

The G8-Process and the Heiligendamm Summit – Civil Society Criticism, Expectations and Perspectives

Statement by Tobias Münchmeyer (Greenpeace Germany)

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

What is GREENPEACE expecting from the G8 summit at Heiligendamm?

Greenpeace is expecting, that the G8 countries commit themselves bindingly to a GHG emissions reduction of at least 30 percent by 2020. 20 percent would be definitely not enough.

Greenpeace is expecting, that the G8 countries agree that the increase of the global average temperature compared to pre-industrial levels must be kept under 2 degrees Celsius.

Greenpeace is expecting, that the G8 advocates for the UN climate summit at Bali in December to decide on a comprehensive negotiating mandate for all aspects of the Kyoto Protocol and the UN FCCC for the period post 2012 as well as on a time table for those negotiations.

Greenpeace is expecting that an agreement will be achieved, how an effective framework giving financial incentives for the reductions in deforestation and forest degradation in the tropics, which facilitates that the destruction of the tropics will be stopped by 2010 and all unsustainable deforestation will be stopped by 2020.

Deliberately I say “Greenpeace is expecting” and not “Greenpeace is demanding”. Federal Chancellor Merkel herself has increased the expectations. She has declared climate protection to be “one of the decisive issues” of her G8 presidency. We welcome this very much. At a meeting with Tony Blair in February she stated, that emission reduction targets should be debated on at a special conference in May, which then could be decided on in June at Heiligendamm. We support this procedure. But we will observe very critically, if Ms. Merkel will really deliver something substantive at Heiligendamm. It remains to be seen, if at her most important political appearance so far, she will succeed in achieving a real progress for climate protection – or if her summit will fail in a grandiose way.

The day before yesterday the Federal Chancellor has said, that she does “not have the expectation, that the USA will adopt the European climate protection targets”. Yesterday G8 sherpa of the German government Mr. Bernd Pfaffenbach, has stated, that climate protection was “one of the most difficult issues” and one of his “toughest negotiating fronts”. He added, that was caused partly also by “reservations, if not resistance of one particular big country”.

This can mean only one thing: The German government has to drop its focus on a G8 consensus on climate protection as soon as possible. The failed G8 summit of Gleneagles has demonstrated in a very depressing way, how contraproductive for climate protection it is to wait for George Bush. The German G8 presidency must go ahead with the G8 Kyoto states which means the “G8 minus USA”. The best what the German G8 presidency can do now in order, that on the long run als the USA are coming on board in international climate protectionis, is to achieve at Heiligendamm without George Bush ambitious climate protection targets.