France believes that achieving this objective depends on mobilising the entire international community. It wishes to see, ultimately, the signature of an ambitious and legally binding international agreement. In parallel, France has undertaken numerous policy and economic activities for climate change adaptation and mitigation, at international, European, national and local levels.

Climate change: a priority in France

Climate change action has been a priority for the French government since the early 1990s, and French climate change policy has been continually strengthened ever since. This priority was reaffirmed in the undertakings made at the Grenelle Environment Round Table.

The policies and measures decided on and implemented by France – through its Climate Plan – are designed to enable it to comply with its undertakings on climate: stabilisation of its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels over the 2008-2012

period under the Kyoto Protocol and, at European Community level, implementation of the revised Directive on the European Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS) and achievement of the French target of a 14% cut in emissions from sectors not covered by the Directive during the 2005-2020 period.

The adoption of the EU Climate and Energy Package was a priority for France during its European Union presidency (in the second half of 2008). The Climate and Energy Package is designed to allow the EU to achieve the targets set by the March 2007 Council meeting: a 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 to 2020, a 20% share of renewables



in final energy consumption in the EU by 2020 and a 20% improvement in energy efficiency.

France is also in favour of raising the EU target for emissions cuts to 30% if an ambitious international agreement is signed. Regarding this agreement and in line with the principles of the Climate and Energy Package, France wishes provisions to be considered to avoid risks of carbon leakage.

France is already a low-carbon country

France is responsible for only 1.1% of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions although it accounts for 5.5% of global GDP (Gross Domestic Product). It is among the industrialised countries with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions, both per capita and in terms of emissions per GDP unit, thanks to an energy mix that relies primarily on nuclear power. From 1990 to 2009, greenhouse gas emissions dropped by 8.1% to 517 MtCO₂eq. The 1990 baseline emissions level for French Kyoto undertakings (mainland and overseas France) was set at 563.9 MtCO₂eq.

These cuts, although partly due to a drop in GDP in 2009, are essentially attributable to policies introduced, such as the bonus/malus scheme to encourage “green” vehicle purchases, the new regulation on thermal efficiency in buildings, incentives for energy-efficient renovation or equipment in the tertiary sector, development of renewables, changes in behaviour, etc.). Thanks to these results, France is on track to achieve the EU target of a 20% cut in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and the “Factor 4” target as described in the 2009 Grenelle Act. All of the activities committed to and planned by the government should reduce French emissions by 23.9 % from 1990 to 2020 (i.e. from 563.9 MtCO₂eq to 429 MtCO₂eq by 2020).

The need for joint and concerted action at the European and international levels

France considers that the question of concerted action at global level is of major importance to meet the challenge of climate change, since climate is by nature a global public good and because even more ambitious emission reduction targets will be needed in future. Keeping average global temperature rise to less than 2°C over pre-industrial levels will mean reaching “peak” emissions by 2020 at the latest, and thereafter halving them compared to 1990 levels by 2050, as emphasised in the 4th IPCC assessment report.

Consequently, an international agreement on the post-2012 system to combat climate change must imperatively be signed. The adoption of the Climate and Energy Package during the French presidency of the European Union is an example proving that an entire geographical zone, with all its different economic situations, energy mixes and potentials, can achieve ambitious targets in combating climate change. This is a key point for concluding an ambitious post-2012 agreement.

A driving role in international negotiations

France engaged in the post-2012 negotiations at an early stage. In 2007, the international community adopted the Bali Action Plan, in which the Parties decided to launch the post-2012 negotiating process and agreed on a list of topics to be addressed in these talks, which France hopes will result in an international agreement that will take over from the Kyoto Protocol and cover all countries, both developed and developing. The adoption of the Climate and Energy Package in 2008 during the French EU presidency enabled the European Union to take up a driving role in the international post-2012 talks.

As of 2009, France and the European Union had also taken up a strong position in favour of an ambitious and well-balanced agreement compatible with the +2°C warming target, which would build on the main Kyoto Protocol achievements and include quantified and binding targets as well as targets for sectors not covered by the Protocol (such as forests, aviation and maritime transport).

For 2011, France believes it is essential to implement the decisions made at the UN conference in Cancún, which include the provisions of the Copenhagen Agreement, so that the instruments provided for by the Cancún decisions are brought into effect (monitoring and review system, new funds, a mechanism on technologies, cooperation on adaptation, action against deforestation, etc.) to promote practical action on climate change, especially in the developing countries. The Durban Conference in early December should also ensure continuity with the Kyoto Protocol through the transition to a new global legal instrument. Raising funds through innovative financing mechanisms, to reach the Cancún target of 100 billion Dollars/year by 2020 for the developing countries, is also considered by France as a specific challenge to be addressed in connection with the French presidency of the G20. Finally, France is maintaining the objective of raising the overall level of ambition, which is presently too low to bring the international community on track to keep global warming below +2°C.

France and action to prevent deforestation

France has decided to give emphasis to fast-track financing for forests, allocating 20% of its contribution. Preserving and improving the value of the world's great forest basins are among the priorities for action in France, which has internationally recognised expertise in this area. This is also the main thrust of the Paris-Oslo process launched in March 2010 by the French president, through which an interim partnership

was set up that now involves 73 forest countries and donors. This platform for voluntary political and technical cooperation between donors and forest countries is to raise 4 billion\$ in fast-start REDD+* financing over 3 years. The partnership was co-chaired by France and Brazil in the first semester of 2011.

*REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and land Degradation)

Solidarity-based support for project mechanisms

In order to contribute to sustainable development in the South, France encourages implementation of the Kyoto Protocol project mechanisms and facilitates financing for climate change mitigation projects in these countries. France has approved 50 projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and authorised participation in a further 39. These 89 projects represent about 50 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent avoided per year during the Kyoto accounting period. Approval has been given to 15 projects under Joint Implementation (JI) and authorisation to participate in a further 6, which together represent about 5 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent avoided per year during the Kyoto period.

In addition, the French government encourages businesses to participate in these mechanisms, since they in turn promote their adoption by developing and emerging countries through technology transfers in particular.

Substantial financial means for partner countries

France's international action on climate change now absorbs a substantial share of its overall official development assis-

tance effort, in terms of volume and exchanges of know-how. Its bilateral commitments to mitigation and adaptation projects have steadily increased in recent years to a total of 2.8 million Euros in 2010. France has also strengthened its commitments to the major multilateral financing agencies, in particular through the 5th replenishment, in 2010, of the Global Environment Facility with 215 million Euros, and its 500 million Dollars contribution to the World Bank's Clean Technology Fund (CTF).

Finally, France has undertaken to raise 1.26 billion Euros in 2010-2012 (420 million Euros per year) for the "fast-start" financing mechanism agreed to in Copenhagen, in the context of the European Union's commitment of 7.2 billion Euros. In 2010, France reached its target of 420 million € in fast-start financing in the form of loans and grants, including 20% for forests. About 80 % of these commitments are to bilateral projects (21 in 2010) via the AFD and the FGEE, and 20% to multilateral programmes, including 13 million Euros to the GEF in 2010 and almost 68 million Euros to the World Bank's Clean Technology Fund.

France and the most vulnerable countries

Climate change action should not be detrimental to development in the poorest and most vulnerable countries, and France therefore argues for particular attention towards them. This initiative has been taken up in the "Paris-Nairobi" process. As in the "Paris-Oslo" process, France has undertaken to co-pilot an international partnership, with Kenya in this case, for access to clean energy. This "Paris-Nairobi" initiative aims to address energy needs in Africa and countries vulnerable

to climate change and to bring them on track towards sustainable development. The aims of this proposed global partnership are to facilitate the mobilisation of funds and to develop mechanisms to support climate change adaptation and mitigation through projects securing access to clean energy. The launch of the partnership was announced in December 2010 at Cancun and a preliminary meeting was held in Paris in April 2011.

Adaptation to climate change

Action by the French State in this area began with the creation, in 2001, of a national observatory on climate change effects, with an explicit mission on adaptation to climate change, followed by the adoption in 2006 of a national adaptation strategy. Interministerial work between 2007 and 2009 then quantified the costs of climate change impacts in France. In 2010, national consultations were organised with a view to developing a national climate change adaptation plan, with 200 recommendations formulated. Based on these, the government presented the first nation-

nal climate change adaptation plan in July 2011, covering 2011 to 2015. The recommendations are geared in particular to saving and optimising water use, developing knowledge and strengthening monitoring systems on emerging diseases, developing appropriate planning policies and preventing forest fires. Finally, on the strength of its geographical diversity and its commitments, France is also implementing adaptation measures at international level, ranging from support to the creation of reliable meteorological and climate databases to back project implementation in developing countries.