

## Catherine Abreu's Remarks at the 2017 Ontario Climate Symposium

We hear a lot about how Canada is responsible for just 2% of global climate pollution. What we don't hear much about is that, at 2%, we're one of the world's top 8 polluters. 2% is in fact double the amount of greenhouse gasses emitted by 145 of the world's least polluting countries combined.

When it comes to pollution per person, the picture gets even more grim. Canada is a serious contender for the distinction of being the world's highest per capita polluter. There are a lot of reasons for this - Canada is cold, there are few of us, we're spread out. But it's obvious that we're a big part of the problem and, as the world's 10th richest country, we have the capacity and responsibility to act.

Fortunately, there is a new normal for Canada on the issue of climate change. We ratified the Paris Agreement in October 2016. That agreement brought every country in the world - 196 parties - together in an unprecedented display of solidarity on an issue of unprecedented urgency.

And, for the first time, Canada has a framework that brings the federal government, most provincial and territorial governments, and all major sectors of our economy together on a shared path of climate action.

Unveiled in December 2016, the Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change and Clean Growth introduces an ambitious suite of policy proposals aimed at putting Canada on track to meet our current international commitment under the Paris Agreement to reduce emissions 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.

With this groundbreaking agreement between the federal government and most provinces and territories, we have promises to: introduce nation-wide carbon pricing by 2018; phase-out coal-fired electricity by 2030; reduce methane emissions 40-45% by 2025; phase-out fossil fuel subsidies by 2025; reduce the carbon intensity of all fuels used in Canada; develop a Canada-wide zero emissions vehicle strategy by 2018...the list goes on.

Our ability as a nation to turn these promises into action has major implications for the global effort to confront climate change. Analysis from Oil Change International tells us that without significant climate policy Canada will be the world's second highest contributor of new oil production globally over the next twenty years. Meanwhile, recent studies show that the world will exceed 2 degrees Celsius of warming if emissions from all the fossil fuel reserves currently in production or under development are released.

And we know that not only do we need to make good on our current promise, but we need to generate success we can build on because our current goals aren't good enough. Our 2030 commitment does not represent our fair share of addressing global climate change. We at Climate Action Network Canada estimate that Canada's fair share contribution would see us reducing emissions by 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 while increasing our contribution to international climate financing to \$4 billion/year by 2020.

Our current government came into office promising to treat the previous administration's target as a floor to build upon, and we must hold them and ourselves to this pledge.

Implementing the Pan-Canadian Framework isn't going to be easy. There are five big hurdles we will have to address:

1) **Reconciling reconciliation with climate action.** The Trudeau government has also made significant promises to improve federal relationships with Indigenous communities through a variety of measures including the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. To be a part of reconciling histories of marginalization, Canadian climate action must take up opportunities to address long-standing issues like First Nations housing crises.

2) **Dependance on continued provincial/territorial leadership.** A decade-long vacuum of federal leadership on climate saw provinces and territories step up to the plate in a big way to design their own climate plans customized to their particular abilities and needs. The Framework is intelligently designed to scale up the most impactful subnational activities established in recent years and to accommodate flexible provincial and territorial approaches to achieving outcomes mandated by federal policy. It is a creative approach that may turn Canadian federalism, which has traditionally constrained Canada's ability to move coherently and consistently on climate change, into a strength. The vulnerability of this approach, of course, is that it relies on provinces and territories following through with and, in many cases, exceeding their current commitments.

3) **The Trump Administration.** With a shifting political landscape south of the border, concerns are being raised over supposed competitive disadvantages Canada might face if we move forward with climate action while our largest trading partner retreats. With this come calls for a weakening of Canada's climate plans. Furthermore, there are several policies key to Canada's ability to meet its targets that are harmonized with U.S. policy.

4) **The Oil Lobby.** The oil and gas sector represents more than 25% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. And we know that oil and gas companies are used to running the policy show in Ottawa. They take every opportunity to water down ambition and prevent Canada from doing its fair share of the global effort. They also deploy slick communications tactics to lull Canadians into thinking that the transition to renewables isn't inevitable.

5) **Canadian cognitive dissonance on climate.** While Canada's Prime Minister was running for office, Facebook and twitter lit up with oil spills that look like Justin Trudeau's hair. If elected, Trudeau promised to both provide unprecedented leadership on climate change and get Canadian oil to market by building pipelines. Canadian campaigners used brilliant tactics to point out the calamitous contradictions baked in to the Liberals' platform on climate.

But the Liberals weren't alone in their confused campaign. Every party in Canada's 2015 election promised to build fossil fuel infrastructure of some sort - whether pipelines or refineries. Canada's left-of-centre New Democratic Party ran on a platform opposed to some pipeline projects but open to others. Even Canada's Green Party, which opposed all export pipelines, advocated for the construction of new refining capacity in Canada.

Cognitive dissonance on climate is the name of the game for most Canadians. A recent poll from Abacus data found that 40% of respondents felt it was possible for Canada to develop its oil resources and meet its emissions reduction targets. 36% were on the fence while only 24% acknowledged the impossibility of this equation.

Canadian government and Canadians more generally have yet to accept that - as Bill McKibben recently put it - you can't have your cake and burn it, too. Yet the Pan-Canadian Framework means that Canada is now one of few major oil-producing jurisdictions to boast significant federal climate policy and the only federated state with a comprehensive climate plan that accounts for and counts on the coordinated action of subnational jurisdictions.

Clearly, there is critical work to be done securing ambition in Canada and ensuring the success of a climate plan that can act as a model for action to other jurisdictions. Because now more than ever the world needs climate leadership. Canada can and must provide examples of aggressive emissions reductions and economic transformation.

So here's my pitch on how we ensure that federal, provincial, and territorial governments stay on track, that Canada continues to lead even if the U.S. falls behind, that we interrogate and uncover the depths of oil industry influence in Canada, and that we start to set Canada's story straight when it comes to climate leadership and fossil fuels: we work together.

To elaborate, we work against one of the root causes of climate change - namely the strange mix of globalized institutions and myopic individualism associated with modern capitalism - by investing in community and nurturing feedback between the local and national/international.

This is at the heart of what we at Climate Action Network Canada do.

There is critical work to be done securing ambition in Canada and ensuring the success of a climate plan that can act as a model for action to other jurisdictions. To do this work, climate advocacy organizations must nurture a spirit of cross-sectoral collaboration and justice-based alliances. We need each other now more than ever.

Yet the Canadian climate community is still reeling from a decade-long federal administration that shunned climate targets and fuelled an extremely adversarial dynamic with Indigenous communities and environmental NGOs. Restoring faith in Canada's ability to make progress on climate change and capacity to come to the defence when that progress is threatened will take time and care.

Here I take inspiration from Jason Mogus' and Tom Liacas' research into the building blocks of some of the 21st century's most successful campaigns to-date. They identify four features that help organizations win:

- 1) Horizontal structures where power is genuinely shared with supporters and networks. This I summarize as EMPATHY.
- 2) The ability to frame a compelling cause where the solution is big enough to be inspiring, but is also winnable, and which features heroes and villains. In other words, STORYTELLING.
- 3) Willingness to make mistakes, share things that aren't perfect, and have honest conversations, which we can sum up as HUMILITY.
- 4) And finally, CROSS-MOVEMENT COLLABORATION that goes beyond transactional relationships to build lifelong relationships of solidarity.

Ultimately, the climate movement is a people's movement, and I am dedicated to doing what I can to nurture the communities that movement creates. Politics can not change the minds and hearts of people who are defending their homes from rising sea levels, people who are putting their bodies on the line in Standing Rock and other communities to stop the advance of fossil

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fuel infrastructure, people who are no longer willing to live with the economic injustice and systems of oppression that are both the root and consequence of climate change.