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Norwegian Climate Policy: Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

It is Norway´s view that the increase in global mean temperature has to be limited to a maximum of 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial level in order to achieve the ultimate objective of the UN Convention on Climate Change of preventing dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

This means that global greenhouse gas emissions will have to be reduced by 50-85 % by 2050, most likely as much as 85%. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, carbon capture and storage (CCS) has, after energy efficiency, the second largest potential for global emission reductions. This view is supported by the International Energy Agency which stresses that CCS is a key technology in reaching the two-degree goal. Around 20 per cent of necessary emissions reductions could come from CCS activities.

To tackle the important task at hand, we need a broad and comprehensive portfolio of mitigation options and tools. In light of its vast potential of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Norway sees CCS as an imperative part of this portfolio.

It is crucial that the future climate regime creates a framework that welcomes, promotes and provides incentives for research, innovation and implementation of all technologies that contribute to reducing emissions. This requires increased efforts on renewable energy and energy efficiency. But we must also meet the challenge of securing a sustainable future energy supply by reducing emissions from the continued production and use of fossil fuels. CCS is one of the most promising technologies to achieve this. This technology will complement other climate change mitigation actions by reducing emissions from use of fossil fuels, including coal, during the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Since 1996, Norway has gained extensive experience in storing CO_2 in geological structures. Monitoring data show the precise subsurface location of the CO_2 plume and confirms that the CO_2 is confined securely within the storage reservoir.

Norway is strongly committed to further develop and contribute to a widespread dissemination of CCS technologies. The Government cooperates with industry on realizing CCS at two gas fired power plants and will contribute financially to these projects. In addition, the European CO_2 Technology Centre Mongstad will test, verify and demonstrate different concepts and technologies capable of reducing costs and risks related to CCS.

There are still challenges in making CCS technologies commercially viable on a global scale. At the same time, there are emissions that easily can be captured and stored if financial and other conditions are in place. We need to develop mechanisms to meet these challenges. To mobilize the financial resources needed to enable and disseminate such climate friendly technologies, we must create a framework that incentives investments in both developed countries and developing countries.

The international efforts to develop incentives that could help facilitating implementation of the CCS technology need to be further intensified. Financing CCS should be seen in the context of the broader discussion on financing mitigation technologies.

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