The Stockholm Environment Institute has recently issued a report that examines four detailed studies of countries’ mitigation pledges under the Cancun Agreements, for the purpose of comparing developed (Annex 1) country pledges to developing (non-Annex 1) country pledges.

It finds that there is broad agreement that developing country pledges amount to more mitigation than developed country pledges. That conclusion is robust, in that it applies across all four studies and across all their various cases, despite the diversity of assumptions and methodologies employed and the substantial differences in their quantification of the pledges.

### But what about historical responsibility?

One of the underlying principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is:

*The Parties should protect the climate ... on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof* (UNFCCC, Article 3).

Considering that developed countries are responsible for about 60% of global emissions under a consumption-based accounting of greenhouse gas emissions and are responsible for 75% of historical emissions, developed countries bear primary responsibility to lead in combatting climate change. In terms of capability, the developed world controls approximately 75% of the world’s GDP.

### And what about the climate?

The mitigation pledged globally puts us on track toward much more than 2°C of warming – possibly as much as 5°C. Given the urgency of the climate crisis, developed countries must must raise their level of ambition to the levels demanded by science and equity. But the uncompromising mathematics of the severely limited global carbon budget make clear that developed countries alone cannot prevent dangerous climate change. Developing countries must also raise their level of ambition. And, with the necessary institutions of technological cooperation and financial support in place, developed and developing countries must then work together to fulfill those ambitions.