

COP-Out? A Brief History of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences: COPs 1-26

Chris Skidmore
Will Farrell

A summary of the key agreements, post-summit action, negotiation successes and breakdowns, and sentiment concerning the first 26 Conferences of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

COP1, 1995: Berlin, Germany

President: Ms. Angela Merkel

Parties (states) attending: 117; Observer states: 53¹.

Backdrop

The first COP came off the back of the 11th session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change². This had itself come after the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio 'Earth Summit'), which followed Thatcher's 1990 call at the second World Climate Conference for negotiating "a successful framework convention on climate change in 1992"³.

Negotiations

The principle focus of COP1 was to kickstart negotiations to strengthen the global response to climate change⁴. Negotiations were guided by recommendations from both the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)⁵.

Notably, commitments at COP1 were only applicable to Annex 1 states (those developed countries), despite universal participation⁶. Certain Annex 1 states were discontented with this lack of universal commitments, notably US, Japan, Russia, Australia, and Canada. In compromise, some Annex 1 states suggested the use of Joint Implementation (JI) to ease the burden of commitments on non-Annex 1 states (developing nations), which resulted in the launch of the pilot program for JI at Berlin.

Key Agreements

Parties agreed to submit national communications, detailing their measures for limiting anthropogenic emissions, with the aim of launching a coordinated global effort. Parties agreed such national communications would be subject to 'in-depth' review. Such reviews would "describe expected progress in the limitation of emissions by sources and enhancement of removals by sinks of greenhouse gases", "describe expected progress in cooperation to prepare for adaptation" and "aggregate data across national communications with respect to inventories, projections, effects of measures and financial transfers, but without adding up the individual national total for projections and the effects of measures"⁷.

¹ UNFCCC, *Directory of Participants, COP1*, <https://unfccc.int/cop5/resource/docs/cop1/inf05r02.pdf>

² UNFCCC, *Provisional Agenda and Annotations, Including Suggestions for the Organization of Work, COP1*, <https://unfccc.int/cop5/resource/docs/cop1/01.pdf>

³ Magrini, M. 2021. *From COP1 to COP26: Flashes of brilliance; years of disappointment*. Geographical. <http://geographical.co.uk/nature/climate/item/4182-from-cop1-to-cop26-flashes-of-brilliance-years-of-disappointment>

⁴ UNFCCC, *History of the Convention*, <https://unfccc.int/process/the-convention/history-of-the-convention#eq-1>

⁵ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its First Session, Part 1*. <https://unfccc.int/cop5/resource/docs/cop1/07.pdf>

⁶ Climate Policy Watcher, *COP1 Berlin 1995*, <https://www.climate-policy-watcher.org/ozone-depletion/cop-1berlin-1995.html>

⁷ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its First Session, Part 2*. <https://unfccc.int/cop5/resource/docs/cop1/07a01.pdf>

Sentiment

Commentators have remarked on the lack of universal participation at COP1, which saw an emphasis placed on developed nations to make commitments⁷. In general, while not overly impressive, COP1 was appreciated as the first step in raising ambition on coordinated global climate action.

Newspaper Archives

Irish Independent, 08/04/1995, p11, Nick Nuttall:

<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0001715/19950408/180/0011>

“The world’s nations agreed yesterday to cut emissions of greenhouse gases as the Berlin climate conference reached a tense but positive conclusion”

“Up to the final minutes, officials were expecting an OPEC nation to block a European Union-led move to broker a deal. The concern gave way to spontaneous applause, however, as German Environment Minister Angela Merkel {...} smashed her gavel to adopt the key document without a single hand being raised in protest.”

“John Gummer, the British Environment Secretary, said: “We have got a genuine document that actually commits us to reductions””.

“The powerful American oil and industry lobby signalled its anger over the deal and promised to put further pressure on the Clinton Administration. John Shales, executive director of the Global Climate Coalition, said the failure to tie in developing nations puts American jobs, economic activity and international competitiveness at ‘grave risk’. “The agreement reached by the UN negotiators at Berlin gives countries like China, India, and Mexico a free ride,” he said.”

COP2, 1996: Geneva, Switzerland

President: Mr. Chen Chimutengwende

Parties (states) attending: 147; Observer states: 14⁸.

Backdrop

As the second session, COP2 was where parties would now have to delve into the details of negotiating a globally coordinated response to climate change.

Negotiations

Negotiations made progress with Northern states, particularly the US, which “finally accepted the need for binding emission reductions to combat climate change” though still pushing for greater participation from Southern states⁹. The US and others argued their climate action, without some participation from ‘developing countries’, would harm their trade competitiveness, which delayed negotiations but brought further forward the importance of assessing how developing countries would decarbonise⁹.

A huge part of COP2 discussed the ‘Geneva Ministerial Declaration’, which drew on the scientific depth of the IPCC second assessment report to recommend Annex 1 Parties (Northern states) commit to “policies and measures {...}, quantified legally-binding objectives for emission limitations and overall reductions within specified time-frames {...}, [establishing] a mechanism to allow the regular review and strengthening of the commitments embodied in a protocol”¹⁰. Despite the “spirit of haste”¹¹, the negotiations broke down before any legally binding targets could be agreed¹⁰. The delegation of Australia stated they had “difficulty [...] with that aspect of the text which commits the Parties to include in the final instrument legally binding targets without the nature and context of those commitments being clear”¹⁰.

The US, however, was by this point much closer to agreeing, with its delegation stating the declaration was “admirable” with only one room for improvement on “working towards a longer-term concentration goal, [...] with] activities implemented jointly on a global basis, and international emissions trading must be part of any future regime”. Other countries joining in stating publicly at the COP their overall support of the declaration were Ireland and Samoa.

Other countries welcomed the declaration’s attempt to establish a response to climate change, marking a political shift globally. New Zealand’s delegation remarked the declaration’s text “sends a strong message that politically we are committed to working together to address the threat of climate change.” New Zealand also echoed concerns over how different countries play their role, stating that though “parties had to do their fair share of emissions reductions, a way had to be found to reduce the disparity in abatement costs between countries”¹⁰.

The declaration received significant criticism from the delegations of Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, the Syrian

⁸ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Second Session, Part 1.*

<https://unfccc.int/cop5/resource/docs/cop2/15.pdf>

⁹ Climate Policy Watcher, *COP1 Berlin 1995*, <https://www.climate-policy-watcher.org/ozone-depletion/cop-1berlin-1995.html>

¹⁰ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Second Session, Part 2.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop2/15a01.pdf>

¹¹ Harrison, H. *A Timeline of COP*. 2021. Climate Talk. <https://climatalk.org/2021/01/29/a-timeline-of-cop/>

Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, and Yemen. The observer state, Iran, also objected. These states took issue with a “non-objective characterisation and selective reference to only some of the information in the IPCC Second Assessment Report, with the result that the draft Ministerial Declaration is biased and misleading”. Further, it was argued there was a “failure of the draft Ministerial Declaration to reflect the views of many Parties as stated by them at the second session of the Conference of the Parties [...and] lack of opportunity for the Conference of the Parties to discuss the draft Ministerial declaration”¹⁰. This complete breakdown in negotiations reflects the importance of inclusivity in COP negotiations, while also exposing the serious economic concerns surrounding sensitive legally binding protocols.

Key Agreements

Parties agreed on working to set binding quantitative targets to limit emissions by industrialised countries (those Northern states)¹². As such, parties endorsed the results of the IPCC second assessment report, which was thanks to COP1’s establishing of this review process for national communications⁷. Given disagreements stalling COP2, the Geneva Ministerial Declaration was noted by the parties (and annexed in the report), but was not adopted¹³.

Sentiment

The second COP was, by many accounts, lack-lustre. A review of proposals up to and including COP2, prepared for *Scientists for Global Responsibility*, read: “nobody has high hopes of an effective long-term agreement by [COP3, Kyoto]”¹⁴. This is largely due to the lack of a legally binding protocol, which was increasingly looking like the principal task for Kyoto (COP3) to face. The statements at COP2 from numerous delegations, including Australia and the US, set up significant anticipation for Kyoto. In particular, the US’ remarks on international emissions trading in part foreshadowed the emphasis on emissions trading at COP3, though the international element of this remains in its infancy beyond even COP26¹⁵.

John Gummer, UK Environment Secretary spoke at the Conference: “I do not think anyone in this hall is so old that he or she will not be affected by climate change unless he or she falls under a tram here in Geneva before the end of the Conference.”¹⁶

¹² Eliades, N. 2021. *A short history of COP*. Ecologist. <https://theecologist.org/2021/sep/16/short-history-cop>

¹³ DownToEarth, *COP2*. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-change/cop-02>

¹⁴ *Choose Climate: Climate Engineering Review*. 1996. <http://www.chooseclimate.org/cleng/part3.html>

¹⁵ Watson, F. 2021. *COP26: Nations strike deal on international carbon markets at Glasgow summit*. <https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/energy-transition/111421-cop26-nations-strike-deal-on-international-carbon-markets-at-glasgow-summit>

¹⁶ Nelsson, R., and Rice-Oxley, M. 2021. *50 years, 25 COPs: the slow-motion movement to save the planet*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/30/50-years-25-cops-the-slow-motion-movement-to-save-the-planet>

COP3, 1997: Kyoto, Japan

President: Mr. Hiroshi Ohki

Parties (states) attending: 155; Observer states: 6¹⁶.

Backdrop

With COP2 unsuccessful at signing legally-binding, quantitative targets, the world reconvened in Kyoto a year later for the third session of COP¹². With significant anticipation, delegates negotiated the first momentous COP deal.

Negotiations

Understanding the target-setting of emissions was the principal aim of COP3, delegations arrived with their initial proposals, which varied enormously. The US proposal was to stabilise emissions¹⁷. The EU proposal was a 15% cut for the 2008-2012 period¹⁷. This compares to the 1990 IPCC report suggesting 60% reduction was needed¹⁷.

Now, developing countries were on the card for action, easing concerns present among the industrialised nations at previous negotiations. The COP3 President set this tone from the start, welcoming delegates by saying “[worldwide strategy against climate change] should be based on three principles: developed countries should take the lead now in committing themselves to reduce greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels; developing countries should also take actions to address the issue of climate change in promoting their sustainable development;{...} and developed countries should strengthen their partnership with developing countries through the provision of financial and technological support for mitigating global greenhouse gas emissions”¹⁸. This was a key theme throughout the COP, with Japan’s ministerial address of welcome remarking on how “developing countries should be asked to make every effort, in their future development activities, to take into account the future of the whole world.[...] to that end, appropriate assistance from developed countries was indispensable”¹⁸. This followed on from earlier COP discussions concerning JI and marked a shift towards a fully global approach.

The proposed Kyoto protocol, which outlined the legally binding climate targets for developed nations, was, however, restrictive on developing nations’ commitments¹¹. Only developed nations were subject to the binding emissions targets, which catalysed President Bush to say he opposed the Kyoto Protocol, particularly since India and China would be exempt from Kyoto measures¹⁷. Compromises were delivered via negotiations, however, which saw greater involvement of developing nations: a JI Project (facilitating lowest-cost approach to emissions abatement by opening possibilities to abate emissions abroad – notably developing nations where abatement is cheaper - rather than domestically) and a Clean Development Mechanism, which would facilitate public finance flows from developed nations to developing nations’ green infrastructure in place of domestic abatement¹¹.

Significant negotiation on the terms of emissions reduction was necessary for an agreement to be reached on the principle aim of the Kyoto Protocol. As earlier detailed, there was disagreement over how far countries had to go with abating emissions. Further, countries including Australia, Norway, and Iceland proposed binding climate targets be differentiated

¹⁶ UNFCCC, *List of Participants, COP3*. <https://unfccc.int/cop4/resource/docs/cop3/inf05.pdf>

¹⁷ Shah, A. 2002. *COP3 – Kyoto Protocol Climate Conference*. Global Issues. <https://www.globalissues.org/article/183/cop3-kyoto-protocol-climate-conference>

¹⁸ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Third Session*. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/cop3/07.pdf>

between countries to even out economic costs¹⁹. Negotiations neared breakdown, with “some members of the [EU] delegation who had not slept for more than 24 hours burst into tears at the prospect of a total breakdown of the negotiations”²¹. Worsening negotiations, China successfully contested the requirement for developing countries (of which they were classified) to sign up to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions, worsening the chance of US approval of the deal¹⁶.

In part, the JI mechanism that came into being at COP3 eased some of these concerns¹⁹. Vitaly, the Kyoto Protocol spearheaded emissions trading with the intent of aiding countries decarbonise via least-cost routes, including by trading emissions with those economies in the same annex²⁰. In the end, compromises were such that the final Protocol detailed targets differentiated by country, averaging 5.2%¹⁷.

Key Agreements

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted by the end of the Conference, though not signed by the US until COP4 and later still not ratified by the US. The US maintained that it disapproved of any international agreement not involving action from developing nations, so it wasn't until 2004 when Russia signed into the protocol that the protocol had to be acted on¹¹. Nonetheless, the Protocol's eventual coming into force established carbon markets and held developed countries to legally binding emissions reduction targets.

The product of negotiation, parties signed to reduce emissions to 5.2% below 1990 levels for the period 2008-2012¹⁷. Also a result of negotiation, the Kyoto Protocol's press release detailed the agreement “grants countries a certain degree of flexibility in how they make and measure their emissions reductions. In particular, a “clean development mechanism” will enable industrialised countries to finance emissions-reduction projects in developing countries and receive credits for doing so. An international “emissions trading” regime will be established allowing industrialised countries to buy and sell excess emissions credits among themselves”²¹.

Sentiment

John Prescott, Deputy PM of the UK at the time, remarked by the end of the Conference “the targets were not what we hoped, but we have to remember that 10 days ago the Americans came here offering only stabilisation by 2012 and Japan cuts of 2.5%”²². Despite the dampened Kyoto targets, the UK was one of various countries to stick to more ambitious decarbonisation timelines, including a 20% reduction in CO₂ in the UK²².

The Kyoto Protocol was controversial among both industry and environmental groups. Greenpeace termed the Conference “a tragedy and a farce” given how distant the binding targets were from the IPCC's targets¹⁷.

¹⁹ Graham, B., Hinchey, M., Fisher, B., Tulpulé, V. 1998. *Climate change negotiations: the Kyoto Protocol*. Abare Conference Paper 98.7. http://data.daff.gov.au/brs/data/warehouse/pe_abarebrs99000363/pc10702.pdf

²⁰ UNFCCC, *Emissions Trading*. <https://unfccc.int/process/the-kyoto-protocol/mechanisms/emissions-trading>

²¹ UNFCCC, *COP3 PRESS RELEASE: Industrialised countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 5.2%*. <https://unfccc.int/cop3/fccc/info/indust.htm>

²² Brown, P. *Clinton Rescues Kyoto Deal*. The Guardian, 1997.

<https://theguardian.newspapers.com/clip/86529004/the-guardian/>

From the negotiations, frustration was also evident. The European Parliament accused the US of being “non-cooperative”²³. Paul Brown, reporting at the Conference, wrote that the Protocol was a “patched-up deal [...that] was only achieved after a cynical trade-off between China and the US”¹⁶.

²³ Shah, A. 2012. *Reactions to Climate Change Negotiations and Action*. Global Issues.
<https://www.globalissues.org/article/179/reactions-to-climate-change-negotiations-and-action#Reactions>

COP4, 1998: Buenos Aires, Argentina

President: Ms. Maria Julia Alsogaray

Parties (states) attending: 150; Observer states: 7. ²⁴

Backdrop

With the Kyoto Protocol adopted, COP4 and COP5 were left with defining the precise details of the deal and its mechanisms before they entered into action²⁵.

Negotiations

While the purpose of the summit was principally to produce a rulebook for the operationalisation of the Kyoto Protocol, negotiations once again returned to the question of developing country participation. As a result, Argentina – as the host – became the first developing country to announce its intention of a binding climate target alongside the Kyoto Protocol's Annex 1 countries²⁶. Kazakhstan later joined Argentina in this announcement²⁶.

The US eventually signed the Kyoto Protocol in Buenos Aires, though would later not succeed at ratifying it. The US was keen to demonstrate a “commitment to work with other nations to meet the Protocol's ambitious environmental goals and ensures a continued strong US role in settling issues left unresolved at Kyoto” ²⁶.

The evidence of an increasing climate threat drew some attention of the Conference away from the action plan. Hurricane Mitch had recently devastated Honduras and Nicaragua most notably, to which the Conference responded with a “resolution on solidarity with Central America [...which] recognises the region's high vulnerability to climate phenomena and the need for further scientific research into possible links between climate change and extreme events”²⁷.

Key Agreements

The summit of COP4 produced the ‘Buenos Aires Action Plan’, a two-year action plan for advancing the Kyoto Protocol to reality²⁷. The plan established:

- Rules for the Protocol's market-based mechanisms (emissions trading, JI, and the Clean Development Mechanism).
- Compliance rules, including consequences for non-compliance.
- Development and transfer of cleaner, climate-friendly technologies to less developed nations.
- Consideration of adverse impacts of climate change and response measures.²⁶

Beyond the Action Plan, COP4 saw parties agree to kickstart more work on understanding carbon sinks, including their definition, measurement, and verification for use in public policy measures²⁶. This was one of the earliest insights into nature-based solutions.

²⁴ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Fourth Session*.

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/cop4/16.pdf>

²⁵ Lang, J. *A Short(-ish) History of the UN Climate Summits*. Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit.

<https://eciu.net/analysis/infographics/un-climate-summits>

²⁶ US Department of State Archive. 1998 *The Buenos Aires Climate Change Conference*. https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/global_issues/climate/fs-cop4_final_981200.html

²⁷ UNFCCC, *COP4 PRESS RELEASE: Climate change meeting adopts Buenos Aires Plan of Action*. <https://unfccc.int/cop4/infomed/p111498.html>

Sentiment

150 non-governmental organisations, representing the private sector and environmental interests, were observers at COP4, marking a significant increase in private sector interest in particular²⁷.

In contrast to more recent COPs, COP4 was attended by only one Prime Minister and no Presidents²⁷.

While this COP was a success at securing key details and enlisting the signing of the US, it was also the focus of criticism, particularly on its lack of deadlines for signatories to make necessary preparations or for when the Kyoto Protocol will eventually operationalise (termed simply “some time after the year 2000”²⁷)²⁸.

The Guardian reported COP4 was “two weeks of ill-tempered talks”²⁹.

²⁸ Shah, A. 2000. *COP4 – Buenos Aires Climate Conference*. Global Issues.

<https://www.globalissues.org/article/182/cop4-buenos-aires-climate-conference>

²⁹ Nelsson, R., and Rice-Oxley, M. 2021. *50 years, 25 COPs: the slow-motion movement to save the planet*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/30/50-years-25-cops-the-slow-motion-movement-to-save-the-planet>

COP5, 1999: Bonn, Germany

President: Mr. Jan Szyszko.

Parties (states) attending: 165; Observer states: 3³⁰

Backdrop

Having established many of the rules and procedures necessary for the enactment of the Kyoto Protocol at COP4, parties convened at COP5 to polish off technical details²⁵. The outgoing COP4 President remarked in her opening statement in Bonn that “developing countries were rapidly becoming a significant source of additional greenhouse gas emissions”, which added a layer of complexity to all future negotiations: the scale of action necessary was now much greater. She added “Progress has thus been slower than expected [...], mere stabilisation, or a slight reduction of emissions from Annex I parties, was not enough [...] urged Conference to send out a convincing signal to continue along the path embarked on in Rio de Janeiro, which should lead to the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol by the year 2002”³⁰.

Negotiations

Remaining negotiations concerned “the adoption of the guidelines for the preparation of national communications by countries, capacity building, transfer of technology, and flexible mechanisms”³¹.

Key moments of momentum built as countries detail actions taken even without Kyoto Protocol enacted:

- Developed (Annex I) nations: “reported they were designing and putting in place domestic policies and measures to reduce emissions in all sectors, such as market mechanisms, tax reform, removal of subsidies, voluntary programmes and domestic emissions trading”. Though ministers “emphasised that implementing emissions reduction policies was not an easy matter, as they demand major social and economic changes”.³⁰
- Developing nations (non-Annex I): “reported on the action they were taking to limit the growth of their emissions, within the context of national sustainable development plans”. Particularly positive reference to “win-win solutions because of the multiple benefits derived”.³⁰

A particular challenge was the return of the technology transfer question, with “importance for developing countries of capacity-building and transfer of technology had been emphasised many times” during negotiations, marking a sticking point in terms of concrete progress on catalysing a more global/international approach³⁰.

Key Agreements

Mainly a technical summit, there were few notable conclusions. Parties were invited, however, to “contribute to [Buenos Aires Action Plan] preparatory work [ahead of COP6], substantively and, as appropriate, financially, inter alia to support adequate participation of

³⁰ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Fifth Session, Part 1*.

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop5/06.pdf>

³¹ The Scottish Parliament. 2021. *COP26: A brief history of climate COP*. <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2021/10/28/cop26-a-brief-history-of-climate-cop/>

developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the small island developing states.”³²

Other conclusions on how to move forward included further improving how countries work with the IPCC on measuring/reporting greenhouse gas emissions; improving transparency, consistency, comparability, completeness, and accuracy of national communications; assessing technical appropriateness of greenhouse gas inventories.³²

COP5 also concluded a list of capacity-building needs of developing country parties, addressing head on the hurdles in the way of globally impactful climate action:

- Institutional capacity building
- Capacity-building under the clean development mechanism
- Human resource development
- Technology transfer
- National communications
- Adaptation
- Public awareness
- Coordination and cooperation
- Improved decision-making³²

Sentiment

President “sensed a new spirit of determination and commitment to success” in the negotiating process.

The Guardian reported ‘Ute Collier, the World Wide Fund for Nature’s climate campaigner, also in Bonn, said: “This [climate change threat] is quite frightening, and should add urgency to these negotiations.”’²⁹

³² UNFCCC, *Report of the Conferences of the Parties on its Fifth Session, Part Two*.
<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop5/06a01.pdf>

COP6, 2000: The Hague, The Netherlands; 2001: Bonn, Germany

President: Mr. Jan Pronk.

Parties (states) attending: 176; Observer states: 4³³

Backdrop

The Kyoto Protocol was nearing its final details, but this momentous two-stage COP would see the political difficulties of climate action flare up enormously¹¹.

Negotiations

The outgoing COP5 President pinpointed a principal sticking point for negotiations in his opening remarks in The Hague. “He recalled that the Kyoto Protocol would enter into force once it had been ratified by 55 Parties, incorporating Annex I parties accounting in total for at least 55% of the total CO₂ emissions for 1990. Therefore, a bridge of understanding providing mutual benefits must be built between developed and developing countries. This might include agreement to count as the reduction by developed countries a part of the emissions absorbed by sinks, and provision by the developed countries of effective and efficient financial assistance to developing countries”³³.

The COP5 President was referring to some of the ‘Flexibility Mechanisms’, which were particularly contentious at COP6¹¹. The US was demanding the use of such flexibility mechanisms to meet emissions targets without real emissions reductions, particularly via carbon sinks. The Umbrella Group, comprising the US, Japan, Russia, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand backed this position, just as they had consistently grouped on issues concerning bringing developing countries into negotiations at previous COPs³⁴.

Flexibility mechanisms were heavily opposed by other nations, especially European, who argued the US demands were such that action would lack sufficient impact³⁴. The disparities in climate ambition across countries led to significant frictions on this issue, which eventually grounded negotiations entirely³⁴.

Negotiations were finally resumed under the banner of COP6 during the July of the next year, with nations organising in Bonn. The US was an observer state and so was not involved in these later negotiations³¹. Fears of negotiation collapse and an atmosphere anticipating another dead-end summit in fact catalysed key concessions. Despite the US’s observer status, the remaining Umbrella Group remained keen on flexibility mechanisms, which the EU gave key concessions over. Further, negotiations made ground on how developed countries ought to commit to supporting developing countries’ decarbonisation pathways financially³⁵. Kyoto mechanisms and compliance were also key turning points in this eventually productive summit³⁶.

Key Agreements

³³ UNFCCC, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on the First Part of its Sixth Session, Part 1*. <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop6/05a01.pdf>

³⁴ Shah, A. Global Issues. 2001. *COP6 – The Hague Climate Conference*. <https://www.globalissues.org/article/181/cop6-the-hague-climate-conference>

³⁵ RisingTide, 2001. *Summary of the Climate Change Agreement COP6.5 (BONN)*. <https://www.risingtide.org.uk/resources/factsheets/bonn>

³⁶ Japan Environment Quarterly, 2001. *Climate Progress at COP6 bis*. <https://www.env.go.jp/en/jeq/v006-03.pdf>

All nations except the US agreed on the mechanisms for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, since the US was an observer state for the second part of COP6³¹.

Funds, including a least developed countries fund and an adaptation fund, were agreed to be established under the Kyoto Protocol and the Framework Convention, marking a shift towards the role of developing country decarbonisation in tackling climate change³⁶.

The outcome of tough and prolonged negotiations over flexibility mechanisms, the mechanics of the Kyoto Protocol emissions trading and sinks were agreed upon:

- Emissions trading: trade of carbon credits among those Annex-1 countries committed to binding targets³⁵.
- JI: joint implementation established so that one country can claim carbon credits for financing projects in other Annex-1 countries³⁵.
- CDM: the Clean Development Mechanism was agreed upon so that developed countries can claim emissions credit for financing decarbonisation projects in developing countries, even where these developing countries have no binding targets³⁵.
- Sinks: concessions achieved on the contribution of sinks towards emissions reductions, though with limits set on a country-by-country basis³⁶.

With these mechanisms finally in place, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 2001 without the US.

Other than the supposed agreement of country specific limits on sink contributions, there were no quantitative limits set on these flexibility mechanisms, another concession achieved by the Umbrella Group³⁵. The agreement was phrased, however, such that domestic action ought to be the “significant element” as countries look to achieve their binding targets³⁵.

Always a difficult aspect of international negotiations, COP6 finally led to a (minor) agreement on compliance, whereby countries not meeting their legally binding reduction targets for one year will see 1.3x their emission reduction deficit subtracted from the emissions reductions in the following year³⁶.

Sentiment

Without doubt, the summit was heavily politicised, most notably in the US. George W. Bush, with the US withdrawn from the Kyoto protocol, remarked as the new President that “the Kyoto Protocol was fatally flawed in fundamental ways {...} for America, complying with its mandates would have a negative economic impact”²⁵.

The negotiations grounding to a halt in the Hague was a bitter moment for global climate efforts. The Guardian reported that “John Prescott almost saved the planet. He thought he had a deal with the United States {...} It turned out he hadn’t”³⁷. Anti-US sentiment was building, with last-minute negotiations described as “yet another US attempt to dress up its resistance to risking a single American job or profit opportunity in the increasing urgent struggle to counteract global warming”³⁷. The article goes further, stating “and while the dirtiest nation swaggers around the globe policing how the rest of the world trades and organises its finances, it apparently believes it should come under no scrutiny at all for running its own industry with fuel-inefficient, environmentally damaging technologies long abandoned by Europe”³⁷.

³⁷ The Guardian, 2000. *Dirty Uncle Sam wrecks deal on global warming*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2000/nov/26/globalwarming.theobserver>

COP6 led to frustration among environmental groups either side of the pond. In the US, groups felt the US position was favoured over the little action transpiring from a breakdown in negotiations. The National Environment Trust, D.C., argued the foregone US proposed action subject to flexibility mechanisms was “major progress” on reducing global warming³⁴.

The ultimate concessions on flexibility mechanisms in Bonn did, however, unlock a route forward for climate ambition, with consensus building over the value of exploiting these low-cost decarbonisation options³⁴.

The Guardian, with Paul Brown reporting from Bonn, stated the agreement “was a triumph for EU diplomacy, and a slap in the face for President George Bush, who repudiated the treaty as ‘fatally flawed’ in March, expecting the rest of the world to follow”³⁸. Brown reported “Japan, Canada, and Australia [nb: key members of the Umbrella Group], which prior to Bonn seemed reluctant to displease Mr Bush, were won over by the concessions made by the EU [those flexibility mechanisms], which made their greenhouse gas reduction targets easier to reach”³⁸.

The legacy of previous COPs and of the changing presidency also played a part: “it would have been particularly hard for the Japanese to explain why they had dropped the treaty and dishonoured the city of Kyoto, where the original targets were negotiated [at COP3]”³⁸.

Brown points to the work still to be done at future COPs: “Although the concessions mean the cuts in greenhouse gases by 37 of the world’s richest and most developed countries will be a marginal 1-3%, compared with the 60-80% scientists are demanding to make the climate safe”³⁸.

Delegation reactions:

Michael Meacher, Britain’s Environment Minister: “Climate change is the single greatest threat to the human race. This agreement is a historic day that all of us will remember”³⁸.

Margot Wollstrom, EU Environment Commissioner: “Now we can go home and look our children in the eye and be proud of what we have done”³⁸.

Paula Dobriansky, US under secretary for global affairs, was booed by fellow delegates, saying “The Bush administration takes the issue of climate change seriously and we will not abdicate our responsibilities”³⁸.

Junichiro Koizumi, Japanese PM: welcomed agreement and went on the record to say he would “continue maximum effort towards an agreement inclusive of the US”³⁸.

Jan Pronk, COP6 President: “We failed in the Hague but we felt we could not fail twice. Citizens, electorates, the public, expected a result. Globalisation is getting so much a bad name, but we have shown that global decisions can be good for the environment”³⁸.

Peter Hodgson, from New Zealand’s delegation: “we have delivered probably the most comprehensive and difficult agreement in human history”.

³⁸ Brown, P. The Guardian, 2001. *World deal on climate isolates US*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/jul/24/environment.physicalsciences>

COP7, 2001: Marrakech, Morocco

President: Mr Mohamed Elyzghi

Parties (states) attending: 170; Observer states: 2³⁹.

Backdrop

Despite the eventual breakthroughs COP6 achieved, there remained a lack of ambition to meet IPCC scientific advice³⁸ and countries had yet to agree on whether to make compliance legally binding³⁶. COP7 was left to tackle these issues, coming off the back of calls for greater international cooperation after 9/11.

Jan Pronk, President of COP6 opened COP6, shining light on the success of COP6 and the wider global need for international cooperation. Concluding, Pronk spoke of the “latest scientific knowledge contained in the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC show[ing] that the Kyoto Protocol represented only a small step forward for the climate. Much remained to be done, and the Conference must not shy away from future debate on the adequacy of commitments, while respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities {...} The focus at this present session would now be on completing the translation of the Bonn Agreements into legal language”³⁹.

Negotiations

Again, the US did not attend negotiations at COP7, given the nature of the summit as a technical gathering for pushing forward the Kyoto Protocol, which the US had withdrawn from⁴⁰.

Importantly, the summit focused on progressing the Kyoto Protocol towards its final stages of preparation.

Again, the issue of flexibility mechanisms, particular carbon sinks, returned. Now – without the US – Canada, Russia, Japan, and Australia coordinated resilience in negotiations, rejecting the proposed paper on how emissions trading would work in favour of explicit mentions of carbon sinks as counting towards a country’s emissions reductions⁴¹.

Key Agreements

After sufficient concessions on carbon sinks and the accounting of flexibility mechanisms, an agreement was reached on the operationalisation of the Kyoto Protocol. The agreement, known as the Marrakech Accords, is first and foremost one of writing the rule book on accounting, inclusion criteria, and penalties for defaulting on commitments⁴². The agreement does little but refine COP6’s Bonn Agreement.

Sentiment

Margaret Beckett, Britain’s Environment Secretary: “This is the first multinational environment agreement with teeth, and it will make an enormous difference in reducing

³⁹ UNFCCC, 2002. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Seventh Session*.

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop7/13.pdf>

⁴⁰ Shah, A. Global Issues. 2001. *COP7 – Marrakesh Climate Conference*.

<https://www.globalissues.org/article/297/cop7-marrakesh-climate-conference>

⁴¹ Browne, A. The Guardian. 2001. *‘Historic’ deal saves Kyoto, but America stays outside*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2001/nov/11/globalisation.climatechange>

⁴² Hirsch, T. 2005. *Jargon obscures Montreal Message*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4494430.stm>

greenhouse emissions”⁴¹. Later, amidst criticism the deal from Marrakech lacked enough ambition: “you can always say “wouldn’t it be better if?”, but no one would have wanted us to leave without an agreement”⁴¹.

Compared to previous COPs, COP7 lacked media attention, likely thanks to greater coverage on terror-related matters, to the absence of the US from negotiations, and to the technical nature of the summit⁴⁰.

COP8, 2002: New Delhi, India

President: Mr T. R. Baalu.

Parties (states) attending: 167; Observer states: 3⁴³.

Backdrop

Outgoing COP7 President opens with remarks on how “The Marrakesh Accords symbolised the transition from theory to practice, that is, from the elaboration of the rules of the Kyoto Protocol to its implementation”⁴³.

The incoming COP8 President remarked “Now it was time to finalise this process [bringing into force of the Kyoto Protocol] without delay”⁴³.

Negotiations

Sustainable development was a key feature of this particular climate summit. COP8 President opened with: “The links between climate change and sustainable development had highlighted the problems of poverty, land degradation, access to water and food, human health, and the use of energy. {...} Climate change in the context of sustainable development would be addressed in the envisaged Delhi Declaration”⁴³.

With the US refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, ambition to see the Protocol into action dwindled, given that either the US or Russia’s ratification was necessary so that the fine print could be satisfied (ratified by 55 countries, which must include those nations constituting 55% of the developed world’s 1990 carbon dioxide emissions). The EU and Japan had already ratified by 2002, but Russia delayed a decision on this as the US held back⁴⁴. So, as climate impacts are increasingly difficult to mitigate, the summit placed a new focus on adaptation and on climate progress in developing countries⁴⁴.

On incorporating developing countries more effectively, Parties negotiated updated and improved guidance on how developing countries ought to present their national communications. Beyond this, little was done to broaden commitments beyond those limited Annex-1 countries⁴⁵. In fact, even relatively minor rule-making exercises on the implementation of those funds announced at COP7, e.g. the Least Developed Country Fund, proved difficult – developed and developing nations were unable to agree on how to improve the transparency of fund decision-making, the appropriateness of fund provision, the predictability of funds, and the level of funds, so rules remained unfinished ahead of COP9⁴⁸.

There were attempts to negotiate more direct assistance from developed countries to developing countries, especially to offset the lack of progress in surrounding negotiations. Despite no concrete outcomes, the adopted Delhi Declaration did note with emphasis the advancement in these conversations. This includes that “technology transfer should be

⁴³ UNFCCC. 2002. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Eighth Session*.

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop8/07.pdf>

⁴⁴ Nature. *Climate Timeline [Archived]*.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120427071042/http://www.nature.com/climate/timeline/icp/index.html>

⁴⁵ International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). 2002. *Summary of the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change [archived]*.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120513004304/http://www.iisd.ca/vol12/enb12209e.html>

strengthened, including through concrete projects and capacity-building in all relevant sectors such as energy, transport, industry, health, agriculture etc.”⁴⁶

There was also, notably, a feeling that the US was undermining COP negotiations: “The US had already struck bilateral deals with several countries – dangerous ‘debt for nature swaps’ with Thailand, Belize, and El Salvador {...} a US senator pointed out that multilateralism was an obstacle in the way of the world’s superpower.”⁵¹

At COP8, the US also shifted its position in defence of its withdrawal from negotiations. “US chief negotiator Harlan Watson {...} made a startling announcement: the US no longer expected developing countries to sign the Kyoto Protocol {...} each developing country should decide its own response to climate change. This was a complete U-turn in US posturing on climate change. Ever since negotiations had begun, it had demanded equal participation from developing countries, especially India and China.”⁵¹

This contrasts the view commonly held today, including by the US, over climate change as an issue perfectly fitting of treatment as a ‘public bad’, requiring multilateral commitments to make any progress. US posturing against the Kyoto Protocol inevitably slowed down negotiation progress, even leading to developing nations siding with the US as economic arguments came to the fore: “Shell-oiled Nigeria: “Allow me to break protocol and pay special tribute to the delegation of the US,” Nigerian delegate Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo said to the COP closing plenary session. “On multiple agenda items {...} the US showed leadership and signalled clearly a good prospect of a change in the dynamic of relations in the COP”⁵¹.

Divisions among developing nations were also evident. Small island states, subjected to rising sea levels, were pushing for global commitments while other developing nations grappled to save their fossil fuel industries⁵¹. The “EU accused Saudi Arabia of using its position as key G-77 spokesperson to whip up emotions and distrust on the issue of developing country commitments”, which further grounded to a halt progress on this phase 2 of Kyoto targets⁵¹.

Key Agreements

By the end of the summit, Parties had agreed to adopt the Delhi Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, having made no substantive progress on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, despite initial objectives⁴⁵.

The Delhi Declaration makes no further commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, making no reference to the Kyoto Protocol in its first draft⁴⁷. It had been hoped that, as the Kyoto Protocol had outlined, there would be negotiation of the targets for the second commitment period for Annex B countries. Negotiations, however, were unable to bring developing country polluters, such as China, into legally-binding commitments and so the summit fell flat on this point, to the frustration of Australia and the US – both had yet to ratify the Kyoto Protocol⁴⁸.

Parties, did however, agree to these key principles of the Delhi Declaration:

⁴⁶ UNFCCC, 2002. *The Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, advanced unedited version*. https://unfccc.int/cop8/latest/1_cpl6rev1.pdf

⁴⁷ Euractiv. 2002. *COP-8 ended with disappointing Delhi Declaration on Climate Change*. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/sustainable-dev/news/cop-8-ended-with-disappointing-delhi-declaration-on-climate-change/>

⁴⁸ Fujime, K. 2003. *Significance and Issues of COP8 – Trends Toward CO2 Emissions Trading and Outlook for the Future*. The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan. <https://eneken.iecej.or.jp/data/en/data/pdf/190.pdf>

- Urge Parties to ratify Kyoto Protocol.
- Parties should promote sustainable development, integrated with national development programmes.
- National sustainable development strategies should integrate more fully climate change objectives in key areas such as water, energy, agriculture, and biodiversity.
- Parties should continue to meet targets set out in previous national communications and in line with the Kyoto Protocol, irrespective of its ratification or not.
- Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change is a [newly] high priority for all countries, in particular those vulnerable developing nations⁴⁸.

In particular, the success of COP8 was in advancing conversations over technology transfer from developed to developing nations, vital for both adaptation and mitigation, though no concrete terms were finalised⁴⁸.

Sentiment

There was significant criticism of the summit's pivot towards pressing developing countries to act to compensate the lack of action from those developed Annex-1 countries.

There was also disappointment in developing countries' actions, however. The Centre for Science and Environment, an NGO based in India, commented on COP8 at the time: "Southern leaders miserably and continuously fail their people. We watch amazed and horrified as the victims of climate change keep pleading for funds from the culprits in the climate negotiations, as if they were beggars. As developing countries fight each other to sell off the rights of their future generations for peanuts under the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) vying to provide the industrialised world with the cheapest way to buy their way out of emission cuts! One can only marvel at the ingenuity of Northern leadership when it comes to protecting their national economic interest by drawing on somebody else's expense account, and at the extreme stupidity of Southern leaders who allow the situation to degrade. Again and again and again and again, in negotiation after negotiation"⁴⁹.

Nb: This remarkably chastising criticism exposes key issues at the time: the lack of effective inclusion of developing countries and the ubiquitous presence of that myopic economic view of climate action as a zero-sum game (which, as we know, is still ubiquitous but arguably on its way out...).

As climate science became increasingly clear, the Bush administration's inaction was also all too clear. The Guardian reported on COP8⁵⁰:

"The Bush administration has never disguised its contempt for the Kyoto protocol {...} The US remains a country which is powered by coal, where people instinctively drive rather than walk and where masses let the plane take the strain {...} Bush's message {...} is clear: the American way of life is not up for negotiation"

"The US withdrawal has also unsettled the Russians and the Canadians, concerned that in the absence of the world's biggest polluter, the US, Kyoto's emissions-trading regime would be worthless".

DTE reported on COP8:

"COP8 didn't witness any scintillating intellectual and moral leadership from a host that often likes to portray itself as a leader among developing nations. The lack of leadership wasn't

⁴⁹ Shah, A. Global Issues. *COP8 – Delhi Climate Conference*. <https://www.globalissues.org/article/382/cop8-delhi-climate-conference>

⁵⁰ The Guardian. 2002. *Dirty dealing in Delhi*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2002/oct/31/guardianleaders.climatechange>

unnoticed, particularly by the small island developing countries – most affected by the climate change phenomenon, worst-hit by inaction in climate talks. “We find it a pity that the Delhi Declaration was not embellished with the same spice, flavours and delicious titbits so much a feature of Indian food,” an official representative from Tuvalu said in the closing session”⁵¹.

⁵¹ DownToEarth (DTE). 2002. *COP-8: Nothing’s brewing*. <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/cop8-nothings-brewing-15475>

COP9, 2003: Milan, Italy

President: Mr Miklós Persányi

Parties (states) attending: 166; Observer states: 4⁵².

Backdrop

The CDM had been made operational in the period between COP8 and COP9, initiating the start of projects by 2004⁵². The outgoing COP8 President remarked at the opening of COP9 that for developing countries, “[adaptation] entailed considerable costs {...} therefore necessary to operationalise as early as possible the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund” left unfinished at COP8⁵². The President also called on Parties to “reconfirm faith in multilateral cooperation”⁵².

Negotiations

Again, there was a reluctance from many developing countries for them to decarbonise. The outgoing COP8 President opened COP9 saying “no new commitments should be introduced for developing countries”⁵².

The incoming COP9 President, like various of his predecessors, emphasised COP9 should look to implement the Kyoto Protocol. He cited the “very large number of states that had ratified it and wished to proceed with its implementation {...} and available scientific scenarios on the future development of the global climate alarming”⁵².

The EU led efforts to push forward the Kyoto Protocol, despite its inability to come into force without either the US or Russia ratifying the protocol. EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström commented: “If it remains credible internationally, the EU must achieve the majority of its climate change mechanisms at home”⁵³. The failure of previous COPs at moving the Kyoto Protocol meaningfully to operation made the EU fearful of more delay, so a strategy of leadership by action was adopted.

In Europe, delegations’ enthusiasm for the Protocol remained. Sweden commented on the emissions trading “as the centrepiece in our cost-effective policy mix”⁵³. Irrespective of the passing of the Kyoto protocol, the EU was pushing on with operationalising the UE emissions trading scheme for as early as January 2005⁵³.

This enthusiasm was juxtaposed at COP9 with a lingering resistance, especially from the Russian and US delegations. Prior to the summit, Kremlin economic advisor, Andrei Illarionov, advised the Kyoto protocol would be “dooming [Russia] to poverty, backwardness, and weakness”⁵³.

Even pro-action experts were doubting Kyoto’s relevance. Washington-based Competitive Enterprise Institute’s Marlo Lewis claimed “Kyoto would have no discernible effect on climate change”⁵³.

With sufficient ratification of the Kyoto Protocol again looking unlikely at COP9, attention turned to implementing the developing country funds left unfinished at COP8. This was subject to tough negotiations, particularly as many developed nations found it contentious for them to fund the economic diversification measures of oil-endowed developing nations.

⁵² UNFCCC. 2003. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Ninth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop9/06.pdf>

⁵³ Carstens, K. 2003. Politico. *EU still determined on climate change in run-up to Milan talks.*

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-still-determined-on-climate-change-in-run-up-to-milan-talks/8>

Some EU nations even had sovereign laws prohibiting such overseas funding⁵⁴. When negotiations reached crunching point, a decision on economic diversification was left till COP10 and negotiators ploughed forward with more palatable measures on funds' use for adaptation, poverty reduction, and sustainable development strategies⁵⁴. This left many developing nations bitter, with Saudi Arabia claiming the abandonment of funding for economic diversification was "backtracking", despite EU delegate's claims that the inclusion of economic diversification would make raising the funds from finance ministries impossible⁵⁴.

Key Agreements

COP9 was unable to deliver the Kyoto Protocol in action, although did transpire significant climate leadership from the EU and various other Annex-1 countries. The implementation of the Special Climate Change Fund and LDC Fund were achievements relative to previous COPs, though themselves lacked a truly coordinated and comprehensive approach⁵⁴.

As initiated with the Marrakesh Accords, capacity-building of developing countries had become a key COP indicator. Parties agreed to launch a comprehensive review ahead of COP10, which would then occur every 5 years to assess how successful implementation of capacity-building was. Parties also urged one another to report more specifically on technology transfer success in capacity-building⁵⁴.

Sentiment

A Desai et al. paper, produced shortly after COP9, concluded "there was no real willingness [among delegations] to start preparing for the longer-term climate regime."⁵⁴ Further, while the paper appreciates the realisation of Bonn and Marrakech agreements via "difficult negotiations", the paper argues that COP9 was "very much business as usual"⁵⁴.

While overall it was positive to see funds, which would direct funds towards adaptation and sustainable developing in Annex-B countries, coming into action at COP9, there were concerns over the adequacy of the COP in its approach to adaptation. Reid et al., analysing COP9's adaptation day, concluded the NGO community was underrepresented at COP9. "The development community, including key NGOs {...}, now needs to join the process and help provide answers to these pressing questions"⁵⁵. In many ways, this was the first indication that the COPs would have to take on a larger platform to truly push forward holistic global climate action.

⁵⁴ Dessai, S. et al. 2004. *Challenges and Outcomes at the Ninth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*.

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10784-004-3372-4.pdf>

⁵⁵ Reid, H. et al. 2004. International Institute for Environment and Development. *Adaptation Day at COP9*. <https://pubs.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10000IIED.pdf>

COP10, 2004: Buenos Aires, Argentina

President: Mr. Ginés González García.

Parties (states) attending: 167; Observer states: 2⁵⁹.

Backdrop

The Kyoto Protocol was still yet to be ratified by a sufficient proportion of developed world emitters, so had yet to come into force. This summit would look to advance efforts to bring forward ratifications of the Kyoto Protocol from Russia and the US, while also improving current climate efforts and capacity-building of the developing world for sustainability⁵⁶.

Negotiations

Momentously, Russia signs the Kyoto Protocol just before COP10, satisfying the requirement for the 1997 protocol to finally come into force⁵⁷. Despite Russia's continuing anti-climate-action sentiment, President Putin is likely to have understood he could exploit the flexibility mechanisms to achieve targets cost-effectively, while signing the treaty would contribute to a positive image of an international Russia and would give Russia leverage in other international negotiations⁵⁷.

Negotiations turned again to the still contentious subject of the role of developing countries. While there was an appreciation of the benefits of CDM and capacity-building, these efforts were deemed too little by many developing nations, especially in the context of the US continuing to demand binding emissions targets from developing nations⁵⁸.

Marcela Valente, Inter Press, reported "Argentine President Néstor Kirchner accused the countries of the industrialised North of double standards, noting they relentlessly pursue repayment from their financial debtors, yet do everything possible to delay or completely avoid meeting their environmental debt to the developing world"⁵⁸. It was clear that developing countries still resonated with the initial COP1, where it was made clear that developed countries would lead emissions reductions given their legacy carbon footprints.

This was echoed by other delegations, including Bangladeshi State Minister for the Environment, Jafryl Islam Chowdhury, "If the poor, developing countries are not responsible for climate change, then why should they have to pay the price for what the industrialised countries have done?"⁵⁸

Around the time of COP10, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) highlighted that climate change-related damage was costing the developing world \$90bn a year in 2004⁵⁸. The funds established at previous COPs for adaptation and sustainable developed were to the volume of hundreds of millions, rather than billions.

A key negotiation breakthrough for developing countries, therefore, was the expansion in those funds, including an EU announcement that the bloc would increase its contribution to adaptation efforts from \$100m to \$360m annually⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ El Diario, 2004. *The Convention on Climate Change: The COP to make history* [translated into English].

<https://cetesb.sp.gov.br/proclima/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2014/08/cop10.pdf>

⁵⁷ Henry, L. and Sundstrom, L. M. 2007. *Russia and the Kyoto Protocol: Seeking an Alignment of Interests and Image*. *Global Environmental Politics* 7 (4): 44-69. <https://direct.mit.edu/glep/article-abstract/7/4/47/14428/Russia-and-the-Kyoto-Protocol-Seeking-an-Alignment?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

⁵⁸ Shah, A. 2004. *COP10 – Buenos Aires Climate Conference*. *Global Issues*.

<https://www.globalissues.org/article/520/cop10-buenos-aires-climate-conference>

Key Agreements

COP10, despite Russia's ratification of the protocol, made little progress in moving the Kyoto Protocol to action⁵⁸. Instead, groundwork was completed, especially on adaptation, which had not previously been a key focus of a COP.

Parties adopted the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures⁵⁹, designed to improve the success of developing world adaptation projects in the face of increasing climate threats⁶⁰. Measures covered for the capacity-building of developing countries: institutional capacity-building, exchange of best practices across countries, financial mechanisms, private sector engagement, policy design for sustainable development in transition, implementation of a global observing system for climate, and development/transfer of technologies for decarbonisation/clean growth⁶⁰.

Further, Parties decided to adopt the updated guidance relating to the clean development mechanism⁵⁹. Guidance aimed at increasing transparency, encouraging better financing of the operations behind the CDM, and how to set up a relevant national authority for participation in the CDM⁵⁹.

COP10 had to start looking ahead, as the Kyoto Protocol had specified 2005 as when negotiations would have to start tackling post-2012 pathways and targets⁵⁸. To kick-start such discussions, it was proposed by Argentina to conduct seminars in 2005 "aimed at an exchange of views in preparation for the future negotiations"⁶¹. Shining a light on the extreme political frictions involved in COP negotiations, there was significant backlash against this proposal. The US produced a draft text, which expressed they would only accept "one seminar, which would [provide] a forum for discussion only about past activities"⁶¹. Further, developing countries were hesitant, "concerned that [the seminars] could lead to an early debate about new developing country commitments even before industrialised countries had to implement theirs"⁶¹. The eventual outcome was almost exactly as the US draft text had directed, after the EU and small island nations were left alone to champion the seminars⁶¹. Even "talks about talks about talks", as the Dutch lead negotiator put it, could be critically contentious⁶¹.

Sentiment

Given the US was still not involved in active negotiations, there was concern over the impact any future negotiations could have. Tony Blair, British PM, spoke of the "catastrophe" if global warming was not addressed now, adding that he hoped to bring President Bush back into climate talks as the "only solution"⁶².

WWF sharply criticised the Bush administration at COP10: "The US moved from non-interference at the conference to a strategy of active obstruction, using a series of wrecking measures. These tactics were employed to block any discussion on future talks and to keep poor vulnerable countries from getting the support they need to adapt to the impacts of climate change"⁵⁸.

⁵⁹ UNFCCC. 2004. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Tenth Session. Part 1.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop10/10.pdf>

⁶⁰ UNFCCC. 2004. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Tenth Session. Addendum – Part 2.*

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/cop10/10a01.pdf>

⁶¹ Ott, H. E. et al. 2005. *It Takes Two to Tango – Climate Policy at COP10 in Buenos Aires and Beyond.*

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/35133712.pdf>

⁶² BBC. 2005. *Blair to press US for Kyoto talks.* http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4269723.stm

The COP10 host also identified a (now) increasingly popular theme in climate talks of empowering a bottom-up approach. Aníbal Ibarra, head of Buenos Aires City Government, “The role of cities is central {...} we must work in a coordinated manner with the countries, with the UN, and with the NGOs to bring the problem of the change of climate down to the ordinary citizen, and this should result in pressure for other national states. When people get involved, the results change.⁵⁶”

Plenty of delegation quotes reflecting all of the above in more of the article referenced 56.

COP11, 2005: Montreal, Canada

President: Mr. Stéphane Dion.

Parties (states) attending: 180; Observer states: 2⁶³.

Backdrop

Parties came to COP11 with a “solid and broad scientific basis on which to take immediate action to eliminate the causes of climate change” in the words of the outgoing COP10 President⁶³. Climate risks were also at the fore of delegates’ minds, given 2005 had seen extreme weather, including a devastating US hurricane season⁶⁴. Hung in the air was the hope the Kyoto Protocol would become operational⁶⁵.

Negotiations

The US and Australian delegations came to COP11 remaining still outside the Kyoto Protocol. So, the passing of legal accords concerning the entering into force of the Kyoto Protocol excluded the US and Australia from negotiations. US and Australian delegations did, however, involve themselves in later negotiations, which did not involve legally binding climate action⁶⁶.

Those Parties to the Kyoto Protocol first agreed to enter into force the Kyoto Protocol, along with the mechanisms and rules decided by Parties at COPs 3-10⁶⁶. This was an early win for negotiators, “hailed immediately as historic by the conference organisers”⁶⁷. Despite seven previous COPs in preparation, how enforcement of rules would occur was not passed by Parties so easily, with Saudi Arabia procedurally objecting to the draft text on this – though likely to hold as a bargaining chip rather than to collapse the Kyoto Protocol⁶⁷.

Japan tabled a conference paper proposing criteria for measuring the GHG emissions sequestrations by sinks, which had remained a contentious issue through to COP11⁶⁷. Despite other Protocol mechanisms and rules being agreed upon by the end of the Conference, no agreement was reached on this issue, which was held in abeyance until COP12⁶⁸. Parties had struggled to negotiate the terms for how sinks could be included adequately in Kyoto mechanisms.

Kenya, on behalf of the Africa Group, noted to the Conference an inadequate commitment from Parties on capacity building of developing countries, an increasingly prominent theme at COPs⁶⁸. On this front, Malaysia made calls on behalf of the G77/China for improving the approach technology transfer, including recommending a high-level roundtable on technology cooperation and partnerships and urging increased funding for the Expert Group

⁶³ UNFCCC, 2005. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Eleventh Session, Part 1*.

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2005/cop11/eng/05.pdf>

⁶⁴ Nature. 2009. *International Climate Policy – Timeline*. [archived]

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120427071042/http://www.nature.com/climate/timeline/icp/index.html>

⁶⁵ Adam, D. The Guardian. 2005. *US retreats at climate change talks*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2005/dec/11/usnews.greenpolitics>

⁶⁶ Hallman, D. 2005. *Report on the 11st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework*

Convention on Climate Change the 1st Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

COP11/MOP1. <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/montreal-un-climate-change-conference>

⁶⁷ Hirsch, T. BBC News. 2005. *Jargon obscures Montreal message*.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/4494430.stm>

⁶⁸ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2005. *Summary of the Eleventh Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and First Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol: 28 November – 10 December 2005*. International Institute for Sustainable Development.

<https://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop11/>

on Technology Transfer (EGTT)⁶⁸. The COP decides to go forward with the hosting of the high-level roundtables, as well as inviting Parties to submit proposals for improving the function of the EGTT⁶⁸.

The US, Australia, and other nations not signed up to the Kyoto Protocol joined those Parties who had to discuss future climate negotiations. A draft text was put forward during informal discussions, which called for international cooperation on climate change and a look towards future climate negotiations for all Parties, including identifying new ways for curbing emissions⁶⁵. The Head of the US delegation walked out of negotiations at this moment, reported by the New York Times as “the capstone of two weeks of American efforts to prevent any fresh initiatives from being discussed”⁶⁹. The negotiations supposedly opposed President Bush’s mantra of unilateral climate efforts⁶⁵.

Key Agreements

The Kyoto Protocol was brought into force eight years after its conception, including the much-anticipated emissions trading. Notably, this included a “strengthened” clean development mechanism, one of those key flexibility mechanisms to facilitate green investment in developing countries and quieting concerns from some developed countries, notably those of the Umbrella Group who had ratified Kyoto, about the feasibility of emission reduction commitments⁶⁶. Funding for the CDM totalled over \$13m, as agreed in Montreal. Another flexibility mechanism was also launched, with the governing body for Joint Implementation being set up at COP11⁶⁶. This was of particular interest to those ‘developed’ Eastern European economies, who were set to benefit from investment under JI.

Crucially, those parties signed up to the Kyoto Protocol agreed to extend the Protocol beyond 2012, its original expiry⁶⁸. Negotiations will take place to decide how this will look, which many hope will include US ratification after Bush leaves office⁶⁴.

After ‘trivial’ changes were made to the statement the US delegation head initially walked out on, it was finally agreed upon by ‘weary’ negotiators from all Parties⁶⁵.

Sentiment

Richard Kinley, acting head of the UN Climate Change Secretariat: “one of the most productive UN Climate Change Conferences ever”; “there is now certainty for a sustained and effective global carbon market”; “under the [clean development mechanism], developed countries can invest in sustainable development projects in developing countries, helping the developing nations to improve the quality of life for their citizens while also allowing developed countries to earn emission allowances”⁶⁶.

Marking the growing pressure on Parties to act from civil society, NGOs, and the media, over 10,000 attended COP11 – the most since 1997, the conception of the Kyoto Protocol⁷⁰.

On the US walkout, Jennifer Morgan, WWF: “this shows how willing the US administration is to walk away from a healthy planet and its responsibilities to its own people”⁶⁹.

At the same time, former President Bill Clinton gave a conference speech, calling out Bush’s opposition to the Kyoto Protocol on economic grounds as ‘flat wrong’, saying further “[if the

⁶⁹ Revkin, A. The New York Times. 2005. *US delegation walks out of climate talks*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/09/international/americas/us-delegation-walks-out-of-climate-talks.html>

⁷⁰ Shah, A. Global Issues. 2005. *COP11 – Montreal Climate Conference*.

<https://www.globalissues.org/article/585/cop11-montreal-climate-conference>

US] had a serious, disciplined effort to apply on a large scale existing clean energy and energy conservation technologies {...} we could meet and surpass the Kyoto targets easily in a way that would strengthen, not weaken, our economies”⁶⁵.

The U-turn from the White House on agreeing to the joint statement from COP11 came after “appearing to misjudge critically the international and domestic mood on its efforts to tackle global warming”, as reported the Guardian⁶⁵. This marked an important **shift** in international climate politics, as the US shifted towards climate cooperation (albeit at this point only a hint). A further mark of this pivot comes from the Guardian reporting from COP11 that “US journalists flooded in, some privately admitting that they had no previously realised the international significant of the issue [climate change]”.

Gender emerged as a theme in fringe events for the first (notable) time. The International Network for Sustainable Energy declared “Montreal Marked a ‘New Era’ for Gender and Climate” after attendance of women’s events was improved on COP10’s disappointing turnout⁷¹.

⁷¹ Sustainable Energy News, International Network for Sustainable Energy. 2005. *Success in Climate Talks*. <https://www.inforse.org/doc/SEN51.pdf>

COP12, 2006: Nairobi, Kenya.

President: Mr. Kivutha Kibwana.

Parties (states) attending: 180; Observer states: 3⁷².

Backdrop

Parties convened in Nairobi for COP12 with key issues on the agenda: advancing mitigation and adaptation efforts, further strengthening of the Clean Development Mechanism, reviewing the mandate of the EGTT (as agreed at COP11), and setting out how to negotiate post-2012 action after Kyoto expiry (also as kickstarted at COP11)⁷³.

Negotiations

The negotiations commenced with a dialogue on advancing mitigation and adaptation efforts, though much of this was 'unfocused' discussion where countries spoke about their current efforts⁷³. South Africa highlighted a growing understanding that clean energy delivers multiple benefits, both economic and environmental⁷³.

The question of developing country involvement was increasingly pertinent as Parties looked to how negotiations would appear for post-2012 agreements. Brazil suggested countries should face a financial incentive to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions, though this received a 'muted' response⁷³. Such a scheme would require a global fund, contributed to by developed nations, which created the significant hesitancy among negotiators to pursue the idea⁷⁴.

The Kyoto⁷³ review was also discussed at COP12, though its focus was itself contentious with developed countries looking for the review to emphasise how future commitments must look to combat climate change, while developed countries sought clarity on the efficacy of developed country measures so far under the Protocol⁷³. Where all Parties did agree was that future action and agreement must be based on 'sound science and reliable economics'⁷³.

The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies reported that some stakeholders "lamented that the Parties failed to suggest concrete and urgent actions that would help stabilise global climate", despite the intention of negotiations to identify these actions ahead of future negotiations on post-2021 commitments⁷³.

Following Kenya's COP11 call for greater capacity building efforts in developing countries, COP12 highlighted the poor representation of African countries in the CDM portfolio. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, announced the UNFCCC, UNFP, UNEP, World Bank, and African Development Bank would work together to enhance geographic equity and accessibility to CDM⁷³. However, despite calls to do so, Parties did not commit new resources to the CDM to address the geographic inequity⁷³. Further, Ghana's call for the EGTT to become a Technology Development and Transfer Board was resisted heavily by developed countries, again mainly on cost and economic grounds⁷³. Instead, Parties made little progress on capacity-building via technology transfer, deciding only to renew the EGTT

⁷² UNFCCC. 2006. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twelfth session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/cop12/eng/05.pdf>

⁷³ Ancha, S. et al. 2006. *Key Outcomes of the Nairobi Conference (COP12 AND COP/MOP2) and Future Challenges.* Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

⁷⁴ Phillips, T. The Guardian. 2006. *Brazil to call for global fund to save rainforests and cut climate change.* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2006/oct/19/brazil.conservationandendangeredspecies>

for an additional year – a sign of the constraints remaining on multilateralism for climate action⁷⁵.

Key Agreements

The initial dialogue of the Conference heard presentations on the economic risks of climate change, including the Stern Review and Pocantico Dialogue⁷³. The former declared the impacts of climate change “could cost as much as 5 to 20% or even more of annual GDP”⁷³. This highlighted the need to scale up adaptation efforts, so Parties agreed to deliberate on adaptation and technology issues at a May of 2007 workshop, with a further workshop on outstanding issues in September⁷³.

Parties also agreed – again – to continue to review the Kyoto Protocol and to consider future negotiations, though leadership from Parties was insufficient to deliver a deadline for setting new global targets for post-2012⁷⁶.

Sentiment

The Guardian reported from COP12 that “environmental campaigners expressed anger last night after [negotiations] seemed about to end without major breakthroughs”⁷⁶. Andrew Pendleton of Christian Aid added “[outcome of COP12] means the Kyoto show is still rolling on, which is good. But if you look at the scale of the problem, the results we have seen are timid”⁷⁶.

US re-engagement:

Changing political winds on climate in the US continue, as noted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development:

“Jeremy Symons, National Wildlife Federation, noted a power shift in the US due to changes in the Congress, which adds momentum to climate action at the national level”⁷⁷.

“Annie, Peterson, Environment Defense, noted that her organisation co-sponsored California’s legislation establishing a target of 80% GHG emission reductions by 2050”⁷⁷. For 2006, this was very advanced climate ambition.

“Michael Goo, Committee on Environment and Public Works, US Senate, said that US mid-term elections reflect that the Bush administration’s climate change policy “has run its course”⁷⁷.

Resistance to action across all pillars of COP negotiations appeared to come from a fear of “damag[ing] competitiveness”, as reported by the BBC attending COP12⁷⁸.

Sharon Loorematta, a Maasai woman working for the charity Practical Action, went as far as to say at the Conference some delegates “came here [to Kenya] as climate tourists who wanted to see Africa, take snaps of the wildlife, the poor, dying African children and women”⁷⁸. This received a standing ovation from delegates⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ UNFCCC. 2006. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Twelfth Session. Part Two*.

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2006/cop12/eng/05a01.pdf>

⁷⁶ Rice, X. The Guardian. *Little progress at climate summit*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2006/nov/18/climatechange.climatechangeenvironment>

⁷⁷ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2006. *A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Second Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 2) and Twelfth Conference of the Parties (COP 12) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop12/enbots/13nov.html>

⁷⁸ Black, R. BBC News. 2006. *Climate talks a tricky business*. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/6161998.stm>

Despite the lack of agreement on concrete next steps, the leader of the EU delegations, Jan-Erik Enestam of Finland retorted “we have proved we are not ‘climate tourists’, but are serious about taking action on climate change”⁷⁸.

Richard Black of the BBC remarked “clearly there is no appetite in any government for doing things the straightforward way – mandating clean energy, banning coal-fired electricity generation, clearing city centres of cars, forcing builders to adopt stringent energy efficiency standards”⁷⁸.

COP13, 2007: Bali, Indonesia

President: Mr. Rachmat Witoelar.

Parties (states) attending: 188; Observer states: 3⁷⁹.

Backdrop

Despite scarce notable agreements from COP12, Parties convened in COP13 with refreshed momentum for strong action. The incoming COP13 president opened the conference by reflecting on the “unprecedented number of high-level discussions in 2007 calling for strong action {...} in Bali”⁷⁹. Mr Witoelar also noted he had heard “widespread support from Parties for launching a process {...} to conduct negotiations on the future climate change regime {...} [and] many had also expressed support for a target date of 2009 for concluding an outcome.”⁷⁹ In keeping with the Kyoto ideology, the COP13 President finished by stressing “the carbon market was key to the efforts to tackle climate change”, while also highlighting the support he sensed among Parties for a future climate regime supporting four ‘building blocks’: “mitigation, adaptation, technology, and finance”⁷⁹. The stage was set for properly starting negotiations for a Kyoto successor.

Negotiations

The foundation-setting for adaptation had firmly been set at previous COPs. Developing countries, particularly those vulnerable to climate change, were keen to see success in deciding how the Adaptation Fund should be managed. There was significant disagreement over how the Global Environment Facility would run the Adaptation Fund⁸⁰. Developing countries in particular worried about a lack of representation within the Washington DC-based GEF and were distinctly hesitant about the Adaptation becoming another international fund intermediated with an implementing agency such as the World Bank, UNDP, or UNEP⁸¹. The EU helped along negotiations by declaring even before convening in Bali that the delegation would agree to accept whichever model the G77 endorsed⁸⁰. Bangladesh, the Maldives, and Tuvalu were among the particularly vocal vulnerable countries pushing back against the instatement of the GEF as manager of the fund⁸¹. To relieve the concerns of primarily developing countries, Parties agreed to establish an independent Adaptation Fund Board to replace the GEF as the key to operationalising the fund. This included agreement also determined that members would be selected under the direct authority of COPs and no implementing agencies would be necessary for nations to gain access to the fund⁸⁰. The Oxford Energy and Environment Comment published shortly after declares the raised trust between the G77, China, and the EU as the key to the “astonishingly smooth progress”, which led to the Adaptation fund agreement in the very first week of the COP⁸⁰.

The Conference now turned to producing the Bali Road Map, which was to set out the progress Parties were to target over the next couple of years of negotiations⁸².

⁷⁹ UNFCCC. 2007. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Thirteenth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06.pdf>

⁸⁰ Müller, B. 2008. *Bali 2007: On the road again! Oxford Energy and Environment Comment.* Oxford Institute for Energy Studies. https://oxfordclimatepolicy.org/publications/documents/comment_0208-2.pdf

⁸¹ International Institute for Environment and Development. *Major news from Bali climate conference: Victory for the vulnerable with decision on climate-change adaptation fund.* <https://www.iied.org/major-news-bali-climate-conference-victory-for-vulnerable-decision-climate-change-adaptation-fund?qt-social=1>

⁸² UNFCCC. 2007. *Bali Climate Change Conference – December 2007.* <https://newsroom.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/past-conferences/bali-climate-change-conference-december-2007/bali-climate-change-conference-december-2007-0>

In these discussions, developing country involvement again became a sticking point in negotiations, especially with the Umbrella Group expecting mitigation commitments from developing nations⁸³. The G-77 and China were disgruntled over such demands, especially as the actions of developed nations had so far been underwhelming. So, negotiations saw a significant push from these nations for the focus of future negotiations to be on capacity building: “nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries {...} supported by technology, financing, and capacity-building, in a measurable, reportable, and verifiable way”. Many developed nations instead pushed for the focus to be on developing countries’ actual mitigation successes, which they stated should be “measurable, reportable, and verifiable nationally appropriate mitigations actions”, rather than the degree of support⁸⁰.

The President of COP13 disseminated a draft Decision, which took the latter-mentioned wording around developing country mitigation efforts – the wording supported by mostly developed nations. The President stated “I believe that the proposal for a draft decision {...} strikes this delicate balance [for reaching agreement]”⁸⁰. Initially, the Decision for the Bali Road Map seemed to be getting off to a relatively uncontroversial way, with Portugal on behalf of the EU first intervening the “[decision] results from a relevant compromise {...} so under the good spirit and with the notion that there are no perfect texts for all, the EU supports this text”⁸⁰. Müller reported “At this point the drama started to unfold. Seven seconds after the EU intervention, the President declared “I see no other wish to ask for the floor, so it is decid... oh, India, ... please take the floor!” India’s literally last second intervention together with the subsequent G77 and China interventions made it clear that the text presented was not {...} a consensus document”⁸⁰. Further, there were significant trust concerns raised in these negotiations, particularly by the G77 and China - twice they had to call for the suspension of the session because their delegation heads were involved in Parallel discussions with Indonesian ministers⁸⁰. This had meant various G77 countries and China were unable to raise their interventions in the session, which was a worrisome position when decisions were being passed. This in tandem with a draft proposal supposedly biased to the developed nation view undermined trust, which in turn risked undermining the coming two years of inevitably tough negotiations⁸⁰. The EU attempted to settle this trust issue by compromising and giving way to the G77 position “as a sign of the spirit of cooperation”⁸⁰. This back-fired, however, as the US initially could not accept this changed position. For there to be the vital progress in future negotiations, the US had to be kept on board. Eventually, the US delegation conceded they were “very heartened by the {...} firm commitments that have in fact been expressed by the developing countries”⁸⁰. Developing countries had clarified the G77 proposal on wording as nonetheless enforcing their commitments to act – this was the reassurance the US needed to avoid entering negotiations where only developed countries are expected to act⁸⁰. So, the adjusted decision was adopted by Parties, finalising the Bali Road Map⁸⁴.

Key Agreements

Parties agreed on the operationalisation of the adaptation fund, a breakthrough for climate vulnerable countries.

Parties eventually agreed on a Bali Road Map⁸³. This includes the commitments by Parties to launch the Bali Action Plan, which details a “new comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action”⁸². Parties agreed on the intention to have reached an agreed outcome on such long-

⁸³ Shah, A. Global Issues. 2008. *COP13 – Bali Climate Conference*.

<https://www.globalissues.org/article/751/cop13-bali-climate-conference>

⁸⁴ UNFCCC. 2007. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Thirteenth Session. Part Two*.

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2007/cop13/eng/06a01.pdf>

term cooperative action at COP15 in Copenhagen⁸². As part of the road map, the Bali Action Plan stipulated:

- “long-term cooperative action...”
- Developed nations to commit to “quantified emission limitation and reduction”
- Developing nations to take mitigation actions “supported and enabled by technology, financing, and capacity-building”
- Positive incentives for reducing deforestation and protecting carbon sinks
- International cooperation on adaptation actions.
- Capacity building and technology transfer to be advanced.
- Action on the “provision of financial resources and investment to support action on mitigation and adaptation and technology cooperation”.⁸⁴

Sentiment

Adaptation fund:

The International Institute for Environment and Development reported on the agreement for operationalising the Adaptation Fund as the culmination of “years of tense climate-change talks” and a “major victory for the countries that have contributed least to climate change but are set to suffer most from its impacts”⁸¹.

Amjad Abdullah, lead negotiator for the Maldives and chair of the Least Developing Countries negotiating block noted “the African countries, small island states, and least developing countries stuck together and fought for a dedicated secretariat with a representative governance board that has special places for the most vulnerable nations.” “This is a major victory”⁸¹.

Road Map negotiation difficulties:

Delegate Kevin Conrad from Papua New Guinea: “if you cannot lead, leave it to the rest of us. Please get out of the way” after the US initially retorted against the EU’s compromise with the G77 and China.⁸³

Kirit Parikh, delegation of India at Bali told IPS: “the G77 had accepted a draft last night, but this morning we noticed there was a change {...} This was unacceptable to us.”⁸³

Pakistani ambassador Munir Akram, chairman of the G77: “We, the developing countries, have had an uphill battle at this conference to protect our legitimate interests. We had to fight every inch of the way to secure our objectives”⁸³

David Adam of the Guardian recalled this anecdote from the conference:

“Faced with angry accusations from the Chinese that he was allowing parallel discussions outside the room, Yvo de Boer, the UN’s top climate official, broke down in tears and had to be helped from the platform. A ripple of supportive applause swelled to a standing ovation – a rare moment of unity that appeared to nudge the talks back on track. A few hours later, the world’s politicians were able to agree and head home.”¹⁶

The US flexibility towards the end of negotiations was a surprise for many, with the NY Times commenting on “signs of compromise”. Germany’s environment minister, Sigmar Gabriel: “during the [last night of] negotiations America was more flexible than in the first part of the conference. We very much appreciate this”⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Fuller, T. and Bowley, G. The New York Times. 2007. *At Bali climate conference, signs of compromise.* <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/14/health/14iht-14climate.3.8750891.html>

COP14, 2008: Poznań, Poland

President: Mr. Maciej Nowicki.

Parties (states) attending: 191; Observer states: 2⁸⁶.

Backdrop

COP14, only a year before Parties would convene in Copenhagen, was the summit where pressure for cooperative global action on climate change was mounting. What would be achieved in the final run up to COP15?

Negotiations

What exactly COP14 intended to achieve other than act as a precursor to Copenhagen appears to have been relatively unclear among delegates, exacerbated by COP13's President remarking to Parties there was no need to reach conclusions with regard to international negotiations⁸⁷. This may have been because of the success of the Bali Road Map, though this itself only gave general targets.

Parties did return to the Adaptation Fund, which was finalised, though this was more a signing off exercise than anything else given the process in Bali⁸⁸. Developing countries sought extra funding for this fund, but developed nations made no concessions in negotiations⁸⁹. The BBC reported this made developing countries "very angry"⁸⁹.

Notable at COP14 were the discussions over the future climate negotiations between Parties, which aimed to build on the Bali Road Map. The EU delegation attempted to set the bar high by championing a package of countermeasures named 'Triple 20', which included 20% emissions cut and 20% more renewable energy by 2020⁸⁷. Internally, this already faced frictions, with Germany successfully negotiating a compromise on CO2 emissions from the steel and cement industry⁸⁷. Kaba reports Merkel was labelled "Darth Vader" for this⁸⁷. France attempted to say the EU's position was clear, despite this internal disagreement⁹⁰. This contrasted with Antigua and Barbuda (representing the G77 and China), who "lamented that the negotiations have not reflected a sense of urgency about climate change"⁹⁰.

⁸⁶ UNFCCC. 2008. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Fourteenth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/cop14/eng/07.pdf>

⁸⁷ Kaba, T. 2009. *Climate Change Journalism: Comparative Study of Japanese coverage of COP3 and COP14*.

Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/Climate%2520Change%2520Journalism%2520->

[%2520A%2520comparative%2520study%2520of%2520Japanese%2520coverage%2520of%2520COP3%2520and%2520COP14.pdf](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/Climate%2520Change%2520Journalism%2520-)

⁸⁸ Shah, A. Global Issues. 2008. *COP14 – Poznań Climate Conference.*

<https://www.globalissues.org/article/771/cop14-poznan-climate-conference>

⁸⁹ Black, R. BBC News. 2008. *Mood mixed as climate summit ends.*

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7781022.stm>

⁹⁰ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2008. *Summary of the Fourteenth Conference of the Parties on Climate Change and Fourth Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 2).* International Institute for Sustainable Development.

https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/enb.iisd.org/archive/download/pdf/enb12395e.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA6QW3YWTJ6YORWEEL%2F20211217%2Fus-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211217T153840Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=60&X-Amz-Signature=95ed2b81a8701798618c52969304d9fec57cb4198ff8b1bc59b66b549735b398

https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/enb.iisd.org/archive/download/pdf/enb12395e.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA6QW3YWTJ6YORWEEL%2F20211217%2Fus-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211217T153840Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=60&X-Amz-Signature=95ed2b81a8701798618c52969304d9fec57cb4198ff8b1bc59b66b549735b398

https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/enb.iisd.org/archive/download/pdf/enb12395e.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA6QW3YWTJ6YORWEEL%2F20211217%2Fus-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211217T153840Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=60&X-Amz-Signature=95ed2b81a8701798618c52969304d9fec57cb4198ff8b1bc59b66b549735b398

https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/enb.iisd.org/archive/download/pdf/enb12395e.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA6QW3YWTJ6YORWEEL%2F20211217%2Fus-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211217T153840Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=60&X-Amz-Signature=95ed2b81a8701798618c52969304d9fec57cb4198ff8b1bc59b66b549735b398

https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/enb.iisd.org/archive/download/pdf/enb12395e.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA6QW3YWTJ6YORWEEL%2F20211217%2Fus-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211217T153840Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=60&X-Amz-Signature=95ed2b81a8701798618c52969304d9fec57cb4198ff8b1bc59b66b549735b398

Despite President-elect Obama's delegation avoiding engaging in negotiations, their presence meant "little attention was paid to Dobriansky's [Vice Secretary of State in the Bush Administration] speech"⁸⁷. This potentially meant Parties felt less constrained by having to appease the Bush administration.

Key Agreements

Those conversations surrounding future talks were only able to concretely set up roundtable meetings and workshops for the following year, to discuss mitigation objectives, technology transfer, and how Parties could agree on differentiation of commitments across countries⁹⁰. However, conversations were seen as having been successful at gearing up for much tougher negotiations at COP15: "The conference enabled us to make real progress on every topic on the Bali roadmap. All the elements exist for us to reach an efficient and equitable agreement in Copenhagen", Martin Bursik, Environment Minister of the Czech Republic⁸⁹. Parties finished the Conference negotiations by endorsing an intensified negotiating schedule for 2009, setting the scene of anticipation for Copenhagen COP15⁹¹.

Vitality for the advancement of adaptation efforts, the Adaptation Fund entered operationalisation, funded by a 2% levy on projects under the CDM⁹¹.

Sentiment

The internal disagreement of the EU delegation in tandem with subsequently little tangible progress from developing countries on mitigation commitments was disappointing for many observers. Tim Jones of the World Development Movement lamented "disappointingly little progress on the [Bali] agreement {...} Yet again the rich countries, who carry the historical responsibility for climate change, have failed to offer sufficient cuts"⁸⁹.

The lack of extra funding for the Adaptation Fund, which stood at circa \$80m, frustrated developing country delegates:

"It is not clear how a 'strong political signal' can be sent by not paying for pollution that you have caused" – Pakistan's delegate Farrukh Khan⁸⁹.

Yvo de Boer, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, agreed that "doing a deal in Copenhagen is, to an important extent, about engaging developing countries, {...} and an important part of engaging countries is providing funds". However, he assured Parties this was not written off, but "politically, this was not the time to do it" (provide more funds)⁸⁹.

As Obama would be the President in time for the next COP, there was significant hope on US engagement and leadership⁸⁹.

⁹¹ UNFCCC. 2008. *Poznań Climate Change Conference – December 2008*. <https://newsroom.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/past-conferences/poznan-climate-change-conference-december-2008/poznan-climate-change-conference-december-2008-0>

COP15, 2009: Copenhagen, Denmark

President: Ms. Connie Hedegaard.

Parties (states) attending: 194; Observer states: 2⁹².

Backdrop

The much-anticipated COP15, where countries were convening (in their largest numbers ever for a COP) to agree a global climate deal to replace the Kyoto Protocol after its expiry in 2012⁹².

Negotiations

Despite the previous two COPs preparatory efforts for COP15, delegations arrived with contradicting anticipations. President Obama and other developed country leaders had indicated weeks before the summit that they foresaw only a political agreement⁹³. This was juxtaposed with demands from developing countries, notably Tuvalu, for the COP15 agreement to immediately consider a legally binding outcome, which slowed negotiations for days⁹³.

Negotiations were immediately difficult, despite ministers arriving in the first week to accelerate talks⁹³. A leaked document, the 'Danish text', appeared on the second day of the Conference, revealing the secret draft agreement worked on by a group of individuals known as the "circle of commitment" (the UK, US, and Denmark) and shown to few delegations⁹⁴. With the text leaked to the Guardian, John Vidal reported the agreement was a "departure from the Kyoto protocol's principle that rich countries {...} should take on firm and binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gases, while poorer nations were not compelled to act. The draft hands effective control of climate change finance to the World Bank {...} and would make any money to help poor countries adapt to climate change dependent on them taking a range of actions"⁹⁴ Further, the agreement would "force developing countries to agree to specific emission cuts", "weaken the UN's role in handling climate finance", and "not allow poor countries to emit more than 1.33 tonnes of carbon per person by 2050, while allowing rich countries to emit 2.76 tonnes [per person]"⁹⁴.

Naturally, developing countries felt excluded from negotiations of this text, the leak of which brokered trust issues between developing and developed countries, which COP veterans were all too cognisant of. A senior diplomat concluded at the Conference that the draft text was "a very dangerous document for developing countries. It is a fundamental reworking of the UN balance of obligations. It is to be superimposed without discussion on the talks"⁹⁴.

While developing countries were calling for greater global action on climate change and more effective climate finance, Obama was attempting to make any global deal palatable to his home Senate, which had no consensus around emission cuts and sat within an American political system "not ready to agree to a treaty that would force the United States, over time, to accept profound changes in its energy, transport and manufacturing sectors", as reported by the New York Times⁹⁵.

⁹² UNFCCC. 2009. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Fifteenth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11.pdf>

⁹³ Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions. 2009. *COP 15 Copenhagen.* <https://www.c2es.org/content/cop-15-copenhagen/>

⁹⁴ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2009. *Copenhagen climate summit in disarray after 'Danish text' leak.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/08/copenhagen-climate-summit-disarray-danish-text>

⁹⁵ Broder, J. The New York Times. 2009. *Senate Poses Obstacles to Obama's Climate Pledge.*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/13/weekinreview/13broder.html>

Anger continued from those developing countries against the pro-developed country 'Danish text'. The Sudanese ambassador to the G77, Lumumba Stanislaus Dia Ping, said "It's an incredibly imbalanced text intended to subvert, absolutely and completely, two years of negotiations. It does not recognise the proposals and the voice of developing countries"⁹⁶.

Industrialising nations were against the text's additional carbon budget provision for developed nations, which would be allowed to emit twice as much carbon dioxide per person. China's delegation made its position clear: "It is unfair to set such a peak target for developing countries which are still in the stage of industrialisation", said Su Wei, Deputy Head of the Chinese delegation⁹⁶.

Antonio Hill, Oxfam's climate adviser, called out the stall in negotiations from the leak of the text as "like ants in a room full of elephants, poor countries are at risk of being squeezed out of the climate talks in Copenhagen"⁹⁶.

Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, attempted to refocus negotiations and move past the impasse by declaring the 'Danish text' as "an informal paper ahead of the conference given to a number of people for the purposes of consultations"⁹⁶.

Negotiations struggled to move on, however, since developing countries were significantly dissatisfied with multiple aspects of the proposed text: developing country emission cuts were too strict on industrialising developing nations, while developed countries were not offering any legally binding commitments (which would have been the natural extrapolation of the Kyoto protocol progress)⁹³.

Tuvalu's delegation was particularly forthright in its demands for legally binding commitments, including for developing countries⁹³. Other small island states, which are of course those especially vulnerable to climate change and unlikely to benefit economically from expanding their own emissions, supported this "Tuvalu protocol", including Grenada, Trinidad, Tobago, and several African states⁹⁷. Opposition came from 15 countries, however, including China, Saudi Arabia, and India⁹⁷. This marked the split of the G77/China, which had previously negotiated as a bloc and had traditionally been in favour of developed nations bearing the brunt of emission cuts while developing nations are left to industrialise. Discussions in this negotiation 'track' were suspended for several hours as the G77 and China could find no consensus on a favourable agreement outcome⁹⁷. Hedegaard rejected Tuvalu's proposal completely, after the scale of opposition from other nations within the G77 alone was clear, though this did little to move negotiations on as no concessions were made or alternatives quickly tabled⁹⁸.

Amidst the loss of support and trust from developing nations, negotiating efforts turned to concessions possible to promote developing nation inclusion in talks and move past the multiple impasses. The Danish pm indicated an updated text contained "a commitment to legally binding commitments [for some countries] by December 2010", though this itself was longer than Gordon Brown wanted for deciding on legally binding targets⁹⁷.

Separately, Britain, Norway, Mexico, and Australia announced they backed a major new climate fund for developing countries, for which they tabled a paper. This would be run by a

⁹⁶ Whiteman, H. CNN. *Poor nations' fury over leaked climate text*.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/12/09/danish.draft.climate.text.0850/>

⁹⁷ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2009. *Copenhagen talks break down as developing nations split over 'Tuvalu' protocol*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/09/copenhagen-tuvalu-protocol-split>

⁹⁸ BBC News. 2009. *Copenhagen denies Tuvalu bid for tough climate controls*.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8405051.stm>

board accountable to the UN, addressing concerns from developing nations over trust in the negotiation process and in the accountability of fund use⁹⁷.

Further, attempts were made to break through impasses via smaller group negotiations, including Obama with other developed and key industrialising nations. However, this also caused upset and further brokered trust concerns among many developing countries, who felt the process had lost full transparency and inclusiveness⁹³.

There were also tough negotiations between the US and other developed nations, and China. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced US support for the goal of \$100b a year for developing countries, which Britain had also declared support for early⁹³. Developing countries were desperate to see this remain intact throughout negotiations, so provided a bargaining chip for the developed nations to gain China's concession on international scrutiny⁹³.

By this point, the process had lost significant momentum, trust, and energy. The Guardian reported world leaders "abandoned ordinary negotiating protocol to haggle line-for-line with mid-level officials"⁹⁹. 30 of the world's leaders most critical for the deal were called to an emergency meeting, which was boycotted by Chinese premier Wen Jiabao and saw Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh's plane "mysteriously develop a problem that delayed his arrival"⁹⁹. Negotiations were so tough that such tactics were deemed necessary to draw concessions from the US and other developed nations over industrialising country commitments.

Britain's secretary of state for energy and climate change remarked "I thought it was meltdown"⁹⁹. China and India declared their opposition to prime minister Gordon Brown's amendments designed to bring the developing nations back into agreement: principally, committing developed nations to 50% emission cuts by 2050 and making the agreement legally binding⁹⁹.

Further mess was created, as chancellor Merkel announced a target of 80% emission cuts by 2050 for developed nations⁹⁹. Again, this was rebuffed by China, despite the fact this target would not apply to the developing nation – though, the Chinese delegation expected it eventually would, given the rate of development the country was experiencing⁹⁹. "Ridiculous", Merkel uttered, abandoning the target⁹⁹.

Negotiations descended into such disarray – with few sessions convening all Parties – that the Guardian reported "in the last 24 hours, it became negotiation by leak"⁹⁹. Negotiations "repeatedly teetered on the brink of collapse" as "all eight version of the final text that world leaders were asked to sign up to were leaked within minutes of being published"⁹⁹.

Any agreement over 2050 emissions target completely collapsed, with the Observer asking the director general of the Swedish environment protection agency, Lars-Erik Liljelund, who was to blame for blocking a 2050 target: "China", he said after a dramatic pause. "China doesn't like numbers."⁹⁹

Obama, keen to finally broker the increasingly difficult deal, began smaller negotiations, especially engaging with China, India, Brazil, and South Africa, while also with EU nations⁹³.

Finally, Obama declared unilaterally to the press that a deal had finally been agreed, despite only the few 'leader' nations having been involved, the continued disagreements from Tuvalu and similar nations, the lack of a Conference-level decision, and the outstanding need for

⁹⁹ Vidal, J. and Watts, J. The Guardian. 2009. *Copenhagen: The last-ditch drama that saved the deal from collapse*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/20/copenhagen-climate-global-warming>

negotiations among all nations on details of the 'agreement' struck⁹³. This further fuelled disdain from many developing countries, particularly Tuvalu, Venezuela, Sudan, Nicaragua, and Bolivia. Venezuela declared Obama's declared deal as a "coup d'état against the United Nations"⁹³. Sudan even compared the agreements effects on poor nations to the Holocaust, which faced angry demands for the comment's withdrawal⁹³. Obama contested the deal was a "major breakthrough", though also admitting it was an insufficient response to combat climate change¹⁰³.

The (new as of 15th December) President of COP15, the Danish pm Mr. Rasmussen, announced the 194 Parties attending the Conference had one hour to consider the deal negotiated behind closed doors with few nations⁹⁹. The Guardian reported on "anger in the [conference] hall"⁹⁹. A Venezuelan delegate "raised a bloodied hand to grab [President's] attention: "Do I have to bleed to grab your attention," she fumed. "International agreements cannot be imposed by a small exclusive group"⁹⁹. This was followed by small island nations and other developing nations' attacks on the accord, which the Chinese delegation sat through in silence⁹⁹.

The Guardian reported on the remarkable closing of the deal:

"It was too much for Rasmussen, who looked strained and exhausted after a week spent vainly trying to bridge the schisms between the parties. He raised his gavel to close the debate, which would have aborted the Copenhagen accord and condemned the summit to abject failure. The document was saved at the last second by Miliband, who had rushed back from his hotel room to call for an adjournment. During the recess, a group led by Britain, the US, and Australia forced Rasmussen out of the chair and negotiated a last-minute compromise. The accord was neither accepted or rejected, it was merely "noted" [the only 'decision' reaching consensus among Parties]. This gave it a semblance of recognition, but the weak language reflected the unease that has surround its inception. Copenhagen was the leakiest international conference in history."

The change of President closer to the end of the Conference is also an interesting and unusual pivot in the story of COP15. Ms. Hedegaard resigned on the 15th of December, three days before the close of the summit, to be replaced by Denmark's Prime Minister, Mr. Rasmussen⁹². Hedegaard insisted this purely procedural, remarking "with so many heads of state and government having arrived it's appropriate the prime minister of Denmark presides", though there were also rumours Hedegaard was unhappy with the draft text prepared by Denmark, which had caused so much controversy, and the Danish pm would attempt to push this through¹⁰⁰.

Key Agreements

The deal was weak to say the least, with no mention of legally binding commitments and with the Copenhagen Accord only "noted" by Parties, since this was all that would achieve consensus among the 194 Parties⁹³.

The agreement does note a 2C global warming target limit, though without commitments to substantiate this¹⁰⁶. Weirdly, the accord appears to apologise even for this, calling for a review of the accord by 2015 to strengthen the long-term goal "in relation to temperature rises of 1.5 degrees Celsius"⁹³. This is a peculiar paradox: admitting to waiting longer (when the world is warmer and when it will be harder to abate warming) to up ambition to the sufficient level in line with the science.

¹⁰⁰ Stratton, A. and Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2009. *Connie Hedegaard resigns as president of Copenhagen climate summit*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/16/connie-hedegaard-copenhagen-resigns>

The Copenhagen accord shifted away from the Kyoto protocol on developing country commitments by declaring the need for quantified action from both developed and developing nations¹⁰⁶. Developing countries commit in the accord to “implement mitigation actions”, while developed nations will “commit to implement” economy-wide emissions targets for 2020⁹³.

On funds for supporting developing nations, the deal did promise to deliver \$30bn over the next three years and expressed a target of £100bn a year by 2020¹⁰¹.

While China made no quantitative commitments, the delegation agreed to open up to international scrutiny over emissions measurement and over climate efforts. This was a rare success in the negotiations, marking a shift towards greater action from China and the US¹⁰¹.

Sentiment

Between 40,000 and 100,000 people attended a huge climate march in Copenhagen, which called for a global agreement to be reached¹⁰². Per Larsen, Chief Coordinating Officer of the Copenhagen police force remarked the police reaction to the protests was “surely the biggest police action we have ever had in Danish history”¹⁰³.

The home US environment was – again – proving difficult for Obama to envisage political returns for ambitious climate policy. Former vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin scare mongered in a Washington Post article that Obama’s plan for cap and trade (“cap and tax”) would outsource energy supplies to China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia⁹⁷.

Three days before the end of the Conference, a confidential scientific analysis paper emerged from the heart of the UN secretariat, showing that the emission-cut pledges countries had made by that point in negotiations would lead not to a 2C rise, as countries were aiming for, but a 3C rise that would “frazzle half the world”⁹⁹. This added yet another leak to the Conference process, and exposed the gap that remained between action taken and scientific advice.

Ian Fry, head of the Tuvaluan delegation, refused to agree with the much-weakened Copenhagen Accord, describing it to the Conference hall as “30 pieces of silver to betray our future and our people {...} our future is not for sale”, a reference to the Bible’s story of Judas striking a deal with the Chief Priest and the Sanhedrin to turn Jesus over to them for 30 pieces of silver¹⁰⁴.

Ed Miliband defended the accord: “it was definitely worth saving. This is the first time that developed and developing nations have agreed to deal with emissions and the first time the world has agreed on a deal on climate finance”⁹⁹.

China agreed. “The meeting has had a positive result, everyone should be happy” said Xie Zhenhua, head of the Chinese delegation⁹⁹.

¹⁰¹ BBC News. 2009. *Key powers reach compromise at climate summit*.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8421935.stm>

¹⁰² BBC News. 2009. *Climate activists condemn Copenhagen police tactics*.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/8410414.stm>

¹⁰³ Zeller, T. The New York Times. 2009. *Copenhagen Talks Tough on Climate Protest Plans*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/07/science/earth/07security.html>

¹⁰⁴ Morton, A. The Age, Australia. 2009. *Copenhagen chaos as talks fail*.

<https://www.theage.com.au/environment/copenhagen-chaos-as-talks-fail-20091219-l6r5.html>

Brian Cowen, the Irish Taoiseach, expressed disappointment: “The substance of the EU’s [offers] was robustly put, but we couldn’t get the commitment of others. We did not achieve everything we wanted, but the reality is that this is as much as can be advanced at this stage”⁹⁹.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy defended the accord, admitting it was not perfect but that “if we had no deal, that would mean that two countries as important as India and China would be freed from any type of contract. The United States, which is not in Kyoto, would be free of any type of contract. That’s why a contract is absolutely vital”¹⁰¹.

Greenpeace UK executive director, John Suaven, called for a “radically different model of politics than the one on display here in Copenhagen”, criticising the deal as having “no targets for carbon cuts and no agreement on a legally binding treaty”. “The city of Copenhagen is a crime scene tonight [final day of the Conference], with the guilty men and women fleeing to the airport”¹⁰¹.

The International Institute for Environment and Development declared the Accord “weak”, given “it is not binding and has no targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions”. “The low level of ambition will make preventing dangerous climate change increasingly difficult. What countries have so far proposed will commit us to a 3-3.5 degree temperature increase, and that is just the global average. The Accord does propose short-term funding for adaptation in vulnerable countries {...} [but] is not adequate for 100 vulnerable countries with about one billion citizens”¹⁰⁵.

Brookes and Nuthall of the BBC commented on “green economic growth” at Copenhagen. Despite an obtrusive lack of consensus remaining, they reported that “green growth is now the prevailing economic model of our time. The idea that addressing climate change is bad for business was buried at Copenhagen. Countries from both developed and developing worlds have announced low-carbon economic plans and are moving forward”¹⁰⁶. While the robustness of the commentary reflects a clear pivot in economic thinking and political will surrounding green growth at COP15, the difficulty of negotiations over legally binding emission cuts contradicts the idea that countries were confident to expect no economy-climate trade off by implementing climate policies.

Fuqiang Yang, director of global climate solutions, WWF, commenting at the time: “Copenhagen ended without a fair, ambitious or legally binding treaty {...} [but] will, at the very least, cut greenhouse gases, set up an emissions verification system, and reduce deforestation. Given the complexity of the issue, this represents a step forward”¹⁰⁷.

John Prescott, climate change rapporteur for the Council of Europe, commenting at the time: “I’ve read a lot about so-called Brokenhagen and the failure to get a legally binding agreement. Frankly we were never going to get one, just as we didn’t get one at Kyoto, when I was negotiating for the EU.

What you need is a statement of principle. At Copenhagen this was a final admission that we cannot let temperature rise 2C above pre-industrial levels. And to get approval from 192 countries on this principle is remarkable, considering Kyoto dealt with only 47 nations. Copenhagen’s achievements are an acceptance of the science (contested at Kyoto), an

¹⁰⁵ Huq, S., Chandani, A., and Anderson, S. 2010. *COP15 – Review and Analysis*. International Institute for Environment and Development. <https://www.iied.org/cop-15-review-analysis>

¹⁰⁶ Brookes, T. and Nuthall, T. BBC News. 2009. *What did the Copenhagen climate summit achieve?* <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8424522.stm>

¹⁰⁷ Vaughan, A. and Adam, D. The Guardian. 2009. *Copenhagen climate deal: Spectacular failure – or a few important steps?* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/dec/22/copenhagen-climate-deal-expert-view>

admission there will be global emission cuts, and an acceptance that there will have to be verification.”¹⁰⁷

Gavin Schmidt, Nasa climate scientist, commenting at the time: “Look at the history of environment negotiations – take the ozone ones as the best example. People start off negotiating very hard and the first agreement does nothing but moderate the problem”. He then compared the Copenhagen Accord to the Montreal protocol on CFCs, which “made an infinitesimally small difference at first” before requiring “four amendments to get from reduction to a ban [on CFCs], a process of 20 years after science identified the problem”. “Carbon and climate change are much more complicated, and we’re just getting to that 20-year mark now {...} It’s not an event. It’s a process”¹⁰⁷.

Nicholas Stern, Chair of Grantham research institute on climate change and the environment, London School of Economics and Political Science, commenting at the time: “Copenhagen meeting was a disappointment, primarily because it failed to set the basic targets for reducing global annual emissions of greenhouse gases from now up to 2050, and did not secure commitments from countries to meet these targets collectively. Nevertheless, {...} generated commitments on emission reductions from many countries, including, for the first time, from the world’s two largest emitters, China and the US. {...} [and there was] the creation of the Copenhagen green climate fund to administer funding for developing countries”¹⁰⁷.

Drawn from Senator John Kerry’s speech at the Conference (Wednesday 16 December, 2nd week of the Conference): “Seventeen years [since the Rio Earth Summit, 1992] is a long time to pursue an urgent goal. But history reminds us that sometimes even urgent struggles take time. Consider the hundred years of conflict in Northern Ireland. At the moment when peace was finally achieved after tireless efforts, Senator George Mitchell, said simply: “We had seven hundred days of failure and one day of success”. And that’s why we’re gathered here again: because we know that, in one day, with one agreement, we can put the world on a safer path. And in the coming hours and days, the world expects us to get the job done”¹⁰⁸.

The French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, raised the North/South justice elements of climate action – prominent among the developed nations leading negotiations. Sarkozy made a speech in Copenhagen discussing his “Climate Justice Plan”, which was a high-level diplomatic initiative echoing UNFCCC global solidarity principles and enforcing the idea that climate impacts are disproportionately on the poorest nations, thus calling for greater action and leadership from developed nations and proposing \$500bn of climate aid and increased research in low carbon technologies. However, Joseph Szarka reported in *Politique Européenne* that the plan “remained semi-detached from EU policy-making and COP processes. It raised expectations about France’s climate ambitions yet had no impact on the 2009 Copenhagen Accord {...} Further, the Copenhagen anti-climax sapped the will for climate policy innovation” **. This was one of many indications that climate progress had lost momentum.

** Szarka, J. 2011. *Climate policy in France: between national interest and global solidarity?* *Politique Européenne*. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-europeenne-2011-1-page-155.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Boston.com. 2009. *Text of Sen. Kerry’s speech at COP15 [archived]*. http://archive.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2009/12/16/text_of_sen_kerrys_speech_at_cop15/

COP16, 2010: Cancún, Mexico

President: Ms. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano.

Parties (states) attending: 192; Observer states: 1¹⁰⁹.

Backdrop

The Guardian's Damian Carrington: "After the catastrophe in Copenhagen came the compromise in Cancún"¹⁶. Parties convened in Cancún, having yet to establish legally binding commitments and the scope of developing world action.

David Cameron, British PM, was not expecting consensus and agreement at COP16, though did expect some progress towards multilateral action. Writing in the observer on the eve of the summit, Cameron declared Britain was prepared to act unilaterally against climate change, "setting a shining example domestically for other countries to follow"¹¹⁰. Cameron also encouraged his government, politicians, and negotiators to make the "economic case for action", highlighting the low-carbon market is worth up to £3.2 trillion and growing¹¹⁰. "I passionately believe that by recasting the argument for action on climate change away from the language of threats and punishments and into positive, profit-making terms, we can have a much wider impact"¹¹⁰.

Negotiations

Despite significant work remaining, leaders were playing down the chance of a deal. Not only Cameron, but also the US and EU delegations were unhopeful, reflected in significantly fewer delegates and journalists attending COP16 than had COP15¹¹¹. Very few world leaders joined the summit, excluding David Cameron "despite a direct appeal by the Mexican chair of the conference"¹¹¹. In many ways, this approach by delegations was hardly surprising given the energy, ambition, and anticipation heading into COP15 was followed by great disappointment and the complete absence of multilateral action¹¹².

Further, the US was again proving to be a challenging party on the road to multilateralism, having "little to offer, because the failure of domestic climate legislation in the Senate earlier [in 2010]"¹¹¹. This frustrated the Obama administration, with US energy secretary, Steven Chu, warning the US risks falling far behind advances made by China and other countries in the global race for clean energy, referring to this as a "Sputnik moment". "Are we going to continue America's innovation leadership or are we going to fall behind?"¹¹¹

For the most part, negotiations were extensively in "plenary, contact groups, informal consultations and bilateral meetings"¹¹³. As highlighted by the COP16 President, the multilateral system was at stake after the disappointment of COP15, so these negotiations would be pivotal¹¹³.

¹⁰⁹ UNFCCC. 2010. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its Sixteenth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07.pdf>

¹¹⁰ Asthana, A. The Guardian. 2010. *David Cameron: UK is prepared to act on its own over climate change.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/nov/28/cancun-climate-change-david-cameron>

¹¹¹ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2010. *PM turns down Mexico's invite to summit where backroom deals show how progress can be made despite low expectations.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/nov/29/cameron-cancun-climate-change-summit>

¹¹² Shah, A. 2011. *COP16 – Cancún Climate Conference.* Global Issues.

<https://www.globalissues.org/article/791/cop16-cancun-climate-conference>

¹¹³ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2010. *Summary of the Cancun Climate Change Conference.* International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop16/>

Yemen, on behalf of the G77 and China, “called for negotiations to be party-driven, transparent, and inclusive”, while the EU delegation called for a “balanced package”¹¹³. Small island states made powerful calls for ambitious action on climate change: Antonio Lima, ambassador to the UN for the Cape Verde Islands said “[island states] are going to drown. They face the end of history. {...} We don’t want to be the forgotten, the sacrificed countries of the 21st century”¹¹⁴. Diplomats from 43 island nations made such calls for greater multilateral action on climate change¹¹⁴.

Many Parties supported a legally binding outcome in these early negotiations, though with different expectations and caveats. Granada, for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), “stressed the importance of: a process for considering the legal form [contact group established]; {...} and establishing a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol”¹¹³. The G77, China, the EU, and others were pushing for the establishment of the second commitment period (post-2012) under the Kyoto Protocol¹¹³. Singapore, another AOSIS member, stated that the outcome “must be a global and comprehensive legally binding agreement that is complementary to the Kyoto Protocol”¹¹³. Calls for setting a firm timeline were also made – Costa Rica “called for a mandate to work towards the adoption of a legally-binding instrument at COP17”¹¹³.

Negotiations faced difficulty – once again – on the question of country-by-country differentiation on commitments. Japan favoured a single legally-binding instrument for all, while Australia sought differentiation between developed and developing countries on commitments¹¹³. The US then expressed it would be unable to adopt a mechanism that focused only on the legal elements, calling for developed country action on mitigation measures¹¹³. Negotiations ground to a halt on most of these fronts, entering the eventual Cancún Agreements in subtle language changes, including underscoring the “complementary, interrelated and mutually supportive” nature of the working groups and requesting Parties “continue discussing legal options with the aim of completing an agreed outcome based on the Bali Action Plan, the work done at COP16, and proposals made by Parties under Convention Article 1.7”¹¹³.

On public climate finance, negotiations faced further hurdles, despite general agreement surrounding the \$100bn per year adaptation fund at COP15. By COP16, still only \$30bn had been committed – more than half from Japan¹¹⁵. Developing country frustrations were exacerbated at the EU’s chief climate negotiator, Artur Runge-Metzger, “made the case for loans rather than grants”¹¹⁵. There was vehement opposition to this, particularly from those poor and vulnerable countries. Asad Rehman, Friends of the Earth’s climate campaigner, denounced the loans “climate money for developing countries must come from grants, not loans – [loans] will simply shackle developing countries with more debt”¹¹⁵. Runge-Metzger later softened his position, referring then to largely concessional loans and indicating no loans would be issued to countries unable to repay them. Such negotiations eventually led to the agreement to establish a Green Climate Fund, which would predominantly target support for adaptation against climate change in those most vulnerable countries¹¹⁶.

Key Agreements

¹¹⁴ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2010. *Don’t consign us to history, please island states at Cancún*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/dec/01/cancun-climate-talks-island-states-sea-levels>

¹¹⁵ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2010. *Cancún climate change conference: Row over EU climate loans policy*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/dec/01/cancun-climate-change-conference-loans>

¹¹⁶ UNFCCC. 2010. *PRESS RELEASE: UN Climate Change Conference in Cancún delivers balanced package of decisions, restored faith in multilateral process*.

https://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/pr_20101211_cop16_closing.pdf

The Cancún Agreements contained provisions on adaptation, technology transfer, mitigation, and finance¹¹³. The Earth Negotiations Bulletin reported, however, that “most participants acknowledged that it was a relatively small step in combating climate change”¹¹³.

Parties did agree to establish the Green Climate Fund, though no understanding of how this would be funded was found¹¹⁶. Further, parties re-emphasised commitment to the \$100bn climate finance, but without achieving this with funds declared by delegations¹¹⁵.

The official press release did remark, however, on the success of COP16 at having “restored faith in multilateral process”, arguably the most critical element of this particular session¹¹⁶. Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC added “governments have given a clear signal that they are headed towards a low-emissions future together, they have agreed to be accountable to each other for the actions they take to get there, and they have set it out in a way which encourages countries to be more ambitious over time”. “This is not the end, but it is a new beginning. It is not what is ultimately required but it is the essential foundation on which to build greater, collective ambition”¹¹⁶.

Only a year away from 2012, Parties decided to continue negotiations on the successor to the Kyoto Protocol, from which the first commitment period would elapse in 2012. In a blow to this ambition, however, Russia declared they would sign up to a Kyoto successor: “Russia will not participate in the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol”, said Alexander Berditsky – Russia’s climate change envoy¹¹⁷. Japan has also opposed a future such treaty – negotiator Akira Yamada described a renewal of Kyoto was “not an appropriate way or an effective way or a fair way to tackle climate change”¹¹⁷. Canada joined in opposition¹¹⁸.

Japan argued the Kyoto Protocol, which given developing country growth now covered only 27% of global CO₂ emissions, would not be appropriate, since it would not require developing country actions¹²³. Ryu Matsumoto, the Japanese environment minister, ruled out a compromise and so stalled negotiations on the future of the Kyoto Protocol, saying “even if we are to set the second commitment period it is not going to lead the global reduction of CO₂. Therefore we have to have the Copenhagen Accord which covers 80 per cent of emissions and has to been the main framework”¹²³. Developing country involvement had resurfaced as the most contentious issue in moving climate negotiations forward ahead of 2012.

The Climate Action Tracker project assessed the pledges up to and including COP16 as setting the world on course for 3.2C of warming, significantly higher than the 1.5/2C goals reinforced a year earlier at COP15¹¹⁸.

The Guardian reported “the dissenting voices that crashed Copenhagen dwindled inn Canún to just one – Bolivia – following intense diplomatic pressure. The Bolivian delegation’s leader, Pablo Solón, denounced the Cancún deal as ignoring scientific reality: “Its cost will be measured in human lives”¹¹⁸.

Sentiment

2010 was another year enduring more extreme weather, related to climate change. “It is one of the hottest years ever recorded. This year has seen massive suffering and loss due to extreme weather disasters.” Tim Gore, Oxfam’s EU climate change policy adviser¹¹¹.

¹¹⁷ Goldenberg, S. The Guardian. 2010. *Cancún climate change conference: Russia will not renew Kyoto protocol*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/dec/10/cancun-climate-change-conference-kyoto>

The Guardian's Damian Carrington described COP16 as the "compromise in Cancún, but one that left the most difficult decisions for Durban [COP17] next year"¹¹⁸. It was "enough to save the UN process itself from burning out, but remains far short of saving the planet"¹¹⁸.

Xie Zhenhua, head of China's delegation: "We can step forward in South Africa if we can continue to consolidate and carry on the spirit of unity and co-ordination formed in the Cancún conference"¹¹⁸.

Connie Hedegaard, EU commissioner on climate action (and former COP15 President): "But the negotiations in the future will continue to be difficult {...} There is a very heavy work programme in the next year"¹¹⁸.

The Guardian reported Patricia Espinosa, President of COP16, was "praised for her firm but inclusive chairing of the meeting, a critical missing factor in Copenhagen"¹¹⁸. India's environment minister even went as far as to "compare her to a goddess"¹¹⁸. Espinosa herself remarked the outcomes were "the best we could achieve at this point in a long process"¹¹⁸.

UK climate change secretary, Chris Huhne: "A global deal on climate change is now back on track"¹¹⁸. He also, however, then proceeded to tell Parliament that "a union chapel, a Women's Institute or a village cricket team meeting" would have been more organised than the "anarchic" climate change summit¹¹⁹.

Increasingly clear at COP16 (for one of the first times) that the pledges countries make outside summits are pushing progress on climate. The Guardian reported "some senior observers have suggested progress in combating climate changes depends as much – or more – on action outside the UN process in the next year, with nations and regions making their commitments"¹¹⁸.

George Soros concluded COP16 shone light upon "a new bottom-up approach", which "holds better prospects for success than the cumbersome UN negotiations"¹²⁰. Soros concluded the "top-down approach to tackling climate change is breaking down" – seen as Japan, Russia, and Canada oppose a new treaty, meaning "no international price on carbon, and, without a market price, it is difficult to see how the reduction of carbon emissions can be efficiently organised". Soros instead looks to how a "bottom-up approach is likely to produce a multiplicity of prices for carbon emissions. This is more appropriate to the task of reducing carbon emission than a single price because there is a multiplicity of sectors and methods, each of which produces a different cost curve", meaning they will each require a different carbon price to decarbonise efficiently¹²⁰.

COP16 saw widespread criticism of nations' "double counting" of climate aid/finance. As the Guardian reports: "In bitter exchanges, China has accused the USA of double-counting its climate money, Britain has been charged with counting money put aside for other climate funds, and France has counted money that accumulates from green investments"¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ Carrington, D. The Guardian. 2010. *Cancún deal leaves hard climate tasks to Durban summit in 2011*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/dec/14/cancun-climate-change-compromise-carrington>

¹¹⁹ Carrington, D. The Guardian. 2010. *Cancun climate change talks 'anarchic' says Chris Huhne*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2010/dec/15/cancun-climate-change-conference>

¹²⁰ Soros, G. The Guardian. 2010. *Grounds for hope for the climate change agenda*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/cif-green/2010/dec/13/hope-climate-change-agenda>

¹²¹ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2010. *Cancún climate change conference: Row over EU climate loans policy*.

Despite having issues with the sourcing of climate finance, The Times reported a “minor victory for developing countries [on finance]: they will dominate the committee that will be appointed to design the [Green Climate Fund], with 25 of the 40 members”¹²².

Clearly, COP17 in Durban, South Africa, would have plenty to deal with: developing country involvement? Kyoto second commitment period or Copenhagen Accord involving developing countries in mitigation actions? Where will \$100bn in climate finance yet to come be sourced?

On the 11th of December, only the day after the Cancún conference was officially over, The Times reported on the kicking the can down the road to COP17: “these talks have assumed a life of their own and many of the 15,000 delegates are already inquiring about the best hotel rooms and restaurants in Durban”¹²³.

¹²² The Times. 2010. *UN climate change deal fails to make progress on emissions*.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/un-climate-change-deal-fails-to-make-progress-on-emissions-zbdckr6jtk2>

¹²³ The Times. 2010. *A lot of activity but not a lot of action at UN climate change talks*.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-lot-of-activity-but-not-a-lot-of-action-at-un-climate-change-talks-t8vhv5w2hkq>

COP17, 2011: Durban, South Africa

President: Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane

Parties (states) attending: 192; Observer states: 2¹²⁴.

Backdrop

Parties convened in Durban with significant outstanding issues to work through, primarily the urgent need for a binding agreement for emission reduction post the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period ending in 2012¹²⁵. South African President, Jacob Zuma, summarised the circumstances in his opening remarks at the Conference: "We are agreed that this global challenge requires a global solution. However, different positions still prevail on some critical points. However, it is important that there is common ground on the elements that will remain critical in reaching any agreement. These are multilateralism, environmental integrity, common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities, equity, and honouring of all international commitments and undertakings made in the climate change process {...} We need to show the world that Parties are ready to address the problems in a practical manner, and that they are willing to forgo the national interest at times, for the interest of humanity, no matter how difficult this may be"¹²⁶.

Negotiations

President Zuma, as host, encouraged Parties to reassure one another over the future of climate treaties to break through the negotiation impasse outstanding from COP16: "In order to find a solution, Parties need to be reassured that should some of them commit to a 2nd Commitment Period under the Kyoto Protocol in a legally binding manner, others would be ready to commit to a [different] legally binding regime in the near future."¹²⁶

Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres, called on developing countries to announce their mitigation pledges as she asserted cutting emissions was "the defining issue of this conference". In a bid to reenergise negotiations, she quoted Nelson Mandela: "It always seems impossible until it is done"¹²⁷.

Such reenergisation was desperately needed following two disappointing summits and amidst rumours that "governments of the world's richest countries have given up on forging a new treaty on climate change {...} before 2016 at the earliest, and that even if it were negotiated by then, they would stipulate it could not come into force until 2020"¹²⁸. This would be 23 years after the first (and only at this point) legally binding agreement at Kyoto in 1997. The Guardian reported just before COP17 got under way that "the UK, EU, Japan, US and other rich nations are all now united in opting to put off an agreement and the UN also appears to accept this {...} The Alliance of Small Island States {...} called moves to delay a new treaty "reckless and irresponsible"¹²⁸. Connie. Hedegaard, Europe's climate chief,

¹²⁴ UNFCCC. 2011. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Seventeenth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cop17/eng/09.pdf>

¹²⁵ Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions. 2011. *COP 17 Durban*. <https://www.c2es.org/content/cop-17-durban/>

¹²⁶ South African Government website. 2011. *Address by President Jacob Zuma at the official opening of the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP17/CMP7 High-Level Segment, Durban.*

<https://www.gov.za/address-president-jacob-zuma-official-opening-united-nations-climate-change-conference-cop17cmp7>

¹²⁷ The Guardian. 2011. *Jacob Zuma opens Durban climate negotiations with plea to delegates.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/nov/28/jacob-zuma-durban-climate-negotiations>

¹²⁸ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2011. *Rich nations 'give up' on new climate treaty until 2020.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/nov/20/rich-nations-give-up-climate-treaty>

declared the EU's target was for an agreement to be drawn up "by the first COP after 2015" to come into force in 2020¹²⁸. Chris Huhne, UK climate change secretary, declared a global deal "an absolute necessity" ahead of the summit, but wrote off its possibility at Durban given "Europe is gripped by a currency crisis [the eurozone crisis] of constitutional proportions. The United States is preoccupied with jobs, growth, and a looming presidential election. And the Middle East and North Africa are consumed by questions of political reform", he said¹²⁹. He added the Durban talks would be successful if Parties agreed to mandate negotiations for a binding treaty¹²⁹.

Apparent consensus among developed countries for an elongated negotiating period came in tandem with Europe taking "the toughest negotiating stand it as ever adopted on global warming", as The Guardian's Fiona Harvey reported¹³⁰. The EU delegation insisted on stiff conditions being met by China and developing countries on mitigation ahead of talk of any binding agreements¹³⁰. Harvey described how officials were "angry that the EU's goodwill on climate change has been taken for granted"¹³⁰.

To unblock negotiations, China suggested developing countries (including themselves) take on legally binding commitments to cut emissions, but that these should be nationally determined and either voluntary or binding only at the national level, which India supported¹³⁰. The EU, however, was demanding developing countries match developed nations on commitments, especially as categorisation of 'developing' had become contentious in itself¹³⁰. Chris Huhne described "the rather bizarre situation we have is that we are locked into definitions of developed and developing that go back to the 1990s, when South Korea and Singapore are no longer realistically developing in the same way as, say, Botswana. That doesn't make sense"¹³¹. This standpoint was reinforced by the US, which was reported to be more in favour of a global treaty if developing countries, particularly China, signed up to the same enforcement of commitments¹³¹.

The lack of progress frustrated negotiators. China's lead climate negotiator, Su Wei, told China Daily: "I think EU is just shifting the goalpost from one place to another. This is actually not an efficient way to do things, because we need to accomplish the goals one by one"¹³⁰.

There were increased calls at and surround COP17 for "bottom-up" approaches, predominantly surrounding voluntary commitments on carbon reduction. Sir David King, the UK's former chief scientist, was particularly outspoken on this issue, terming it "muscular bilateralism" and suggesting it is advantageous over the continued failures of international negotiations since 1997¹³². Meanwhile, others, including former UK environment secretary John Prescott, were calling for the Kyoto agreement to continue past 2012 in its current form¹³². Negotiations appeared to face a lack of consensus on all fronts.

The EU position hardened as agreeing to continue the Kyoto protocol in its current form, but contingent on a parallel legally binding treaty forcing all Parties to cut emissions, but at least allowing for differentiation. The compromise of differentiated actions appeased some

¹²⁹ The Times. 2011. *Finance crisis and Arab Spring will delay vital deal on climate, says Huhne*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/finance-crisis-and-arab-spring-will-delay-vital-deal-on-climate-says-huhne-z8fw7spcb9p>

¹³⁰ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2011. *EU takes hardline stance at UN climate talks*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/nov/30/europe-hardline-un-climate-talks>

¹³¹ The Times. 2011. *Huhne calls on developing countries to 'do more' on climate change*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/huhne-calls-on-developing-countries-to-do-more-on-climate-change-q67f5vtfdx2>

¹³² Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2011. *John Prescott: suspend the Kyoto protocol*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/02/john-prescott-suspend-kyoto-protocol>

developing nations, with an EU source halfway through the summit describing how “China is sending signals of flexibility, Indonesia, South Africa, and Brazil are sympathetic, but India is still saying the current treaty is a red line”¹³³.

Such a proposal (the Durban Roadmap for negotiating such a parallel treaty) was opposed by many other developing countries. Venezuela’s spokesman said “all the options so far from developed countries move towards a lowering of ambition” and a diplomat from an African country said the talk of a new treaty was distracting from developed countries renewing pledges so that they “fear that we will not have legally binding targets and timetables”¹³³. Andy Atkins, head of Friends of the Earth, agreed: “Negotiating a new climate deal will take too long and be a recipe for inaction”¹³³.

As negotiations continued, the impasse appeared increasingly difficult to break through – talks overran by more than a day and a half¹³⁴. Finally, an agreement finally appeared on a roadmap towards a 2015 treaty, though this “set to fall apart as tempers frayed and the EU and India came to an apparent impasse over the wording of the final text”, as reported by The Times¹³⁴.

The EU was pressing India for a solution entailing India at least giving “a clear political signal that it will commit in the future”, as put by Connie Hedegaard at the Conference¹³⁵. Further complicating negotiations, the EU then spoke of China’s inadequacy preventing the EU from signing up to Kyoto’s second commitment period, with Connie Hedegaard saying “I still believe that China holds one of the central keys to unlock the situation {...} how China will follow us [on binding commitments of second commitment period] and when”¹³⁵.

Helping the EU massively, the Chair of the 54 African nations, Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, announced that their position had moved closer to the EU’s calls for a legally binding agreement covering all nations¹³⁶. He did, however, criticise the EU’s negotiating position, saying it “seems to be beyond the comprehension of everyone except the Europeans”¹³⁶, and denounced the US, Japan, Russia, and Canada over their oppositions to the second commitment period as “some people [having] a vested interest in not making any progress in these talks”¹³⁶.

US climate envoy Todd Stern’s office clarified the US position: “Todd Stern said in his press conference today that the United States could support a process to negotiate a new climate accord. He did not say that the United States supports a legally binding agreement as the result of that process. The EU has supported both a process and the result being a legally binding agreement.”¹³⁷

China faced increasing pressure to agree to the roadmap, given its close allies of Brazil, South Africa, Argentina, and most of Africa had agreed to the roadmap¹³⁷.

¹³³ Vidal, J. and Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2011. *Durban climate talks ‘roadmap’ held up by India*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/04/durban-climate-talks-eu-india>

¹³⁴ The Times. 2011. *Global climate treaty deal struck in Durban*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/global-climate-treaty-deal-struck-in-durban-3wjxdzwl1nr>

¹³⁵ Vidal, J. and Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2011. *India dampens Europe’s hopes of a new climate change agreement*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/06/india-europe-climate-change-agreement>

¹³⁶ Vidal, J. and Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2011. *African nations move closer to EU position at Durban climate change talks*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/08/african-eu-durban-climate-change>

¹³⁷ Harvey, F. and Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2011. *Durban COP17: Connie Hedegaard puts pressure on China, US and India*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/09/durban-climate-change-connie-hedegaard>

Jayanthi Natarajan, the Indian Environment Minister “threatened to walk out, saying that it risked tying her nation to emissions cuts that would prove incompatible with a rapidly growing economy and that the deal was unfair {...} “The equity of burden-sharing cannot be shifted”¹³⁴. “In a highly unusual diplomatic twist, the EU and India were granted ten minutes by the South African president of the summit to go into a public huddle to hammer out a compromise”, which turned into nearly an hour¹³⁴. Finally, India signed up to an agreed adjustment of the wording.

Connie Hedegaard continued her hardline approach with China and the US, compelling China among the rest of developing countries to sign up to her roadmap – giving developing countries the prospect of a global treaty they needed, while giving the US and other developed assurances over developing country mitigation efforts¹³⁸. So convincing were Hedegaard’s efforts that even the US signed up after China, since developing country involvement satisfied the US’s hardline approach that it would only sign up to any agreement based on legal parity between developed and developing countries¹³⁸.

Hedegaard received significant praise in unblocking the deal over the “marathon” COP. Chris Huhne, UK climate change secretary, described Hedegaard as “very, very good and we are very lucky to have her {...} She held everything together in a very impressive manner – a class act”¹³⁸. The Guardian’s Fiona Harvey detailed how Hedegaard “has been hailed the hero of the Durban meeting that reached an unexpectedly solid outcome in the early hours of Sunday {...} key to her success was the hardline attitude [she] adopted”¹³⁸. Harvey went on: “Durban was Hedegaard’s chance to raise a new phoenix from the ashes of the Copenhagen conflagration [where she was President]. And she was determined to do so”¹³⁸. “Despite the battering she received in the conference – from Indian and Chinese ministers, who attacked the EU for trying to strongarm them – she held her nerve. Up to the last moment, negotiators for other countries were briefing that the EU would cave in, and concede that an agreement was no possible. But in the final minutes, the EU agreed a phase that it said would ensure future commitments were binding”¹³⁸.

Key Agreements

The extended Conference is most memorable for keeping Kyoto alive on a “limited, transnational basis, while pointing the way toward a new pact under the UNFCCC putting developed and developing countries on a more equal footing” in terms of emission reduction commitments and the surrounding legal nature¹²⁵. Parties also made headway on the operationalisation of the Green Climate Fund, initiated at COP16¹³⁹. Altogether, the Durban package broke through an impasse existing since the first COP on developing country involvement¹³⁹.

The Earth Negotiations Bulletin, published for each COP by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, described “there was a strong sense that elements of the Durban package {...} restored sufficient momentum for a new negotiation process {...} between developed and developing countries”¹³⁹.

Despite Hedegaard’s hardline approach, the outcome remained a compromise, which is seen in the COP decision as stating the post-2020 agreement take the form of a “protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force”¹²⁵. As the Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions assessed, this was “implying but not explicitly mandating that it be

¹³⁸ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2011. *Durban talks: how Connie Hedegaard got countries to agree on climate deal*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/11/connie-hedegaard-durban-climate-talks>

¹³⁹ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2011. *Summary of the Durban Climate Change Conference*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop17/>

legally binding”¹²⁵. Further, they note the absence of the UNFCCC principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which had been a feature since COP1, “effectively discarding the stark differentiation between developed and developing countries embedded in the Kyoto Protocol”¹²⁵. In setting up the UN process for these now agreed upon negotiations, Parties agreed to develop a new process: the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action¹³⁹. This new working group was to begin in the first half of 2012, to conclude “as early as possible but no later than 2015”¹²⁵. Successful calls from the most vulnerable countries, particularly AOSIS, led to the platform “starting with a workshop at the first session next year, to explore options for ‘increasing ambition’ and closing the gap between existing mitigation pledges and the level of emission reduction needed by 2020 to meet the 2-degree goal”¹²⁵.

Despite progress on the operationalisation of the Green Climate Fund, Parties were unable to agree on its entire funding model, leaving this to COP18¹³⁹.

Sentiment

Concern among experts on binding agreement delay:

Fatih Birol, chief economist at the International Energy Agency (IEA): “if we do not have an international agreement whose effect is put in place by 2017, then the door to [holding temperatures below 2C] will be closed forever”¹²⁸.

Lord Stern, chair of the LSE’s Grantham Institute on Climate Change: aiming for a 2020 deadline was “pessimistic and risks introducing lethargy {...} It’s not fast enough – this is a collective failure, and [leaving agreement to] 2020 is taking considerable risks with the planet”¹²⁸.

On the Durban package:

Todd Stern, US climate envoy: “This is a very significant package. None of us likes everything in it. Believe me, there is plenty the United States is not thrilled about”¹³⁴.

Chris Huhne, UK Energy & Climate Change Secretary: “This outcome shows the UNFCCC system [ie, multilateralism on climate action] really works and can produce results.”¹⁴⁰

Christina Figueres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary: “[countries] have all laid aside some cherished objectives of their own to meet a common purpose – a long-term solution to climate change”¹⁴⁰

Connie Hedegaard, EU Climate Chief: “the EU wanted more ambition. And got more. {...} Where the Kyoto divides the world into two categories, we will now get a system that reflects the reality of the today’s mutually interdependent world. And as we are interdependent, what we promise to do must have the same legal weight”¹⁴⁰.

Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, head of the Africa Group: “We meet mid-way. Of course we are not completely happy about the outcome, it lacks balance, but we believe it is starting to go into the right direction”¹⁴⁰.

Ruth Davis, Greenpeace UK chief policy advisor: “Every December the mismatch grows between what the world is committing to and what nations should be delivering. In the

¹⁴⁰ The Guardian. 2011. *Durban climate deal: the verdict*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/12/durban-climate-deal-verdict>

current vernacular, we're kicking the climate can down the road. [But] the political signal delivered by Durban is more powerful than the actual substance"¹⁴⁰.

Richard Gledhill, PwC Partner, sustainability & climate change: "There is still a 40% gap between the 2 degrees climate goal and emissions targets through to 2020."¹⁴⁰

Keith Allot, WWF head of climate change: "Governments have salvaged a path forward for negotiations, but we must be under no illusion: the outcome of Durban leaves us with the prospect of being legally bound to a world of 4C warming."¹⁴⁰

Michael Jacobs, London School of Economics: political ambition on climate change comes from several sources: "By 2015, the world's young people in particular can be expected to demand greater action as the evidence of future damage becomes clear. I think this will be bigger than Copenhagen."¹⁴¹

Times of India: "India took over centre stage as a force to reckon with, regained its position as the leader and moral voice of the developing world as the EU and the US were forced to address its demands"¹⁴².

Alden Meyer, Union of Concerned Scientists: "There is some hard bargaining to get a treaty by 2015. It will be particularly tough for the US, which isn't doing its fair share of emissions cuts and scaling up finance. The politics on that aren't very promising given two members of the Republican party are in complete denial"¹⁴³.

¹⁴¹ Harvey, F. and Carrington, D. 2011. *Durban climate conference agrees deal to do a deal – now comes the hard part*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/12/durban-climate-change-conference-2011-southafrica>

¹⁴² Watts, J. The Guardian. 2011. *Durban climate talks: media in China and India cautiously upbeat*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/dec/12/durban-climate-china-india-upbeat>

¹⁴³ BBC News. 2011. *Reaction to UN climate deal*.

COP18, 2012: Doha, Qatar

President: Mr. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah
Parties (states) attending: 189; Observer states: 3¹⁴⁴.

Backdrop

Parties convened in Doha with the aim of moving talks on in the bid to secure a second commitment period under Kyoto and eventually negotiate a new legally binding treaty for emissions reductions by all Parties – developed and developing – to come in for 2020. Parties were also discussing how to tackle outstanding issues of the Green Climate Fund and the \$100bn a year pledge for developing countries by 2020¹⁴⁵. As Deloitte published, “many observers predicted that the conference [COP18] would be a transitional one of limited ambition {...} the conference presented an occasion to do some groundwork for future discussions” and to address climate finance and adaptation¹⁴⁶.

COP18 came soon after a World Bank projection detailing an expected 4C rise in global temperatures by 2100¹⁴⁷.

The location of COP18 was controversial for some, given Qatar was at the time the nation with the highest per capita emissions¹⁴⁸.

Negotiations

The US were early to defend their climate actions amidst continuing criticism. US delegate Jonathan Pershing pointed to Obama’s efforts to increase fuel efficiency standards of vehicles and on promises of climate finance: “it doesn’t mean enough is being done. It’s clear the global community, and that includes us, has to do more if we are going to succeed at avoiding the damages projected in a warm world”¹⁴⁷.

China was also under fire for its contradictory – or confusing – position, which was one “resolute in reducing emissions” according to state newswire Xinhua despite China’s emissions expected to peak as late as 2030¹⁴⁹. China’s chief negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, defended China’s emissions trajectory by signalling emissions would peak once GDP per capital reaches \$20,000-25,000 from its current \$5,000¹⁴⁹.

Receiving interest early in the Conference was Bhutan’s innovative approach to measuring economic success: gross national happiness (GNH)¹⁵⁰. As an alternative to GDP, the new measure’s adoption in policymaking would accentuate (or disentangle from the noise) the multidimensional gains from climate action and ambitious emission reduction. At Doha, it

¹⁴⁴ UNFCCC. 2012. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Eighteenth Session. Part One*.
<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/cop18/eng/08.pdf>

¹⁴⁵ South African Government Website. 2012. *South Africa participates in COP18 hosted in Qatar from 26 November – 7 December 2012*. <https://www.dffe.gov.za/event/international/2012cop18dohaqatar>

¹⁴⁶ Deloitte. 2012. *COP18 in Doha – What businesses should know*.
https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/dttl_cop18_doha_brief.pdf

¹⁴⁷ The Guardian. 2012. *Doha climate talks: US defends ‘enormous’ efforts*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/nov/26/doha-climate-talks-us-defends-efforts>

¹⁴⁸ Goodman, A. 2012. *Contemplating climate change catastrophe at COP18 in Doha*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/nov/29/climate-change-catastrophe-cop18-doha>

¹⁴⁹ Kaiman, J. The Guardian. *China’s emissions expected to rise until 2030, despite ambitious green policies*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/nov/26/china-emissions-rise-green-policies>

¹⁵⁰ Kelly, A. The Guardian. *Gross national happiness in Bhutan: the big idea from a tiny state that could change the world*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/01/bhutan-wealth-happiness-counts>

was reported that a UN panel was considering ways that Bhutan's GNH measure could be replicated across other countries. Bhutan was also praised at COP18 for maintaining its pledge to continue its carbon neutrality while successfully raising living standards relatively fast¹⁵⁰.

As Parties got down to negotiating the second commitment period of the Kyoto protocol for those Annex-1 parties signed up, a hurdle was quickly identified: carbon credits. Poland, signed up to the Kyoto protocol as a member of the EU, refused to give up its surplus credits from the first commitment period – surpluses stemming from a collapse in industrial output across the region (Russia, Ukraine included etc.) in the last decade¹⁵¹. Critics expressed this was a way of dampening ambition. André Corrêa do Lago, head of the Brazilian delegation: “the second phase has to have environmental integrity, and you will not have that if countries are allowed to carry [the credits] {...}. This is not a way to have effective reduction”¹⁵¹.

In a bid to bring Poland onside with leaving their period 1 carbon credits behind, the UN agreed COP19 will take place in Warsaw, reported by the Guardian as a move “that some applauded as a diplomatic coup and others called a joke”, given Poland's reliance on fossil fuels, especially coal¹⁵¹.

Climate finance then emerged as the most contentious issue in Doha. By the Wednesday of the second week, only Britain and Germany had pledged to provide cash until 2015¹⁵². Ed Davey, the UK's energy secretary: “Britain has promised a total of £2.9bn {...} between now and 2015 our climate finance commitments will continue”¹⁵³. Alternatively, the US argued they were under no obligation to provide more finance until 2020, which sparked impassioned calls for a raising of ambition on climate finance, including the Seychelles ambassador remarking: “We are past the era of mitigation and adaptation. What comes next is the disappearance of islands. We are in an era of mass relocations.”¹⁵²

India described sourcing more funding for the Green Climate Fund a “matter of urgency”, while the EU called for “more ambition from the US and all other countries”¹⁵². Worsening matters, Britain struggled to show leadership – despite being one of only countries pledging the finance to 2015 – because of domestic challenges; Chancellor George Osborne was set to announce the opening of 30 new gas power stations, juxtaposed against Ed Davey's efforts in Doha. Asad Rehman, Friends of the Earth's representative at COP18, described this as “George Osborne's gas-guzzling energy strategy sends the UK hurtling in completely the wrong direction”¹⁵⁴.

Two days later, as the Conference entered its final few hours, the climate finance negotiations were yet to unlock a breakthrough. Greg Barker, the UK climate minister described two weeks of “slow if unremarkable progress” and that “the process is moving very slowly, and we need greater political will to bring this conference to a successful conclusion. As things stand the clock is ticking”¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵¹ Harvey, F. The Guardian. *Carbon credits row could derail UN climate talks, says Brazil*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/dec/02/carbon-credits-climate-talks-brazil>

¹⁵² Vidal, J. The Guardian. *Frustration over lack of climate cash for poor countries rises in Qatar*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/dec/05/frustration-climate-poor-countries-qatar>

¹⁵³ Vidal, J. The Guardian. *UK pledges £133m more for Africa to tackle climate change*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/dec/04/uk-pledges-africa-climate-change>

¹⁵⁴ Whipple, T. The Times. *Ed Davey appears at odds with George Osborne over emissions*.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ed-davey-appears-at-odds-with-george-osborne-over-emissions-m6q9g873bn7>

¹⁵⁵ Whipple, T. The Times. *Delegate in tears as climate talks face deadlock over aid for poor nations*.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/delegate-in-tears-as-climate-talks-face-deadlock-over-aid-for-poor-nations-0vkmk5fnp25>

The Times even reported that negotiations became so fraught that “the pressure was felt on the floor of the conference, where a negotiator from the Filipino delegation broke down in tears. He had been calling for the delegations to settle their differences and reach agreement after the deaths of hundreds of people in his country from a typhoon that some have attributed to climate change”¹⁵⁵. Developing nations continued calls for increase climate finance commitments from developed countries, in particular \$10bn a year until 2020, which was only 10% committed to by developing countries at COP16 for after 2020.

The US was reported to be holding back the overrunning talks, unwilling to commit more climate finance, substantiated by fiscal concerns, described by Lord Stern as “they are about to go off a fiscal cliff. You can’t expect them to offer money at this stage”¹⁵⁵.

Progress was made as further finance pledges came from Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands¹⁵⁶.

Unable to secure more financing commitments, especially from the US, negotiators looked to appease developing countries by enshrining ‘loss and damage’ in the final text. This led to much extended negotiations as this was the first time such language had been used, previously avoided as it was associated with developed countries compensating developing countries for unpredictable damage from extreme weather related to climate change. US negotiators “made certain that neither the word “compensation”, nor any other term connoting legal liability, was used, to avoid opening the floodgates to litigation – instead, the money will be judged as aid”, as reported by the Guardian¹⁵⁷.

Key Agreements

To progress preparations for the 2015 climate agreement negotiations, Parties “strengthened their resolve and set out a timetable to adopt a universal climate agreement” as part of the Doha Climate Gateway – the agreements signed at COP18¹⁵⁸. Parties also agreed to “emphasise the need to increase their ambition to cut greenhouse gases and help vulnerable countries to adapt”¹⁵⁸. On the Kyoto’s second commitment period, Parties launched this period, keeping in place the first period’s legal and accounting models until a new agreement covering developing countries as well would come into force by 2020¹⁵⁸.

On the Green Climate Fund, the Republic of Korea was endorsed as the host of the fund, though funding remained an outstanding issue – developed countries only reiterated their intent to provide climate finance to developing nations with only some European countries detailing fund commitments¹⁴⁶. Parties made sufficient progress to expect the fund to begin allocating funds in the second half of 2013¹⁵⁸.

While little of a substantive nature, Parties also raised the issue of deforestation – an issue increasingly prominent – clarifying ways to measure deforestation, though without any agreements on how to reduce deforestation other than vague language committing Parties to “ensure that efforts to fight deforestation are supported”¹⁵⁸.

As commentator Michael Jobs put it: “It is almost a ritual now for UN climate change negotiations to reach the brink of collapse before a nail-biting, past-the-deadline compromise is achieved. But the tortuous conclusion to this year’s talks in Doha, Qatar, only sets the

¹⁵⁶ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2012. *Doha climate talks stall over draft text wording*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/dec/07/doha-climate-talks-stall>

¹⁵⁷ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2012. *Doha climate change deal clears way for ‘damage aid’ to poor nations*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/dec/08/doha-climate-change-deal-nations>

¹⁵⁸ UNFCCC. 2012. *The Doha Climate Gateway*. <https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/the-big-picture/milestones/the-doha-climate-gateway>

stage for a much bigger drama three years hence, in 2015, when a new comprehensive agreement must be reached”¹⁵⁶.

The Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, the critical working group moving forward, also saw its two workstreams outlined:

“Workstream 1 to take the steps necessary to negotiate a global climate change agreement that will be adopted by 2015 and enter into force from 2020”.

“Workstream 2 to agree how to raise global ambition before 2020 to accelerate the response to climate change”¹⁵⁸.

Sentiment

COP18 saw a new group of grassroots activists protest the Conference: the newly-formed Arab Youth Climate Movement gathered hundreds of young activists from across the region “calling for their nations to take the lead in reducing emissions”¹⁴⁸.

Lord Stern, chair of LSE’s Grantham Institute on Climate Change, pushed developing countries for greater action: “it’s a brutal arithmetic – the changing structure of the world’s economy has been dramatic. That is something developing countries will have to face up to”¹⁵⁹.

Ruth Davis, political adviser at Greenpeace said on ‘loss and damage’ clause: “this is a highly significant move – it will be the first time the size of the bill for sailing to take on climate change will be part of the UN discussions. Countries need to understand the risks they are taking in not addressing climate change urgently.”¹⁵⁷

Connie Hedegaard, the prominent EU negotiator in Durban and EU climate chief, wrote for the Guardian shortly after COP18: “Yes progress was slow and frustrating, but the main goal was to prepare the ground for the big 2015 talks. Job done.”¹⁶⁰ Hedegaard also praised the introduction of the single new working group “now we have one negotiation forum, the Durban Platform, for all countries. Check.”¹⁶⁰. And on the slow pace of negotiations: “Although frustration is a renewable source, it does not reduce emissions. To overcome frustration, one must remain intensely focused on the final goal that all parties have signed up a global climate deal by 2015. Doha took the first steps”¹⁶⁰.

Obama’s climate envoy, Todd Stern, was reported by Fiona Harvey of the Guardian to have expressed progress on talks stemmed from combining the two negotiating tracks (formerly dividing developed and developing nations) into the one Durban platform: “[You can’t] cut a deal unless you have got all the big players in the room”, he said¹⁶¹.

Asad Rehman, head of climate and energy at Friends of the Earth: “A weak and dangerously ineffectual agreement is nothing but a polluters charter – it legitimises a do-nothing approach whilst creating a mirage that governments are acting in the interests of the planet and its people”¹⁶¹.

¹⁵⁹ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2012. *Lord Stern: developing countries must make deeper emissions cuts*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/dec/04/lord-stern-developing-countries-deeper-emissions-cuts>

¹⁶⁰ Hedegaard, C. The Guardian. 2012. *Why the Doha climate conference was a success*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/dec/14/doha-climate-conference-success>

¹⁶¹ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2012. *Doha climate gateway: the reaction*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/dec/10/doha-climate-gateway-reaction>

Kumi Naidoo, executive director of Greenpeace International: “Just three days after Typhoon Bopha hit the Philippines and showed the human cost of extreme weather in vulnerable countries, the decision by politicians not to speed up efforts to cut carbon pollution is unforgivable”¹⁶¹.

Bindu Lohani, VP at the Asian Development Bank, shed light on the scale of adaptation costs in vulnerable countries in Asia alone: “we need to mobilise massive funds for climate change adaptation – around \$40bn a year for Asia and the Pacific would be a very conservative estimate”¹⁶¹.

Inter Press Service reported the World Bank had warned “coal, oil and gas companies and their backers in the financial and investment industry must stop putting billions of dollars into finding and extracting new sources of fossil fuels. If they don’t shift their investments, temperatures will soar to 4 to 10 degrees C higher, devastating many parts of the world”¹⁶².

Martin Khor of the South Centre (an association of 52 developing nations): “It is a breakthrough. The term Loss and Damage is in the text – this is a huge step in principle. Next comes the fight for cash. What helped swing it was Obama asking Congress for \$60bn for the damage caused by [Hurricane] Sandy”¹⁶³.

¹⁶² Leahy, S. Inter Press Service. 2012. *Planet on Path to Four C Warming, World Bank Warns*.
<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/11/planet-on-path-to-four-c-warming-world-bank-warns/>

¹⁶³ Harrabin, R. BBC News. 2012. *UN climate talks extend Kyoto Protocol, promise compensation*.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20653018>

COP19, 2013: Warsaw, Poland

President: Mr. Marcin Korolec.

Parties (states) attending: 190; Observer states: 2¹⁶⁴.

Backdrop

With both developing and developed countries preparing for the much-anticipated 2015 negotiations on a legally binding emission reduction treaty for them all, Parties convened in Warsaw to progress preparations. Key issues to discuss included how differentiated mitigation commitments would be between countries, loss and damage, climate finance commitments, and wider adaptation efforts¹⁶⁵.

Despite the recent and devastating typhoon Haiyan that had recently hit the Philippines and surrounding region, *Heinrich Böll Stiftung* – a political foundation affiliated with the German Green Party – reported the Conference was “the COP with the lowest expectations ever – and lived up to that in every respect”¹⁶⁶.

Negotiations

With the Doha conference having incorporated loss and damage phraseology into the COP decisions for the first time, this quickly became the principal issue for Parties¹⁶⁵. The Guardian gained access to an official US briefing document at the start of COP19, which expressed the US delegation was worried the talks would “focus increasingly on blame and liability” with developing countries “seeking redress for climate damages from sea level rise, droughts, powerful storms and adverse impacts”¹⁶⁷.

Yeb Sano of the Filipino delegation made an emotional appeal to the Conference for urgent mitigation and adaptation efforts, referencing the recent typhoon Haiyan and pledging to fast for the remainder of the summit in what was reported by some as a ‘hunger strike’¹⁶⁶. He told delegates: “We cannot sit and stay helpless staring at this international climate stalemate. It is now time to take action. We need an emergency climate pathway {...} Science tells us that simply, climate change will mean more intense tropical storms. As the Earth warms up, that would include the oceans. The energy that is stored in the waters off the Philippines will increase the intensity of typhoons and the trend we now see is that more destructive storms will be the new norm.”¹⁶⁸

G77 lead negotiator, Juan Hoffmaister, declared G77 nations could not leave Warsaw without agreement on a loss and damage mechanism: “We can’t rely on ad-hoc humanitarian aid given the reality that major climate-related disasters are becoming the new normal”¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁴ UNFCCC. 2013. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Nineteenth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ Shah, A. 2013. *COP19 – Warsaw Climate Conference.* <https://www.globalissues.org/article/803/cop19-warsaw-climate-conference>

¹⁶⁶ Fuhr, L. et al. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. 2013. *COP19: Warsaw.* <https://www.boell.de/en/2013/12/03/after-cop-19-warsaw-checkmate-international-climate-politics>

¹⁶⁷ Leahy, S. The Guardian. 2013. *US fears climate talks will focus on compensation for extreme weather.* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/13/climate-talks-typhoon-haiyan-philippines>

¹⁶⁸ Vidal, J. and Vaughan, A. The Guardian. 2013. *Philippines urges action to resolve climate talks deadlock after Typhoon Haiyan.* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/11/typhoon-haiyan-philippines-climate-talks>

US senior negotiator, Trigg Talley, was reported to have said early on in negotiations that the US had “technical and political issues” with any loss and damage mechanism, reflecting the US’ hesitancy for the incorporation of such language in the Doha Gateway the year prior¹⁶⁷.

Challenging negotiations on loss and damage, which proved to see little enthusiasm from developed nations, led to a walkout of the G77+China group of 133 developing countries, citing a reluctance of developed countries to commit to a loss and damage mechanism¹⁷⁷.

A few days into the Conference, frustration over inaction on loss and damage was exacerbated as it became apparent certain developed nations were downgrading emission reduction commitments: Japan, Australia, and Canada principally. Japan reduced its 2020 pledge for cutting emissions from 25% to 3.8%, citing reduced nuclear power as a result of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami¹⁶⁹.

China’s lead negotiator, Su Wei, added to the backlash: “I do not have any words to describe my dismay at Japan’s decision”¹⁶⁹. Ed Davey, UK energy secretary, called the decision “deeply disappointing”¹⁷⁰.

Bjorn Lomborg, however, defended Japan’s efforts in a The Times article, saying Japan’s promise of \$110bn for innovation in environmental and energy technologies was worth focusing on: “Japan could – incredible as it may sound – actually end up showing the world how to tackle global warming effectively”. This sentiment was not reflected in COP19 negotiations however, with Bjorn admitting: “climate summits persist in hoping for a globally binding agreement on cutting carbon emissions. This was the essence of the failed 1997 Kyoto protocol”¹⁷¹.

Amidst the criticism, Japan conceded additional aid funding to support developing countries, tapping into strong calls from developing countries on loss and damage and pledging Japan’s public and private sectors to raise \$15-16bn in climate aid¹⁷⁰.

Negotiations remained “controversial” on loss and damage¹⁷², resulting in the summit once again overrunning. The US, Britain, and other developed countries were “adamant that they would not pay compensation [under an automatic loss and damage mechanism] but they accepted the need for a “new entity” within the negotiations to study the issue and make proposals” in what came down to a last-minute compromise¹⁷³. As seemingly normalised at Doha, a diplomatic “huddle” was allowed to seek this compromise after negotiations stalled in the adjourned closing plenary of the Conference¹⁷². Developing countries suggested textual amendments on the direction and review of the loss and damage international mechanism¹⁷².

Key Agreements

¹⁶⁹ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2013. *Climate change pledges: rich nations face fury over moves to renege*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/16/climate-change-pledges-rich-nations>

¹⁷⁰ Vidal, J. and Macalister, T. The Guardian. 2013. *Japan under fire for scaling back plans to cut greenhouse gases*. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/nov/15/japan-scaling-back-cut-greenhouse-gases>

¹⁷¹ Lomborg, B. The Times. 2013. *At least, a Plan B to stop global warming*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/at-last-a-plan-b-to-stop-global-warming-3mcb6l2qtq>

¹⁷² Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2013. *Summary report, 11-23 November 2013; Warsaw Climate Change Conference*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/events/warsaw-climate-change-conference-november-2013/summary-report-11-23-november-2013>

¹⁷³ Webster, B. The Times. 2013. *Climate deal in doubt after US and China fail to set date*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/climate-deal-in-doubt-after-us-and-china-fail-to-set-date-frtchl5ls8m>

The Parties agreed to establish the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage under the Cancun Adaptation Framework, subject to review at COP22, including on its “structure, mandate and effectiveness” to address loss and damage associated with extreme weather in developing countries vulnerable to climate change¹⁷². The mechanism was also agreed to be talks on enhancing knowledge of risk management approaches and most effective measures for issues associated with loss and damage¹⁷².

Parties managed to make progress on establishing clear reporting/monitoring of REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) activities and on discussing the financing of such activities from a variety of public, private, bilateral, multilateral, and other sources¹⁷². The EU “hailed COP19 as the biggest advance on REDD+ since Cancun”, according to the Earth Negotiations Bulletin¹⁷². The issue proved relatively uncontroversial, given the technical nature of the discussion (rather than pointing to particular countries for blame, for finance, or for legally binding commitments).

Despite difficulties in getting China onside for a 2015 deadline for negotiating the new global treaty¹⁷⁴, the Parties decided on such a deadline while also outlining the next few years would be an “effective global effort to reduce emissions rapidly enough to chart humanity’s longer-term path out of the danger zone of climate change, while building adaptation capacity”¹⁷⁵. This includes Parties agreeing to bring forward their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in time for the first quarter of 2015, which will form the basis of the new deal to be struck in Paris at the end of 2015¹⁷⁹.

Negotiations were non-stop for the final 36 hours to secure the deadline, which was opposed by what the Guardian reported as “the self-styled ‘like-minded developing countries’, a group that comprises several oil-rich nations, including Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Bolivia, and Malaysia {...} [they] take the view that the strict separation of nations into developed and developing {...} must remain as the bedrock of any future agreement”, which stalled negotiations focusing on setting the negotiating deadline for the global agreement (covering all Parties) as set out in Doha a year before¹⁷⁶. The BBC reported: “With time running out, desperate ministers and their advisers huddled in the corner of the [conference] hall to work out a compromise. After an hour, they agreed to change “commitments” to “contributions” in the text outlining the expectation of *all* parties in the 2015 agreement¹⁸⁰.

Sentiment

An AOSIS spokesperson expressed satisfaction with the establishment of the Warsaw international mechanism on loss and damage, but lamented that there remained a “catastrophic ambition gap”¹⁷².

Action Aid’s Harjeet Singh remarked on the mechanisms little progress on the COP18 pledge to address loss and damage: “it is the barest minimum that was supposed to be achieved at Warsaw on loss and damage anyway. A few rich countries including the US held it hostage till the very end”¹⁸⁰.

There was dismay among NGOs attending the Conference that Parties were unable to upshift ambition on timelines for negotiating a legally binding global climate treaty, which

¹⁷⁴ Webster, B. The Times. 2013. *Climate deal in doubt after US and China fail to set date*.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/climate-deal-in-doubt-after-us-and-china-fail-to-set-date-frtchl5ls8m>

¹⁷⁵ UNFCCC. 2013. *Warsaw Outcomes*. <https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/the-big-picture/milestones/outcomes-of-the-warsaw-conference>

¹⁷⁶ Harvey, F. The Guardian. *Warsaw climate talks set 2015 target for plans to curb emissions*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/24/warsaw-climate-talks-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

was set for 2015. Inter Press Service reported on “hundreds of representatives from various NGOs walk[ing] out of the negotiating rooms”, “donning white t-shirts with the slogan: “polluters talk, we walk”” and including protestors from Oxfam International, Greenpeace International, ActionAid International, and the International Trade Union Confederation¹⁷⁷.

The German environment minister, Peter Altmaier, was disappointed by the lack of breakthroughs at Warsaw and pointed the finger at China and the US: “China and the US will have to take a position at some point. Both President Obama and the new Chinese leadership have said they will prioritise climate protection but that has to become visible in practice”¹⁷⁸.

Martin Kaiser of Greenpeace Germany remarked: “Warsaw was a waste of energy”¹⁷⁸.

Fiona Harvey’s commentary on the summit: “Weary delegates trudging home from an exhausting and sleep-deprived fortnight of climate change talks in Warsaw may be unwilling to acknowledge it, but the hard work is just beginning. Like schoolchildren after a packed day of lessons, they have been sent back to their national capital to “do their homework””¹⁷⁹.

Achim Steiner, executive director of UNEP: “If delegates leave here [Warsaw] with a sense of how much is left to do, then maybe that will focus efforts in the coming 12 months, because without that sense we have all reason to be very concerned”¹⁷⁹.

On the differentiation between developing and developed countries, Todd Stern. – US special envoy for climate change - said this was “now the major Faultline at the talks {...} and poses the biggest challenge to the negotiations over the next two years”¹⁷⁹. India, looking to minimise their commitments, left the Warsaw talks under the impression “the firewall [differentiation between developed and developing countries] exists and will continue to exist”, according to the Indian environment minister, Jayanthi Natarajan¹⁷⁹. This would please the “like-minded developing countries” in favour of limited commitments as more recent industrialising economies without legacy climate debts, but would make the chance of the Umbrella group, including the US, signing the deal unlikely.

Connie Hedegaard, EU Climate Commissioner and prominent negotiator at this many previous summits: “it is extremely challenging, but we got the process [for the Paris 2015 agreement] on track. There are more beautiful and faster ways to Paris but what is important here is that we get there and get a good outcome, I think that is doable after what I have seen here”¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷⁷ Inter Press Service. 2013. *Storm Brews at U.N. Climate Talks*. <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/11/storm-brews-at-u-n-climate-talks/>

¹⁷⁸ Le Blond, J. The Guardian. 2013. *US and China must act on climate change rhetoric, says German minister*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/25/us-china-climate-change-rhetoric-peter-altmaier>

¹⁷⁹ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2013. *As the Warsaw climate talks end, the hard work is just beginning*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/25/warsaw-climate-talks-end-cop19-2015>

¹⁸⁰ McGrath, M. BBC News. *Last-minute deal saves fractious UN climate talks*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-25067180>

COP20, 2014: Lima, Peru

President: Mr. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal.

Parties (states) attending: 186; Observer states: 2¹⁸¹.

Backdrop

The President of COP20 and Peru's environment minister, Mr Pulgar-Vidal, was keen to ramp up the pace of progress when Parties convened in the Peruvian capital. In early 2014, months before the summit, the President lamented slow progress at the Warsaw talks (COP19) and told the Guardian "If what we want by Paris 2015 is a new binding global climactic agreement, then what we need to produce in Lima is a solid working draft"¹⁸². As the third COP under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform, Mr Pulgar-Vidal's call for a working draft at Lima – only a year before the Paris COP – was to ensure sufficient preparatory work was complete to lay the foundations for a fruitful round of negotiations in Paris, where Parties had agreed to negotiate – for the first time since 1997 – a legally binding treaty¹⁸³.

Negotiations

With Paris looming, Parties were quick to dive into the language of any draft text for a legally binding agreement¹⁸⁴. Varying opinions on the direction of commitments were expressed: Tuvalu – for the LDCs – said the long-term mitigation goal should be to limit global warming to below 1.5C, while the EU called for explicit reference to 2C instead. New Zealand favoured quantifying emissions and suggested "net zero CO2 emissions by 2100", which was in line with the latest science¹⁸⁵.

Returning to the age-old debate, India, Argentina, Venezuela, Jordan, Cuba, and Bolivia called for a draft agreement to reference 'common but differentiated responsibilities', which was opposed immediately by Japan, New Zealand, the US, Australia, Switzerland, and Canada¹⁸⁵. Bolivia took a hard-line position on this, calling for commitments to be based on an indexed global carbon budget divided among all parties according to historical responsibility, ecological footprinting, state of developing and capabilities¹⁸⁵. The EU took a more middle ground position, suggesting the text should reflect that all parties will eventually take quantified emission reduction measures regardless of being developed or developing¹⁸⁵.

In an unusual development for COPs, China and the US's recent meeting of their presidents in Beijing helped raise ambition at COP20. President Obama and President Xi had agreed the US-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change the month prior to COP20, which signalled the US emission reduction target of 26-28% by 2025 and China's emission target

¹⁸¹ UNFCCC. 2014. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Twentieth Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/cop20/eng/10.pdf>

¹⁸² Collins, D. The Guardian. 2014. *Lima talks should deliver first draft for 2015 climate deal, says Peru minister.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/31/climate-talks-paris-2015-carbon-emissions-amazon>

¹⁸³ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2014. *Lima Climate Change Conference: Curtain Raiser.* International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/climate/cop20/enb/>

¹⁸⁴ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2014. *Report of the main proceedings for 3 December 2014.*

<https://enb.iisd.org/events/lima-climate-change-conference-december-2014/report-main-proceedings-3-december-2014>

¹⁸⁵ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2014. *Report of the main proceedings for 4 December 2014.*

<https://enb.iisd.org/events/lima-climate-change-conference-december-2014/report-main-proceedings-4-december-2014>

of peak emissions early in 2030¹⁸⁶. The presidents had also agreed to establish the US-China Climate Change Working Group to encourage dissemination of innovative technical solutions to climate change, while also agreeing to work together to phase down those HFCs that – while unharmed to the ozone – are very potent GHGs¹⁸⁶. The agreement even included encouraging bilateral trade between the nations on green goods¹⁸⁶. PwC's Director of Climate Policy, Jonathan Grant, reported from COP20 that this "US-China climate deal is a big deal. It has really opened up the debate about what all countries might do to reduce their emissions"¹⁸⁷. This was clearly key if those countries historically hesitant to pledge emission cuts, such as India and the Umbrella Group, would now be keener to make pledges now that China was playing a greater role in the global action against climate change. Grant added, however, that "this has not really changed the dynamic much inside the negotiation hall, where governments are not making much progress"¹⁸⁷.

With reforestation and REDD+ a growing theme in the last couple of COPs, COP20 did see progress among some Parties on reforestation. Peru, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, and Costa Rica pledged to restore an area of forest twice the size of Britain by 2020¹⁸⁸.

Parties continued to work through difficult negotiations over the draft text, in particular struggling to build consensus behind the legal aspects of any future Paris deal. Ed Davey, UK energy/climate change secretary, revealed there could be a 'hybrid' deal, in which "some things are legally binding and some things aren't"¹⁸⁹, despite COP18 asserting the 2015 deal would be truly global. Julie Bishop, Australia's foreign minister, faced criticism when she insisted any targets set out in 2015 would have to be legally binding, or else the deal would "amount to nothing more than aspirations"¹⁹⁰. Observers indicated this was an impossible demand given the lack of progress on the draft text, especially as the US has traditionally avoided legally binding global agreements¹⁹⁰.

24 hours before the close of the Conference, parties had only agreed on one single paragraph of text, far shy of the goal set out a few days earlier to prepare a full working draft of a global agreement¹⁹¹. Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists declared "we are going backwards"¹⁹¹. The paragraph agreed upon only sets out that countries will intensify engagement in the years up to 2020, something uncontroversial to begin with¹⁹¹.

US Secretary of State, John Kerry, warned of "massive collective moral failure of historic consequence" if the world would not act sufficiently quickly. He also attacked "the paucity of

¹⁸⁶ The White House. 2014. *US-China Joint Announcement on Climate Change [archived]*. The Obama White House Archives. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/11/11/us-china-joint-announcement-climate-change#>

¹⁸⁷ Grant, Jonathan. 2014. *First impressions of COP20*. PwC UK blogs. <https://pwc.blogs.com/sustainability/2014/12/first-impressions-of-cop20.html>

¹⁸⁸ Vidal, J. The Guardian. 2014. *Lima climate talks: pledge to plant 20m hectares of trees*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/08/lima-climate-talks-pledge-to-plant-20m-hectares-of-trees>

¹⁸⁹ Webster, B. The Times. 2014 *Climate targets send energy bills soaring*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/climate-targets-send-energy-bills-soaring-6bwj5vrnkj7>

¹⁹⁰ Taylor, L. The Guardian. 2014 *Australia still 'constructive' in climate talks, despite Julie Bishop rhetoric*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/11/australia-still-constructive-in-climate-talks-despite-julie-bishops-rhetoric>

¹⁹¹ Goldenberg, S. The Guardian. 2014 *Lima climate talks agree on just one paragraph of deal with 24 hours left*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/11/lima-climate-talks-fail-agreement-single-paragraph-deal>

the few, usually industry paid-for, false analyses” used to downplay the need for rapid decarbonisation efforts¹⁹².

In typical COP fashion, talks were soon overrunning the allotted fortnight allocated to the talks. Despite the impression of US-China cohesion from their bilateral climate agreement, negotiations stalled in a grand fashion with these two nations at the heart of a disagreement. China claimed the draft text put too much of a burden on poor nations to limit GHG emissions, described by China’s deputy foreign minister, Liu Zhenmin, as “we need a Lima consensus, but given the current situation we have a deadlock”¹⁹³. Meanwhile, US climate envoy Todd Stern urged parties to accept the text as was, saying failure to agree a draft would be viewed as a “major breakdown” threatening the success of COP21 in Paris¹⁹³.

Finally, the deal was signed after a tense 40 hours of negotiations overrunning by two days, which saw a compromise in the draft text allowing for countries to not pledge emission reduction targets, despite this being the principal aim of the 2015 deal¹⁹⁴.

Key Agreements

Parties agreed the ‘Lima Call for Climate Action’. Within this, the EU and the US successfully included language requiring clear and precise targets to be set out by countries at Paris the following year (NDCs)¹⁹⁵. The text did, however, also concede “common but differentiated responsibilities”, which appeased concerns from developing countries over the burden of emission reductions in parallel with developed nations¹⁹⁶. For the US and many of the Umbrella group, this had been opposed in negotiations given many found the developed/developing grouping arbitrary when considering China and India’s rapid industrialisation, so the final text was a compromise, including also reference to targets “in light of different national circumstances”, which matched well the overall rhetoric for welcoming intended NDCs in time for Paris¹⁹⁵.

Little else was achieved at COP20, bar the reforestation agreement signed by those 8 Latin American countries early in the Conference.

Sentiment

Midway through the second week of the Conference, thousands of activists protested in Lima, pressing not only for climate action but also “for fairness, as well as protection for environmental activists who face daily harassment from powerful corporate interests”¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹² Webster, B. The Times. 2014 *John Kerry warns of catastrophe if climate change is not tackled*.
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/john-kerry-warns-of-catastrophe-if-climate-change-is-not-tackled-s5rzt0sv5mg>

¹⁹³ The Times. 2014. *Lima climate talks on the brink of collapse as rich clash with poor*.
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/lima-climate-talks-on-the-brink-of-collapse-as-rich-clash-with-poor-nbwb86x3xkm>

¹⁹⁴ Webster, B. The Times. 2014. *Last minute deal on UN climate change scorned as half baked*.
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/last-minute-deal-on-un-climate-change-scorned-as-half-baked-f3pk9q9srvs>

¹⁹⁵ Goldenberg, S. The Guardian. 2014. *Lima climate change talks end in agreement – but who won?*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/14/lima-climate-change-talks-who-won>

¹⁹⁶ UNFCCC. 2014. *Lima call for climate action*.
https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/lima_dec_2014/application/pdf/auv_cop20_lima_call_for_climate_action.pdf

¹⁹⁷ Goldenberg, S. The Guardian. 2014. *Thousands of marchers demand just solution at UN climate talks*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/10/thousands-marchers-demand-just-solution-un-climate-talks-lima>

Michael Jacobs, Gordon Brown's climate change adviser when at no10: "There aren't two kinds of countries anymore and that's good"¹⁹⁵.

A Guardian editorial coined the US-China joint declaration a "recognition of their [US/China] role in making the Paris negotiations a success". The same editorial discussed how "the biggest, most difficult and ultimately most important challenge is devising an acceptable, transparent route to measuring emissions, in order to facilitate some kind of global monitoring of targets. And that remains a work in progress"¹⁹⁸.

Connie Hedegaard, the outgoing EU climate chief, on how countries needed to up ambition for Paris: "Say Paris could not deliver. How would believe the UN process would have credibility after that?". She added that scrutiny of NDCs would be vital, and applauded China's declaration of peak emissions by 2030: "I remember when [asking] the Chinese when their emissions would peak destroyed the good atmosphere in the room. I hope it will make India [and others] reconsider their strategy, and I see signs that the new Modi government is doing exactly this"¹⁹⁹.

Asad Rehman of Friends of the Earth: "Once again poorer nations have been bullied by the industrialised world into accepting an outcome which leaves many of their citizens facing the grim prospect of catastrophic climate change"¹⁹⁴.

Rising energy bills in Europe made some of the discourse surrounding climate change more challenging, leading to France and Germany calling for reduced regulatory pressure on cleaning up vehicle emissions. In the UK, climate sceptic Lord Lawson took a hardline response: "The UK's unilateral Climate Change Act is enforcing British industry and British households to suffer an excessively high cost of electricity to no purpose. Following Lima, it is clearer than ever that the Act should be suspended until such time as a binding global agreement has been secured"¹⁹⁴.

Incoming COP21 President, minister Laurent Fabius, congratulated the COP20 President for "setting an example of a great COP president with ambition, a listening ear and a spirit of compromise" and for "putting to rest the haunting ghost of Copenhagen [COP15]"²⁰⁰.

The US called for countries submit their intended NDCs "well before Paris" in a clear, transparent, and understandable manner, which had been a theme backed by the EU and the US throughout Lima²⁰⁰. Malaysia, on behalf of LMDCs, remarked "we worked hard to recapture a lost balance in the text", saying also that the transparent and inclusive multilateral process of negotiations had been "restored"²⁰⁰.

The closing plenary of the Conference heard from Indigenous Peoples, Women and Gender, and Youth calling for the Paris agreement to be fully respectful of indigenous rights, human rights, gender equality, and intergenerational equity²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁸ The Guardian. 2014. *The Guardian view on the Lima climate change conference: a skirmish before the real battle*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/14/guardian-view-lima-climate-change-conference-cop-20-skirmish1>

¹⁹⁹ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2014. *Connie Hedegaard: credibility of UN climate process hangs on Paris talks*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/28/connie-hedegaard-credibility-un-climate-process-2015-paris-talks>

²⁰⁰ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2014. *Summary Report of the Conference of the Parties: COP20*. <https://enb.iisd.org/events/lima-climate-change-conference-december-2014/summary-report-1-14-december-2014>

Ed Davey: "I am not going to say it will be a walk in the park in Paris. That's when the real deal has to be done"²⁰¹.

Sam Smith of WWF: "The text went from weak to weaker weakest and it's very weak indeed"²⁰¹.

²⁰¹ BBC News. 2014. *UN members agree deal at Lima climate talks*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-30468048>

COP21, 2015: Paris, France

President: Mr. Laurent Fabius.

Parties (states) attending: 196; Observer states: 2²⁰².

Backdrop

Momentous in the history of multilateral action on climate change, expectations were high going into the much anticipated and long prepared for climate summit, COP21. Parties were tasked with coming up with a legally binding agreement for global emission reduction, as close to the science as possible and sufficiently traversing the many hurdles of differentiated responsibility, scrutiny of targets, and climate finance - among others.

The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, opened the Conference, telling Parties they must act now: “On an increasingly crowded planet, humanity faces many threats, but none is greater than climate change. It magnifies every hazard and tension of our existence {...} your deliberations over the next two weeks will decide the fate not only of those alive today but also of generations as yet unborn {...} the whole of nature cries out at our mistreatment of her {...} In damaging our climate we become the architects of our own destruction {...} the absurd thing is we know exactly what needs to be done”²⁰³.

Negotiations

With the Conference having just started, PM David Cameron was in attendance and told delegates: “Instead of making excuses tomorrow to our children and grandchildren, we should be taking action against climate change today {...} [climate action] is doable and therefore we should come together and do it”²⁰⁴.

Parties focused on reforestation efforts in early stages of negotiations, building off the back of the New York declaration on deforestation signed the previous year outside of COPs, which pledged to halt the loss of natural forests by 2030 and was signed by countries, businesses, charities, and indigenous groups²⁰⁵. Prince Charles built on such progress by making an early call at COP21 for protecting forests and promoting REDD+, which would be a key part of a global climate deal at a time when 12 million hectares of forest are destroyed annually²⁰⁶.

Obama, alluding to the recent Paris terrorist attacks described the Conference as “an act of defiance {...} one of the enemies we will be fighting at this conference is cynicism – the notion that we can’t do anything about climate change”²⁰⁶. With the pressure of negotiating a momentous deal, however, diplomatic relations were strained. Vladimir Putin and Obama were reported to have “barely made eye contact on meeting” and it was also reported that

²⁰² UNFCCC. 2015. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Twenty-First Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10.pdf>

²⁰³ Vaughan, A. The Guardian. 2015. *Prince Charles opens Paris climate talks and calls on world leaders to act now.* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/nov/30/prince-charles-opens-paris-climate-talks-calls-on-world-leaders-to-act-now>

²⁰⁴ BBC News. 2015. *COP21: Climate change action is doable, says Cameron.* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34964130>

²⁰⁵ The Guardian. 2014. *UN climate summit pledges to halt the loss of natural forests by 2030.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/23/un-climate-summit-pledge-forests-new-york-declaration>

²⁰⁶ The Guardian. 2014. *Paris climate talks: Prince Charles to call for forest protection.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/01/paris-climate-talks-prince-charles-to-call-for-forest-protection>

the Indian president Narendra Modi made clear to Obama in a private meeting that developed countries should bear more responsibility, which he echoed in public: “Climate change is not of our making. It is the result of global warming that came from an industrial age powered by fossil fuel [when developed nations were industrialising]”²⁰⁶.

An evolution of the diplomatic ‘huddles’ seen at recent COPs was the theme of small ad hoc groups – coined ‘informal informals’ – where negotiators were meeting outside of main plenary sessions to break through impasses as they arose²⁰⁷. The small huddles came about from a “massive diplomatic effort [from the French]” who are “acutely aware of the risk that any agreement will be foiled not by a lack of political will to forge a deal, but by bogged down in the unwieldy details of the text” as reported by Harvey at the Conference²⁰⁷.

On only the 3rd day of the Conference, COP21 president Laurent Fabius became concerned about the slow pace of negotiations, already getting bogged down in details surrounding large swathes of draft text. He warned: “my message is clear” we must accelerate the process because there is still a lot of work to do”, giving delegates an interim deadline of the end of the first week for having a draft text ready to drill down into²⁰⁸. This was – in the end – a crucial step for success, as observers were surprised that delegates managed to produce a draft text by the Conference’s first Saturday, having narrowed down the text from 50 to 20 pages²⁰⁹. Though with many remaining uncertainties, China’s chief climate negotiator, Su Wei, commented “it has laid a solid foundation for next week {...} political will is there from all parties”²⁰⁹. Martin Kaiser of Greenpeace compared Paris to Copenhagen: “At this point in Copenhagen we were dealing with a 300-page text and a pervasive sense of despair. In Paris we’re down to a slim 21 pages and the atmosphere remains constructive”²⁰⁹.

On the 4th day of the Conference, the EU, the AILAC, and the US made clear that intended NDCs were implying self-differentiation, as it became clear some developing nations – including India – were calling for language on differentiated responsibilities and the removal of “in light of different national circumstances”²¹⁰. Many developed countries maintained that the intended NDCs were sufficient in terms of differentiation and so would not require language surrounding differentiated responsibilities.

On the legally binding nature of the agreement came various views and compromises. The EU, the AILAC, and the AOSIS “strongly pushed for mandatory and quantified national mitigations policies, and a legal obligation to communicate them internationally upon ratification”²¹¹. The US “tried to appear constructive and avoided strongly worded opposition statements. In private bilateral consultations, however, they were so adamant against legally binding mitigation and finance that leading diplomats stated with complete certainty: “If we insist on legally binding, the deal will not be global because we will lose the US” (top EU

²⁰⁷ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2015. *Backchannel climate meetings in Paris could decide the fate of the world*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/02/cop21-the-back-channel-climate-meetings-that-could-decide-the-fate-of-the-world>

²⁰⁸ The Guardian. 2015 *French foreign minister tells Paris climate summit negotiators to pick up the pace*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/02/french-foreign-minister-tells-paris-climate-summit-negotiators-to-pick-up-the-pace>

²⁰⁹ Taylor, L. and Goldenberg, S. The Guardian. 2015. *Paris climate change talks yield first draft amid air of optimism*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/05/paris-climate-change-talks-draft-french-summit>

²¹⁰ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2015. *Summary of the Conference: COP21*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/events/paris-climate-change-conference-november-2015/summary-report-29-november-13-december-2015>

²¹¹ Dimitrov, R. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 2016. *The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Behind Closed Doors*. <https://direct.mit.edu/glep/article/16/3/1/14984/The-Paris-Agreement-on-Climate-Change-Behind>

official).²¹¹ This was perhaps a frustrated response to China's stance on limiting transparency, an anonymous high-level official said in internal meetings: "China is maximalist on legally binding and minimalist on transparency" – from which a compromise came to include the language of "facilitative, non-intrusive, non-punitive"^{211,212}. Eventually, sufficient compromises were made for the final agreement to be deemed to have legal backing, though "literally in the last minutes before the final session that adopted the agreement on 12/12/15, the US demanded a single word change: Developed countries 'should' rather than 'shall' undertake economy-wide quantified emission reductions {...} the EU and G77 reluctantly accepted"²¹¹.

The enforce the credibility of the bottom-up approach of differentiation via NDCs welcomed at the Paris COP, Parties had to tackle the question of setting the global target under which these NDCs would sit and necessarily contribute to. The AOSIS called for global net zero by 2060-80; the EU proposed 80-95% emission reductions by 2050; India, China, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia (the 'Like-Minded Developing Countries') opposed quantifying emission reductions and the US called for the text to say vaguely "decarbonisation this century"²¹¹. 106 states, mainly developing, called for the text to explicitly target 1.5C of warming, rather than the less ambitious 2C in previous COP agreements and still proposed by the EU and the US²¹¹. Australia was reported to act as a "broker" in these negotiations, successfully building trust with both the countries in favour of the 1.5C target and those claiming a move from 2C would be a red line. Greg Hunt, an Australian minister in attendance told journalists "some of the larger countries under no circumstances would accept 1.5 degrees as a goal {...}, so we are trying to be constructive by providing a pathway but [1.5 degrees] clearly won't end up as a formal goal of the text because then it will be vetoed by others."²¹³ The private sector got behind the 1.5C target with Richard Branson's B Team group of chief executives, including those of M&S, L'Oreal, Virgin, and Unilever, calling for greater ambition – "we believe the business case for net zero in 2050 is irrefutable", Jochen Zeitz, co-founder of B Team and former CEO of Puma²¹⁴. Hunt's anticipated negotiation outcome proved true, with the eventual compromise being an explicit 2C target attached to the language citing countries will exert efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5C²¹⁵.

Accelerating negotiation progress at COP21, the French presidency innovated second-week working groups to hammer through negotiations on the final sticking points. This included the UK's Amber Rudd's appointment to lead the special working group on understanding how countries will meet their longstanding goals on emissions and finance up to 2020. One official spoke of how "the French have started moving at breakneck speed" and negotiators were asked to work Sunday, typically a day off at previous COPs²¹⁶. As negotiators quarrelled over regular reviews of country's target-keeping and the level of legal backing in the agreement, those opposed were seeking concessions on additional financing pledges. Such 'backroom talks' became even more important: The Guardian's Lenore Taylor reported a couple of days from the end of the summit that "French diplomacy is fighting 23 years of entrenched positions", with the French strategy of ad hoc small working groups being

²¹² The Times. 2015. *A climate deal must work in our interests this time*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-climate-deal-must-work-in-our-interests-this-time-3dcfxh93q>

²¹³ Taylor, L. The Guardian. 2015. *Australia acting as a 'broker' between blocs at Paris climate talks – Greg Hunt*. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/dec/03/australia-acting-as-a-broker-between-blocs-at-paris-climate-talks-greg-hunt>

²¹⁴ Goldenberg, S. The Guardian. 2015. *Coalition of business leaders challenges 2C climate change target*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/06/paris-climate-change-summit-richard-branson>

²¹⁵ UN. 2015. *The Paris Agreement*. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement>

²¹⁶ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2015. *France moves a 'breakneck speed' to get Paris deal done by end of week*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/07/france-moves-breakneck-speed-paris-deal-done>

pushed to keep up momentum – to the dismay of “some recalcitrant countries” including Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Malaysia²¹⁷.

In a final bid to secure global support for the Paris agreement, the US pledged to double aid to \$861m for those countries vulnerable to climate change. Secretary of State, John Kerry: “We need to get the job done. This moment demands we do not leave Paris without a durable ambitious climate agreement”²¹⁸. This was followed by Obama “work[ing] the phones from Washington, calling the leaders of India and Brazil” to bring them onside with the extra aid²¹⁸. India, Brazil, and others were holding off agreeing to the Paris Agreement amidst the climate finance controversy – an OECD report claimed rich countries were two-thirds of the way towards the \$100bn goal despite many countries’ dismissal of this claim²¹⁸. The environment ministers of China, India, Brazil, and South Africa held a press conference on the issue of climate finance and other remaining hurdles, “which attracted so many journalists it almost turned into a riot” and heard China’s lead negotiator Xie Zhenhua declare “We do not see the money [claimed in the OECD study]”²¹⁹. The surprisingly united front of the four huge economies also revealed they were looking for finance methodology improvements if they were to back the deal – Brazilian environment minister, Izabella Teixeira: “If I measure deforestation in Brazil, I cannot use data provided by a third party. The same should apply to financing!”²¹⁹. With less than 24 hours left of the Conference, this issue was yet to be settled, resulting in “a very tense debate among the ministers of rich countries rag[ing] behind closed doors. Several Northern countries opposed making financial commitments, and even suggested reversing previous pledges on climate finance”²¹¹. It was also reported “some European diplomats fought and argued: “any change in our position on finance [committing to \$100bn a year] will have seismic effects on the negotiations and will wreck the entire deal. What happens in Paris will be in the history books for a long time. Let’s not give any historian a reason to write that we ruined the global response to climate change”²¹¹. Finally, a compromise was achieved – greater transparency and reporting on climate finance, and the agreement to establish a new goal for climate finance from 2020 “from a floor of \$100bn per year”, which was all conceded in return for the ‘like-minded’ nations’ acceptance of legal backing, language around 1.5C, and ambition for decarbonisation across the next few decades²¹¹.

Key Agreements

196 countries signed the Paris Agreement, the first legally binding international treaty on climate change since 1997, on the 12th of December 2015²²⁰. It eventually came into force on 4th of November 2016, ratified by 189 countries representing 96.98% of global emissions²²¹. This compares to only 37 states legally bound to the Kyoto Protocol in operation.

²¹⁷ Taylor, L. The Guardian. 2015. *French negotiators furiously work the backrooms to secure a climate deal*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/09/french-negotiators-furiously-work-back-rooms-secure-climate-deal>

²¹⁸ Goldenberg, S. The Guardian. 2015. *Paris talks: US pledges to double aid to climate-hit countries*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/09/paris-talks-us-pledges-to-double-aid-to-climate-hit-countries>

²¹⁹ Robert, A. EURACTIV. 2015. *How the emerging economies are stealing the show at COP21*. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/development-policy/news/how-the-emerging-economies-are-stealing-the-show-at-cop21/>

²²⁰ UNFCCC. 2015. *The Paris Agreement*. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

²²¹ France Diplomacy Gov website. 2015. *COP21: The key points of the Paris Agreement*. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/climate-and-environment/the-fight-against-climate-change/2015-paris-climate-conference-cop21/cop21-the-paris-agreement-in-four-key-points/>

The agreement set out to limit global warming to “well below” 2C with countries committing to exert effort to limit to 1.5C²²⁰. In doing so, the Paris Agreement calls on signatories to declare their NDCs in line with the aim “to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible”²²⁰. Despite efforts from Brazil, China, South Africa, and others to water down the long-term ambition of the summit, the “Ambition Coalition”²²² (over 100 countries, including the EU, the US, and by the end of the Conference: Australia) was successful in tough final negotiations in maintaining the overall goal of the Agreement: to achieve “a climate neutral world by mid-century”²²⁰.

Further, Parties agreed to put in place “appropriate financial flows”, including pledging to agree on climate finance post-202 with \$100bn a year as an absolute minimum²²³. Developed nations conceded finance transparency amidst the climate aid controversy that was notable at COP21, committing to reporting every other year on finance provisions and committing to follow new methodologies to prevent ‘double-counting’.²²⁴

Parties agreed to share information to facilitate a “transparency system and global stock-take” to encourage discipline of NDCs and to keep track of the world’s progress on meeting the long-term climate goals set out in the Agreement²²³. In this vein, the Agreement also noted the Conference saw “188 countries contribute climate action plans to the new agreement”, which were widely encouraged by the French presidency and were agreed to be the “firm floor and foundation for higher ambition” in future action plans submitted, alongside those NDCs agreed to be submitted every 5 years²²³.

The UNFCCC press release for the Paris Agreement described: “The minister [COP21 President, Laurent Fabius – the French foreign minister], his emotion showing as delegates started to rise to their feet, brought the final gavel down on the agreement to open a sustained acclamation across the plenary hall”²²³. The French president applauded efforts, telling delegates: “You’ve done it, reached an ambitious agreement, a binding agreement, a universal agreement. Never will I be able to express more gratitude to a conference. You can be proud to stand before your children and grandchildren”²²³.

Sentiment

French President, Francois Hollande, hailed the outcome “the first universal agreement on climate” with the COP21 President declared it a “historic turning point”²²⁵. For Hollande, hosting COP21 was a huge part of his presidency – climate advisor, Pierre Rodanne, said “Hollande realised [in the run up to COP21] that his place among the greats of this world depended on the climate question”²²⁶.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon: “This is a resounding success for multilateralism”²²³.

²²² Taylor, L. The Guardian. 2015. *Australia belatedly joins ‘coalition of ambition’ at Paris climate talks*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/12/australia-belatedly-joins-coalition-of-ambition-at-paris-climate-talks>

²²³ UNFCCC. 2015. *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change*. https://unfccc.int/files/press/press_releases_advisories/application/pdf/pr20151112_cop21_final.pdf

²²⁴ Thwaites, J. et al. 2015. *What Does the Paris Agreement Do for Finance?* World Resources Institute. <https://www.wri.org/insights/what-does-paris-agreement-do-finance>

²²⁵ The Sunday Times. 2015. *A climate deal must work in our interests this time*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-climate-deal-must-work-in-our-interests-this-time-3dcfxh93q>

²²⁶ Marlowe, L. The Irish Times. *Clinching Paris COP21 deal: How the French did it*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/clinching-paris-cop21-deal-how-the-french-did-it-1.2464882>

US Secretary of State John Kerry: “This is a tremendous victory for all of our citizens... it is a victory for all of the planet and for future generations”²²⁷.

China’s chief climate negotiator, Xie Zhenhua: the agreement is “a milestone in the global efforts to respond to climate change {...} [with] some areas in need of improvement”²²⁷.

Malaysian delegate and head of the ‘like minded’ grouping of developing countries, Gurdial Nihar: “very happy {...} it is like going to a good restaurant. You may not like all the dishes but in the end it leaves a nice taste in your mouth”²²⁷.

Nur Masripatin, Indonesia’s chief negotiator: “It’s very weak. The deal is not fair... but we don’t have more time, we have to agree on what we have now”²²⁷.

Paul Polman, CEO Unilever: “an unequivocal signal to the business and financial communities {...} The billions of dollars pledged by developed countries will be matched with the trillions of dollars that will flow to low-carbon investment”²²⁷.

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive of the UK campaign of Friends of the Earth: “this climate deal falls far short of the soaring rhetoric from world leaders less than two weeks ago {...} we still don’t have an adequate global plan [referencing the NDC approach and the outlining of future steps to improve these and associated national plans] to make this a reality”²²⁷.

France’s diplomatic community was widely praised as a key to the success of the Paris talks. The Irish Times reported that “Ambassadors were instructed to wine and dine contacts to impress upon them French seriousness of purpose. Fabius [COP21 President] asked for monthly reports on climate policy and opinion in the countries where they are posted”²²⁶. This was months before the Conference convened Parties from around the world, allowing trust to be built. Pierre Radanne, climate adviser, recalled: “There was a huge risk that France, which has a high opinion of herself and of her place in history, would sin by arrogance. France had to be very present, very active, and very humble... They refrained from saying, ‘We’re an old nation. We’ll tell you what to do’”²²⁶. Fabius also made efforts to build rapport on COP21 with negotiators well ahead of the summit, inviting ministers to three Paris summits ahead of COP21²²⁶. Simon Roger, a reporter covering these summits reported: “[the French presidency] saw who they could rely on as ‘facilitators’ in the negotiations. It was important that the French not do everything themselves”²²⁶. Rachel Kyte, the World Bank’s climate envoy to COP21 praised the leadership of the French diplomatic community in leading relationship building well ahead of the summit: “what you have to understand is that at the end of the day, these people know each other very well. This is an eco-system. Climate negotiators spend more time with each other than they do with their families. Knowing each other and trusting each other is very important to being able to carve out a deal”, so when it came to the summit itself, Kyte recalled the “transparency” and “inclusiveness” of the French leadership, which helped maintain trust and progress throughout²²⁶.

This was described by Dimitrov (EU delegate at COP21)²¹¹ as the Paris outcome “made possible by the heavy use of secrecy {...} secrecy is common in diplomacy, but the French finessed it to a new level – and with compelling efficacy.” This sounds contradictory with transparency and inclusiveness, but Dimitrov assesses these as compatible and – in fact – complementary: “what was different this time was the combination between secrecy and legitimacy: the French Presidency made genuine efforts to accommodate everyone’s central interests through reciprocal trade-offs {...} major countries such as Brazil, the EU, or key island states, confided that they did not know all the breakthroughs that were reached in

²²⁷ Clark, P. and Stothard, M. Financial Times. 2015. *COP21: Paris agreement formally adopted*. <https://www.ft.com/content/8677562c-a0c0-11e5-8d70-42b68cfae6e4>

private {...} the crucial last two days of COP21 were dedicated entirely to private consultations, without any official negotiating process”²²⁶. Dimitrov even reveals the anecdote: “I participated in a small “invisible” meeting regarding a secret deal between the US and Saudi Arabia. The meeting took place in a small room of 5 by 5 meters, among only 10 individuals. My delegation was asked to accept or reject the bilateral deal, without rights to negotiate or modify. No record was kept, there was no paper copy of the legal text in question that was only displayed on a small screen, and we were explicitly told not to take photos. We endorsed the deal, and so did other ‘key players.’ Yet, when the French Presidency distributed the next draft of the agreement, it did not reflect the closed deal. In fact, the official draft contained text that was exactly the opposite from what was agreed privately! The value of secrecy was in reducing the number of actors, widely recognized as an obstacle in negotiations (Victor 2011). COP21 President Laurent Fabius and his team sought to secure deals only among the key actors on each contentious issue. In a crucial part of the strategy, they kept many delegations in the dark about trade offs and compromises already made, until the last hours when they released the final text - and then presented everyone with a fait accompli. Pieces of privately negotiated text were thrown into the final text on the last day, when it would be too late to oppose without appearing to spoil the deal. We were explicitly and repeatedly told that the final text is a “take-it-or-leave it” deal that was not open to renegotiation. The overall purpose of these tactics was to avoid provoking early opposition and to leave no time for reopening major issues. This raises important questions about transparency and legitimacy in global governance (Bernstein 2004). Secretive tactics potentially undermine the effectiveness of policy agreements if they leave governments discontent, and therefore less committed to implement. The reason why this approach worked in Paris was its productiveness: it delivered results and produced an agreement based on mutual compromise. The organizational approach did not trigger the public accusations of unfairness and exclusion that helped wreck Copenhagen in 2009. In the closing session that adopted the PA, most delegations declared the process as fair, inclusive, and transparent.”²²⁶

Amber Rudd, UK Energy Secretary: “I think this is the right balance, but it is a compromise. It is nevertheless a historic moment.” Rudd also referenced one compromise was to lessen the rigidity of the global agreement, avoiding the mistakes made in Kyoto in 1997²²⁸.

David Cameron, UK pm: deal is “a huge step forward in securing the future of the planet”.

The Stockholm Environment Institute’s Richard Klein: “Skilful French diplomacy is widely seen as one of the key factors that led to the adoption of the Paris agreement on climate change. {...} For every single issue that required agreement, options were laid out and trade-offs were considered. The French held countless bilateral meetings aimed at understanding key priorities and red lines of other countries and, in the process, building trust.”²²⁹

Elon Musk called for a carbon tax, arguing at a Paris fringe event with Sorbonne University that “If countries agree to a carbon tax and it’s real and it’s not super watered-down and weak, we could see a transition that has a 15- 20-year time frame as opposed to a 40- or 50-year time frame”. He added “for developing economies they could leapfrog the fossil fuel situation with power lines, you could have remote villages with solar panels and a battery pack, just like mobile phones, a lot of countries just didn’t do the landlines, they skipped right

²²⁸ BBC News. 2015. *COP21: UK ‘will deliver’ on climate change, says Amber Rudd.*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35087059>

²²⁹ Klein, R. Stockholm Environment Institute. 2020. *The Paris Agreement and the future of climate negotiations.* <https://www.sei.org/perspectives/paris-agreement-and-future-of-climate-negotiations/>

over landlines”²³⁰. This reflects the frustration growing among technologists and economists over solutions existing, but dramatically underrepresented or promoted at international climate summits. Australia’s Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, did countenance the value of innovation tackling climate change, promising to double Australia’s spending on clean energy research and development to \$200m in the second week of the Conference.

Media coverage of COP21 was huge relative to all those COPs prior. Interestingly, however, mainstream media was still promoting climate policy scepticism on a level remarkable looking back in 2021 (only to 2015!). The Sunday Times published an editorial piece soon after the Paris COP criticising the UK government for being “unilateral decarbonisers”, “penalising our heavy energy-using industries {...} did nothing but cost plenty of British jobs {...} The risk we face is one of power cuts – now that really would be energy saving {...} Similar wasteful follies should be avoided”²³¹.

²³⁰ Taylor, L. The Guardian. 2015. *Elon Musk calls for carbon price to halve the transition time to clean energy*. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/dec/03/elon-musk-calls-carbon-price-halve-transition-time-clean-energy>

²³¹ The Sunday Times. 2015. *A climate deal must work in our interests this time*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-climate-deal-must-work-in-our-interests-this-time-3dcfxh93q>

COP22, 2016: Marrakech, Morocco

President: Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar.

Parties (states) attending: 194; Observer states: 1²³².

Backdrop

Parties convened in Marrakech with one post-Paris focus point: Africa²³³. The summit was coined the 'African COP' to reflect this²³⁴. The continent, particularly vulnerable to climate change, was already facing poorer harvests and more challenging living conditions. The President of Morocco's General Council of Agricultural Development: "Starting in the early 1990s, we've seen on average 15% to 20% less rain annually than previously. The rain now comes in showers instead of sustained downpours, and we see arid areas spreading"²³³. Parties were meeting after a Nature report published its findings on the future of agriculture in Africa, stating in particular that 60% of Sahel land used in 2016 will be unsuitable for bean production by 2090²³⁵.

At COP22, the Paris Agreement had finally reached 100 ratifications, though President-elect Trump was causing concern among delegates about the US contribution to future talks – and indeed to implementing COP21²³⁶.

Negotiations

COP22 saw the "unprecedented involvement of corporate interests" with representatives from the majority of the large gas/oil majors attending²³⁶. Jesse Bragg, Corporate Accountability International: "It's hard to believe the World Coal Association is having conversations with delegates, encouraging them to more strictly regulate the coal industry. That's completely against their interests. So what is their purpose in that space other than to continue to extract and burn coal?"²³⁶ The EU, US, and Australia defended such involvement in the interests of 'inclusivity' and arguing the concept of 'conflict of interest' was challenging to define²³⁶.

The COP22 President opened the Conference telling delegates: "[Paris Agreement] is unrivalled progress {...} and now we must build on this momentum, give tangible meaning to this major step forward through decisions geared towards implementation."²³⁷

Calling on Donald Trump to join climate efforts was a theme throughout the Conference. Fiji's prime minister, Frank Bainimarama, told the conference all "you [US] came to save us

²³² UNFCCC. 2016. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Twenty-Second Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/cop22/eng/10.pdf>

²³³ Hicks, C. The Guardian. 2016. *COP22 host Morocco launches action plan to fight devastating climate change.* <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/nov/07/cop22-host-morocco-marrakech-action-plan-fight-devastating-climate-change-africa-farmers-un-conference>

²³⁴ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2016. *Summary Report, 7-18 November 2016. Marrakech Climate Change Conference.* International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/events/marrakech-climate-change-conference-november-2016/summary-report-7-18-november-2016>

²³⁵ Rippke, U. et al. 2016. *Timescales of transformational climate change adaptation in sub-Saharan African agriculture.* Nature Climate Change. <https://www.nature.com/articles/nclimate2947>

²³⁶ Slezak, M. The Guardian. 2016. *Marrakech climate talks: giving the fossil fuel lobby a seat at the table.* <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/nov/07/marrakech-climate-talks-giving-the-fossil-fuel-lobby-a-seat-at-the-table>

²³⁷ UN News. 2016. *Marrakech: 'The eyes of the world are upon us,' chair of UN conference says as new round of climate talks opens.* <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/11/544652-marrakech-eyes-world-are-upon-us-chair-un-conference-says-new-round-climate>

during World War II, it is time for you to save us now”²³⁴. He was joined by other countries in asking Trump to abandon his position that “man-made climate change is a hoax”²³⁸.

On the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Parties discussed improving functionality and impact. The Maldives, for AOSIS, and South Africa ‘lamented that the procedures of accreditation remain too complex’²³⁵. The GCF board agreed to facilitate an increase in the amount of direct access proposals, supporting country-driven climate plans with simplified and efficient approval procedures²³⁵.

Key Agreements

Parties agreed to the Marrakech Action Proclamation, which called for “urgently raising ambition and strengthening cooperation amongst ourselves to close the gap between current emissions trajectories and the pathway needed to meet the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement”²³⁴.

Successful calls from developing countries, particularly those representing Africa, led to the reaffirmation of the \$100bn to be mobilised by developed countries in support of developing countries’ mitigation and adaptation efforts in the face of climate change²³⁴.

Marrakech, marked by increased private sector attention and attendance, also saw Parties “collectively call on all non-state actors to join us for immediate and ambitious action and mobilisation, building on their important achievements”²³⁴. The Proclamation referenced the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, which had been launched during the Conference and would strengthen climate action collaboration between governments and over 50 non-state actors, including CEOs, mayors, and civil society leaders²³⁹. This marked the increasing trend of business participation in climate efforts – only a few years later would businesses declare their net-zero targets in huge numbers. It also reflected the success of the COP innovation of ‘climate champions’, which were first introduced at COP21, Paris, and continue to current COPs “to connect the work of governments with the many voluntary and collaborative actions taken by cities, regions, businesses and investors”²⁴⁰.

The final key progress at COP22 was the setting of an “open and transparent dialogue between the COP22 presidency and the upcoming COP23 presidency {...} would align goals and purposes of COP23 {...} to achieve the Paris Agreement’s goals”²⁴¹. Momentum from Paris had been maintained.

Sentiment

On increased business engagement with COPs:

Peter Bakker, President/CEO, WBCSD: “We are seeing strong and long-term political signals that encourage business to invest with confidence in the low-carbon economy, and we welcome the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action that has been set up by

²³⁸ McGrath, M. BBC News. 2016. *Climate talks: ‘Save us’ from global warming, US urged*.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-38034171>

²³⁹ Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action. 2020. *High-Level Champions and Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action*.

https://cop23.unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Marrakech_Partnership_Achievements_2019.pdf

²⁴⁰ UNFCCC. 2015. *Meet the Champions*. <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/marrakech-partnership/actors/meet-the-champions>

²⁴¹ DataGuidance. 2021. *International: COP22-25 Key outcomes and developments*.

<https://www.dataguidance.com/opinion/international-cop22-25-key-outcomes-and-developments>

the climate champions. This momentum is irreversible. {...} Business is the key implementation partner for governments around the world as they strive to hit their NDC targets”²⁴².

Rachel Kyte, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and CEO of the Sustainable Energy for All: “Companies are beginning to understand that by doubling their energy productivity and committing to use only 100 percent renewables they are creating the least cost pathway for themselves to decarbonisation”²³⁷.

On Trump:

The Guardian’s Arthur Nelsons described “Trump was a spectre haunting much of the COP proceedings”²⁴³.

COP22 President: “We count on your pragmatism as well as your commitment to the spirit of the international community, in a huge struggle for our future, for the planet, for humanity and the dignity of millions and millions of people”²⁴³.

After Trump announced in June the next year that the US would withdraw from the Paris Agreement, France’s new President, Emmanuel Macron, was one of the most vocal leaders to ridicule the new US administration. In a speech intended to reach US scientists and engineers, Macron called on these scientists to discover a “second homeland in France”, ironically adopting Trump’s rhetoric style by saying “Make our planet great again”²⁴⁴.

COP22 outcome:

Maldives’ Minister Thoriq Ibrahim: “we want to make sure the early action of the Paris Agreement happens as soon as possible, because small islands are being affected by climate change now {...} Maldives has seen {...} coastal erosion {...}, frequent strong winds, and the dry season is getting longer {...} the whole world should start working together {...} so that we all live in a safer world {...} that world will be a happier place”²⁴⁵.

The Earth Negotiations Bulletin concluded “A number of developed and developing nations expressed disappointment [on progress of Paris rulebook”²³⁴.

²⁴² WBCSD. *Marrakesh is sealing new partnerships for global climate action*

²⁴³ Neslen, A. The Guardian. 2016. *Climate summit chief pleads with Trump not to ditch Paris treaty*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/nov/18/poor-nations-pledge-deep-emissions-cuts-at-marrakech-climate-change-summit?platform=hootsuite>

²⁴⁴ Newsy. 2017. *Video: Macron ridicules Trump for Paris deal withdrawal*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88-5EOPgMbw>

²⁴⁵ UN News. 2016. *Small islands push for implementation of climate pledges*. <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2016/11/619572>

COP23, 2017: Bonn, Germany (Fiji as chair)

President: Mr. Frank Bainimarama.

Parties (states) attending: 194; Observer states: 1²⁴⁶.

Backdrop

Having endured \$1bn in damages from Cyclone Winston, Fiji convened Parties in Bonn Germany²⁴⁷, united in addressing increasing climate threats and establishing the success of the Paris Agreement despite Trump's announcement of US withdrawal earlier in 2017²⁴⁸. US withdrawal would not take effect until 2020, but Trump described the Paris Agreement as an international treaty that "disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit to other countries, leaving American workers – who I love – and taxpayers to absorb the cost in terms of lost jobs, lowered wages, shuttered factories, and vastly diminished economic production"²⁴⁹. UN chief climate negotiator, Christiana Figueres: "[Trump withdrawal] provoked an unparalleled wave of support for the treaty. He shored up the world's resolve on climate action, and for that we can all be grateful."²⁴⁷

Negotiations

On the back of anti-Trump and anti-denialism sentiment, Parties were keen to get down to acting on the Paris Agreement¹⁶. Motivations were amplified when the Conference's opening ceremony heard from the World Meteorological Organisation's Secretary-General, Petteri Taalas, report on "record-breaking global temperatures, carbon dioxide concentrations, and sea temperatures, as well as increasing ocean acidification, and more intense hurricane, monsoon, and drought seasons"²⁵⁰. The negotiations were focused on establishing initiatives to meet countries' NDCs and make the 1.5/2C temperature limit of the Paris Agreement a possibility²⁵⁰.

Germany's environment minister, Barbara Hendricks, announced on the first day of the Conference that Germany would contribute an extra EUR50m to the Adaptation Fund, saying "every dollar invested today will pay off in cleaner air, better health, and new economic opportunities"²⁵⁰.

Ecuador, on behalf of the G77 and China, called for COP23 to achieve progress on: the design of the 2018 facilitative dialogue for moving forwards, loss and damage, and finance commitments²⁵⁰. Australia, on behalf of the Umbrella Group, added that COP23 must deliver a "strong and effective enhanced transparency framework" on mitigation efforts, emissions, measurement, and targets²⁴⁹. Loss and damage was strongly pushed for as a discussion point by the AOSIS countries., and Ethiopia cautioned that financing "appears to be tapering" for the LDC Fund and the Adaptation Fund²⁵⁰. The Democratic Republic of Congo, speaking on behalf of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, called for both public and private finance for REDD+ implementation²⁵⁰.

²⁴⁶ UNFCCC. 2017. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Twenty-Third Session. Part One.*

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/11.pdf>

²⁴⁷ Carrington, D. The Guardian. 2017. *The COP23 climate change summit in Bonn and why it matters.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/05/the-cop23-climate-change-summit-in-bonn-and-why-it-matters>

²⁴⁸ Trump White House Archives. 2017. *President Trump Announces US Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord.* <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/articles/president-trump-announces-u-s-withdrawal-paris-climate-accord/>

²⁴⁹ The New York Times. 2017. *Video: President Donald Trump on Paris Climate Accord Withdrawal (Full).* YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deTcuNgKN-E>

²⁵⁰ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2017. *Summary of the Fiji/Bonn Climate Change Conference: 6-17 November 2017.* International Institute for Sustainable Development.

In the early days of the Conference, Syria signed the Paris Agreement, becoming the world's last 'functioning state' to do so. As Fiona Harvey put it, the decision "leaves US isolated", and Paula Caballero, global director of the WRI's climate programme, said: "Now the entire world is resolutely committed to advancing climate action – all save on country. This should make the Trump administration pause and reflect on their ill-advised announcement about withdrawing"²⁵¹. Paul Bodnar, former Obama adviser and lead US negotiator at previous COPs: "It is clear the way the market is driving – towards lower carbon. It would be difficult for a Republican administration to take action that is clearly counter to the forces of the market"²⁵².

UK climate change minister, Claire Perry, launched the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) at COP23 with Canada's environment minister, Catherine McKenna²⁵³. With 20 partners, it aimed to offer "technical and practical help to accelerate the transition away from coal"²⁵³. By the run up to COP26, the alliance had grown to over 100 members committed to phasing out unabated coal²⁵⁴.

UK and German governments responded to calls from rainforest nations on funding for REDD+ by together announcing \$153m to expand programmes in the Amazon basin²⁵⁶.

Key Agreements

The outcomes from COP23 were rather muted, in part thanks to the technical nature of the summit but also because of the slow pace of negotiations on the Paris rulebook. The final COP23 text alluded to the possible need for an additional negotiating session between the May 2018 intersessional and COP24, so that the Paris rulebook be ready by the end of COP24²⁵⁵.

Again, Parties reaffirmed the \$100bn a year commitment, though again failing to come near to it. The Adaptation Fund did, however, see progress on funding, exceeding the \$80m target for 2017 and reaching \$93.3m, mainly down to large funding announcements from Germany and Italy²⁵⁶.

The most notable breakthrough at COP23 was the focus on oceans – finally appreciated, at least in part, for their intimate association with climate change (rather than more narrowly biodiversity). Some Parties launched the Ocean Pathway to "call attention to the critical links between the ocean and climate change, and to present a strategy for including oceans in the UNFCCC process"²⁵⁷. The aim is to capture the ocean in NDCs and open up the UNFCCC's

²⁵¹ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2017. *Syria signs Paris climate agreement and leaves US isolated*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/07/syria-signs-paris-climate-agreement-and-leaves-us-isolated>

²⁵² Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2017. *Donald Trump cannot halt US climate progress, former Obama adviser says*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/10/donald-trump-cannot-halt-us-climate-progress-former-obama-adviser-says>

²⁵³ Gov.uk. 2017. *Climate Change Minister Claire Perry launches Powering Past Coal Alliance at COP23*.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/climate-change-minister-claire-perry-launches-powering-past-coal-alliance-at-cop23?iu=&iap=false&exception=true&cust_params=

²⁵⁴ O'Neill, Claire. The Times. 2021. *It's time to make coal history*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/its-time-to-make-coal-history-lbj6mz6cm>

²⁵⁵ Timperley, J. CarbonBrief. *COP23: Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Bonn*.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop23-key-outcomes-agreed-un-climate-talks-bonn>

²⁵⁶ UNFCCC. 2017. *Bonn Climate Conference Becomes Launch-Pad for Higher Ambition*.

<https://unfccc.int/news/bonn-climate-conference-becomes-launch-pad-for-higher-ambition>

²⁵⁷ IISD. 2017. *Ocean Pathway Launched at COP23*. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/ocean-pathway-launched-at-cop-23/>

work on finance and adaptation to make progress on ocean protection too. Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Norway, Samoa, and Sweden were the prominent donor signatories of the Ocean Pathway. This gained broader support as Finland, Honduras, Romania, and the UK answered calls for action on the oceans at COP23 and signed the 'Because the Ocean' Declaration, which amassed a total of 31 signatories²⁵⁷. The Declaration was established at COP21 and commits signatories to "address comprehensively the ocean/climate nexus", meeting as a group to address the challenges unveiled by the work of the Declaration and other relevant initiatives²⁵⁸. Speaking at The Ocean Pathway launch event, Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), welcomed Fiji's efforts to develop a specific work program on ocean within the UNFCCC. "This would be the culmination of many years of efforts from the IOC and its partners to raise awareness among the nations engaged in climate negotiations of the fact that the ocean is part and parcel of the climate change questions"²⁵⁹.

In response to Trump, President Macron committed France and EU partners to completely fill the funding gap left by the withdrawing US delegation. This got the "loudest applause" in the hall. Macron added: "Climate change adds further injustice to an already unfair world", reflecting Chancellor Merkel's earlier comment to the Conference that "[climate change] will determine the wellbeing of all of us"²⁶⁰.

Sentiment

In a reminder that Trump's climate denialism did not write off progress from the US, Mike Bloomberg announced during COP23 that he would extend his coal phase-out programme, adding \$50m to bring his previously \$164m campaign to Europe. The 2010 \$164m programme ran up to 2017, a period which saw US coal-burning halve²⁶¹. Bloomberg led a group of US states, cities, and businesses pledging committed action at COP23, to balance out the Trump administration's presence. Claire Perry, UK climate change minister, who also launched the Powering past Coal Alliance at COP23, on the initiative: "The UK was one of the first countries in the world to commit to phasing out unabated coal-fire power generation by 2025 and we encourage other nations to follow our lead. Reducing global coal consumption is a vital part of reaching our climate goals."²⁶¹

COP23 was the first Conference to have two distinct zones: the Bula Zone for negotiations and the Bonn Zone for side events featuring civil society, business, industry, and NGOs²⁴⁹. This was similar to the Blue/Green zones at COP26. The Earth Negotiations Bulletin noted, however, that "many commented that the Fiji/Bonn model of two separate zones needs improvement at future COPs, especially as the UNFCCC seeks better integration of these two sphere with highly interdependent functions – one providing the basis for action and ambition, and the other helping to deliver on it"²⁵⁰. This non-state action was clearly a growing theme at COPs.

²⁵⁸ VardaGroup. 2015. *Because the Ocean Declaration*. <http://www vardagroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Because-the-Ocean-Peru.pdf>

²⁵⁹ UNESCO. 2017. *An Ocean Pathway towards sustainable development*. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/an_ocean_pathway_towards_sustainable_development/

²⁶⁰ Carrington, D. The Guardian. 2017. *Climate change will determine humanity's destiny, says Angela Merkel*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/15/climate-change-will-determine-humanitys-destiny-says-angela-merkel>

²⁶¹ Carrington, D. The Guardian. 2017. *Michael Bloomberg's 'war on coal' goes global with \$50m fund*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/nov/09/michael-bloombergs-war-on-coal-goes-global-with-50m-fund>

Despite the success of Paris and the momentum maintained despite Trump's attitude to the Agreement, Bonn saw fresh criticisms levied at the COP process – mainly concerning the gap between action and the recommendations of scientists. Lord Stern (LSE) commented on the remaining “significant gap” between the cuts pledged/affirmed at COP23 and what was needed²⁶². The Times reported on UN negotiators calculating at the end of COP23 that the “cuts in emissions pledged by countries such as the UK and Japan would be eclipsed by massive increases from developing countries in Africa and the Far East”²⁶¹. Nick Bridge, UK climate change envoy to the UN: “We have a fantastic political consensus to move forward, but we don't have the action we need”²⁶².

Loss and damage was yet to enter the Paris rulebook, which frustrated various developing countries. Gabon's President called for urgent action: “the fire is right under our feet. That is why I am expressing the extreme concern of Africa in light of the increase of disasters related to climate change. Africa suffers the loss and damage on a daily basis.”²⁶⁰

²⁶² Leake, J. The Times. 2017. *Developing world emissions will eclipse West's cuts*.
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/developing-world-emissions-will-eclipse-west-s-cuts-b6glrrhrh>

COP24, 2018: Katowice, Poland

President: Mr. Michal Kurtyka.

Parties (states) attending: 196; Observer states: 1.

Backdrop

With the Paris Agreement set to come into force in 2020, COP24 was tasked to finalise the Paris rulebook, particularly setting the standards for governments to measure, report, and verify emissions cuts and efforts in a bid to achieve NDCs¹⁶.

Negotiations

In producing a Paris rulebook with only two weeks remaining before the deadline of 2018 set at COP22, one of the most contentious sticking points remained differentiation – a COP veteran. The Paris agreement had broken away from the developed/developing terminology on commitments, making it a global agreement, but the agreement remained ambiguous²⁶³.

COP24 was also where David Attenborough warned delegates that “if we don’t take action, the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon”²⁶⁴. Attenborough was presenting the *People’s Seat Address*, a new COP innovation where people across the world could submit their experiences and views to an online poll and via video submission²⁶⁵.

The UN secretary general highlighted the need for COP24 to address funding commitments in the rulebook, saying ‘We have a collective responsibility to invest in averting global climate chaos. Climate action offers a compelling path to transform our world for the better. Governments and investors need to bet on the green economy, not the grey.’²⁶⁴

Greta Thunberg, a 15-year-old climate activist who had recently risen to prominence, spoke to the conference hall: “our biosphere is being sacrificed so that rich people in countries like mine [Sweden] can live in luxury {...} you say you love your children above all else and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes {...} until you start focusing on what needs to be done instead of what is politically possible, there is no hope {...} if solutions within this system are so impossible to find, then maybe we should change the system itself {...} we have come here to let you know that change is coming whether you like it or not; the willpower belongs to the people”²⁶⁶. Thunberg’s speech reflects a growing sect among climate activists campaigning for huge economic systems change – including ‘degrowth’ – with an alarmist tone.

²⁶³ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2018. *Summary Report of COP18*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/enb.iisd.org/archive/download/pdf/enb12747e.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA6QW3YWTJ6YORWEEL%2F20220107%2Fus-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20220107T180702Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=60&X-Amz-Signature=c4bcc58297dd0248024153fc348d731d61cd69dae9b1e807353a46f4b5710616

²⁶⁴ Carrington, D. The Guardian. 2018. *David Attenborough: collapse of civilisation is on the horizon*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/03/david-attenborough-collapse-civilisation-on-horizon-un-climate-summit>

²⁶⁵ Priestley, S. 2019. *Climate change conference (COP24): Katowice, Poland*. House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8450/CBP-8450.pdf>

²⁶⁶ Connect4Climate. 2018. *Video: Greta Thunberg full speech at UN Climate Change COP24 Conference*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFkQSGyeCWg>

COP24 started with 3000 areas of disagreement in the draft Paris rulebook negotiated at previous talks, making many delegates fear whether achieving the intended result would be realistic in the two weeks²⁶⁷. With so many disagreements left to settle, the Polish presidency of the COP took a firmer grip on negotiations with COP24 president telling delegates: “The current approach to negotiations is exhausted. Many texts are stuck. From now on we will move under the authority of the Polish presidency”²⁶⁷. The presidency then proceeded to narrow the text down and present shorter versions to delegates to discuss. The rather forceful approach frustrated various parties, but successfully got a text over the line that was legally binding in many places – though still leaving room for flexibility in reporting contributions as a concession to get the deal over the line²⁶⁷.

Brazil claimed to be extremely firm on preventing the double counting of emission cuts when cuts were made via voluntary carbon markets, saying “emissions reductions generated under the sustainable development mechanism must be additional to the emissions-reductions targets made by the country where the reductions are generated”²⁶⁸. However, Brazil were widely reported to be pushing for wording on carbon credit trading that would increase their emissions trading income (thanks to their rainforest cover), but potentially expose the credit trading system to double counting²⁶⁹. A business source told CarbonBrief that “it was Brazil versus the rest of the world and they wouldn’t back down. Brazil wanted to have its cake and eat it”¹⁶⁷. Negotiations stretched into the night of the final day of the Conference²⁷⁰. Talks on how rules could traverse this impasse stalled, leading to a COP24 decision to delay draft decision texts on details pertaining to voluntary carbon markets until COP25.

Small island nations urged greater action, especially for the rulebook to be a single rulebook applying to all signatories, but also to include terms on loss and damage. Vanuatu’s foreign minister confronted the US and other nations delaying negotiations, saying: “It pains me deeply to have watched the people of the United States and other developed countries cross the globe suffering the devastating impacts of climate-induced tragedies, while their professional negotiators are here at COP24 putting red lines through any mention of loss and damage in the Paris guidelines and square brackets around any possibility for truthfully and accurately reporting progress against humanity’s most existential threat.”²⁷¹

An IPCC report recently published, which highlighted the dangers of even a 1.5C warming scenario but recommend this as the best target, faced significant controversy as to whether Parties should “welcome” or “note” the report. The US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait joined forces to prevent Parties from “welcoming” the report, instead the Parties decided to “note” the findings²⁷².

²⁶⁷ CarbonBrief. 2018. *COP24: Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Katowice*.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop24-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-katowice>

²⁶⁸ The Guardian. 2018. *Brazil’s leadership on climate change*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/21/brazils-leadership-on-climate-change>

²⁶⁹ O’Sullivan, K. The Irish Times. 2018. *Limited progress after two weeks of Katowice climate talks*.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/limited-progress-after-two-weeks-of-katowice-climate-talks-1.3733416>

²⁷⁰ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2018. *Progress and problems as UN climate change talks end with a deal*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/15/progress-and-problems-as-un-climate-change-talks-end-with-a-deal>

²⁷¹ Doherty, B. The Guardian. 2018. *US accused of obstructing talks at UN climate change summit*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/11/us-accused-of-obstructing-talks-at-un-climate-change-summit>

²⁷² Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2018. *What was agreed at COP24 in Poland and why did it take so long?*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/16/what-was-agreed-at-cop24-in-poland-and-why-did-it-take-so-long>

Key Agreements

The outcome of COP24 was the production of most of the Paris rulebook in the form of the Katowice climate package, which laid out operational guidance on:

- Information on domestic mitigation and other climate goals and activities that governments will provide in their NDCs.
- Adaptation communications
- Transparency rules
- Establishment of committee to facilitate the implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- Conducting the Global Stocktake of progress towards aims of the Paris Agreement
- Assessment of development and transfer of technology
- Providing advance information on financial support to developing countries and the process for establishing new finance targets from 2025²⁷³.

Parties left gaps in the rulebook on voluntary carbon markets, loss and damage, and other carbon credit mechanisms, which were left for COP25. COP24 was largely absent of any new commitments/ambition from any Parties²⁷².

Sentiment

The summit was criticised from being sponsored by a Polish coal company, especially in light of Poland's President telling the conferences that "efficient" coal use was not contradictory with ambitious climate action, defending this by citing Poland's 30% drop in emissions since 1988 despite the 80% power reliance on coal²⁶⁴. (nb: this of course ignores Poland's structural shifts in this period, which also contributed to emission reductions). Friends of the Earth said the coal sponsorship "raises the middle finger to the climate"²⁶⁴.

David Waskow, WRI: deal was "a good foundation for countries to go about implementing the Paris Agreement {...} now countries need to go home and do their homework, by increasing their commitments"²⁷⁰.

With little more than rule-setting, the summit was criticised as a low-ambition set of talks. Jennifer Morgan, Greenpeace: "A year of climate disasters and a dire warning from the world's top scientists should have led to so much more. Instead, governments let people down again as they ignored the science and the plight of the vulnerable."²⁷⁰

WWF's Gareth Redmond-King added: "The world is in a state of climate emergency and yet some of our leaders prefer to stay in a state of denial"²⁷⁰.

The Irish Times noted "an absence of the heavyweight political presence of France, Germany, and the UK due to domestic factors was evident through the two weeks" - perhaps a key factor in there being no major step-ups in commitments or apparent ambition from developed nations²⁶⁹.

²⁷³ UNFCCC. 2018. *The Katowice climate package: making the Paris Agreement work for all*. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/katowice-climate-package>

COP25, 2019: Madrid, Spain

President: Ms. Carolina Schmidt²⁷⁴.

Parties (states) attending: 196; Observer states: 1²⁷⁵.

Backdrop

COPs haven't lacked commotion over the years, but COP25 stood out. Spain was the 4th prospective host of the summit after Bolsonaro's election vetoed Brazil's original presidency, marking the loss of Brazil as a proactive and helpful party at climate negotiations. Costa Rica then put themselves forward for hosting COP25, but lacked sufficient resources. Chile took the reins, only to lose the COP amidst an ensuing political crisis, which saw rioting in the capital. Finally, Parties convened in Madrid, where negotiations were chaired by the Chilean environment minister, Carolina Schmidt²⁷⁶. Sadly, the commotion hardly end there...

Building on the growing understanding of oceanic carbon sinks at COP24, COP25 was quickly termed the 'Blue COP'. Chile was a keen exponent of the importance of oceans in a pragmatic response to climate change, a key country in the *Because the Ocean* initiative launched at COP21 and having built support in the interim period²⁷⁷. The IPCC had also recently published their Special Report on the Ocean and the Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, building scientific and political consensus behind the value of incorporating oceans into the COP process²⁷⁸.

COP25 came after the UK's Energy Minister, Chris Skidmore, enshrined net zero emissions by 2050 into law – the UK as the first major economy to do so²⁷⁹. The EU soon followed such leadership, declaring a climate emergency shortly ahead of COP25 and committing itself to reducing net emissions by 55% in the next decade²⁸⁰. These measures reflected the domestic political pressures on climate action, which were starting to drive unilateral climate change commitments encouraged by the multilateral COP process.

Besides oceans, the key focus of COP25 was to finalise the market mechanisms and cooperative activities to achieve the Paris Agreement. Parties were tasked with addressing those contentious issues postponed from previous COPs²⁷⁸. With COP26 outlined as the COP for accelerating ambition to match targets with the science for keeping 1.5C in reach, the success of settling these technical issues at the heart of multilateralism was paramount²⁸².

Negotiations

²⁷⁴ UNFCCC. 2019. *Report of the Conference of the Parties at its Twenty-Fifth Session*.

<https://unfccc.int/event/cop-25#eq-32>

²⁷⁵ UNFCCC. 2019. *COP25 Provisional list of registered participants*.

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/COP%2025_Provisional%20List%20of%20Participants.pdf

²⁷⁶ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2019. *Climate crisis: what is COP and can it save the world?*

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/dec/02/climate-crisis-what-is-cop-and-can-it-save-the-world>

²⁷⁷ Because the Ocean. 2019. *COP25: The blue COP just became bluer*. <https://www.becausetheocean.org/the-cop-just-became-bluer/>

²⁷⁸ Allan, J. et al. 2019. *What is COP25? Why is it blue? We have answers*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://www.iisd.org/articles/what-is-cop25-we-have-answers>

²⁷⁹ Gov.uk. 2019. *UK becomes first major economy to pass net zero emissions into law*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-becomes-first-major-economy-to-pass-net-zero-emissions-law>

²⁸⁰ The Times. 2019. *European parliament declares climate emergency before UN summit*.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/european-parliament-declares-climate-emergency-before-un-summit-lzc09jhfn>

Parties struggled to build consensus on the implementation of article 6, which outlined the envisaged global carbon market as a facilitating mechanism for decarbonisation²⁸¹. After the first week, negotiators had only managed to outline a preliminary text on the possible carbon trading mechanism, though this text still lacked agreement on how emissions savings would be counted for emissions trading and how a country's success against previous targets could contribute to the new scheme, something pushed by those developed nations performing well in reducing emissions up to that point²⁸².

The COP25 President attempted to broker breakthroughs in negotiations in the second week, when it became apparent little progress was made on the key outstanding technical issues, convening high-level discussions on the political issues remaining on technical details of the Paris Agreement²⁸³.

Negotiations made little success, however, in the second week. By the day after the summit was supposed to end, it was reported that Brazil, India, and China were the key parties blocking an agreement on the contentious article 6²⁸⁴. In particular, Bolsonaro's delegation was thought to be blocking agreement to delay the implementation phase of the Paris Agreement, which would require Brazil cut emissions²⁸⁴. The delegation was also pushing for its Amazon rainforest to be counted in international mechanisms as a carbon sink contributing to targets, which would allow Brazil to circumvent taking more ambitious emission reduction efforts²⁸⁴. This was rebuffed as a double counting attempt – a repeat of COP24²⁸⁴. The AOSIS parties were key in urging parties to act, including Simon Stiehl – Grenada's environment minister – saying “our countries will be rendered uninsurable if we breach 1.5C warming”; the High Ambition Coalition also emphasised that the COP25 outcome had to set up parties for raising ambition in commitments at COP26²⁸⁴. Morrison's Australian delegation was also criticised for boycotting a deal on article 6, even being accused of “cheating” on emissions reductions by attempting to allow for the carrying over of emissions credits in the Paris rulebook²⁸⁵.

Brazil, China, and India were in the same boat as Australia in demanding the carryover of credits – criticised by former French environment minister (and an architect of the Paris Agreement at COP21), Laurence Tubiana: “if you want this carryover it is just cheating. Australia was willing to destroy the whole system, because that is the way to destroy the whole Paris agreement”²⁸⁶.

Negotiators were exasperated with the lack of a deal on article 6, leading Costa Rica, the UK, Germany, and New Zealand to produce a set of minimum standards for the deal, the ‘San Jose Principles’, which they hoped would chorale parties behind an agreement, albeit a

²⁸¹ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2019. *Climate crisis: what is COP and can it save the world?*

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/dec/02/climate-crisis-what-is-cop-and-can-it-save-the-world>

²⁸² Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2019. *COP25 climate summit: what happened during the first week?*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/09/cop25-climate-summit-what-happened-during-first-week>

²⁸³ Earth Negotiations Bulletin. 2019. *Summary Report: Chile/Madrid Climate Conference*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://enb.iisd.org/events/chilemadrid-climate-change-conference-december-2019/summary-report-2-15-december-2019>

²⁸⁴ Harvey, F. The Guardian. 2019. *Richer nations accused of stalling progress on climate crisis*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2019/dec/13/richer-nations-accused-of-stalling-progress-on-climate-crisis>

²⁸⁵ Morton, A. The Guardian. 2019. *UN climate talks: Australia accused of ‘cheating’ and thwarting global deal*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/dec/16/un-climate-talks-australia-accused-of-cheating-and-thwarting-global-deal>

²⁸⁶ Hook, L. Financial Times. 2019. *UN climate talks undone by ‘ghost from the past’*.

<https://www.ft.com/content/d8e8910c-1f54-11ea-92da-f0c92e957a96>

weakened one²⁸⁵. The text explicitly prohibited carrying over credits²⁸⁵. However, the Guardian reported that observers understood Australia's prime minister Morrison had instructed that the carry over of credits was a "non-negotiable", explaining the total lack of compromise from the Australian delegation, which held out even as any remaining countries backed the San Jose principles²⁸⁵.

Negotiations failed to yield any deal on article 6, despite their overrunning by 44 hours²⁸⁶. Four years on from Paris and the Paris Agreement was still without a rulebook. It was like Kyoto was repeating itself... the "ghost from the past" as Leslie Hook of the FT put it²⁸⁶.

On loss and damage, developing countries saw no progress in negotiations. The Guardian reported that while rich countries were willing to "acknowledge" their historical responsibility for climate change, they "balk at admitting liability, which could require legal redress and compensation payments"²⁸⁴.

As the longest climate negotiations in the history of the COP process, COP25 was equally a colossal failure²⁸⁷. The Washington Post reported on how "as delegates voted on the final texts, many seats were empty: some negotiators, tired and, with flights to catch, had simply gone home", and how "negotiators barely mustered enthusiasm for the compromise they had patched together, while raising grievances about the issues that remain unresolved"²⁸⁸. A disappointed COP25 President, Carolina Schmidt told the media "We are not satisfied. The agreements reached by the parties are not enough"²⁸⁸.

Despite the impending withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement, COP25 saw further pushbacks from the Trump administration in negotiations, though these were mostly jointly with many other developed nations – especially on loss and damage²⁸⁹.

Key Agreements

Unresolved issues included rules on the carbon trading mechanism, common time frames, long-term finance, and transparency issues²⁸³.

Parties took 3 decisions – a historically small number – at the Conference, two of which covered guidance for the GEF and GCF, both pre-existing finance facilities²⁸³. While delegates tried to describe COP25 as uniting parties behind greater ambition for COP26, the Earth Negotiations Bulletin described the one other decision (on the Paris Agreement) as "not specifically a call for greater ambition" but a "suggestion for parties to consider increasing their climate ambition"²⁸³.

Sentiment

Organisers of pro-climate action demonstrations in Madrid claimed over 500,000 people had joined the activist efforts. Greta Thunberg led efforts, saying "The change we need is not going to come from people in power. The change is going to come from the people, the

²⁸⁷ CarbonBrief. 2019. *COP25: Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Madrid*.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop25-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-madrid>

²⁸⁸ Dennis, B. and Harlan, C. The Washington Post. 2019. *UN climate talks end with hard feelings, few results and new doubts about global unity*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/un-climate-talks-end-with-hard-feelings-few-results-and-new-doubts-about-global-unity/2019/12/15/38918278-1ec7-11ea-b4c1-fd0d91b60d9e_story.html

²⁸⁹ Sengupta, S. The New York Times. 2019. *UN climate talks end with few commitments and a 'lost' opportunity*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/15/climate/cop25-un-climate-talks-madrid.html>

masses, demanding change.”²⁹⁰ President Bolsonaro described Greta as a “brat” at the Conference (in response to her having criticised violence against indigenous communities in the Amazon basin) and President Trump tweeted Greta during COP25, telling her to “work on her anger management problem” and “go to a good old fashioned movie”²⁹¹. Such retorts are quite telling...

Helen Mountford, vice president at WRI: “Most of the large emitters were missing in action or obstructive. This reflects how disconnected many national leaders are from the urgency of the science and the demands of their citizens”²⁸⁹. “The can-do spirit that birthed the Paris agreement feels like a distant memory today” (on the day negotiations finally ended)²⁸⁸.

Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists: “This is the biggest disconnect between this process and what’s going on in the real world that I’ve seen. You have the science crystal on where we need to go. You have the youth and others stepping up around the world in the streets pressing for action. It’s like we’re in a sealed vacuum chamber in here, and no one is perceiving what is happening out there — what the science says and what people are demanding.”²⁸⁸

Ian Fry, Tuvalu’s climate change ambassador to fellow negotiators: “This is an absolute tragedy and travesty”²⁸⁸.

The Washington Post reported that “UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres spent much of this year [2019] pleading with countries to produce more aggressive plans to combat global warming over the coming year”²⁸⁸.

Article 6 negotiations, the most contentious at COP25, were described by one observer – Tennant Reed from the Australian Industry Group – as a “rollercoaster of procedural confusion, terminological evolution, and unconcealed frustration over timewasting restatement of well-known positions”²⁹².

Claire O’Neill, the former UK climate minister at the time lined up to be COP26 president tweeted: “no deal is def[initely] better than the bad deal proposed”, pledging to “pull no punches next year in getting clarity and certainty... working with everyone including the private sector for clear rules and transparent measurement”²⁸⁷.

Krista Mikkonen, Finnish environment minister: “It seems that the EU now needs to be the leader and we want to be and we are going to be and that is what we are doing”²⁹³.

President Bolsonaro: “I’d like to know: has there been a resolution for Europe to be reforested, or are they just going to keep bothering Brazil?”²⁹³

Sir David King, who was a UK negotiator at Paris: “If the United States is not backing an agreement that is meaningful it is extraordinarily difficult for the rest of the world to come to an agreement. And I’m afraid as long as we have [President Donald] Trump in the United States with President [Jair] Bolsonaro in Brazil it is extraordinarily difficult to get all of those countries to agree”²⁹³

²⁹⁰ BBC News. 2019. *COP25: Thousands gather for climate change protests in Madrid.*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-50694361>

²⁹¹ Deng, B. The Times. 2019. *Chill out and watch a movie, Trump tells Greta Thunberg.*

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/chill-out-and-watch-a-movie-trump-tells-greta-thunberg-8r39t5shc>

²⁹² Reed, T. 2019. Twitter post: <https://twitter.com/TennantReed/status/1202610912659755009>

²⁹³ BBC News. 2019. *COP25 Climate change talks: ‘We’ve lost an important opportunity’.*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-50801493>

CarbonBrief did, however, note the “rare success story” of COP25 was the decision on a new gender action plan to “support the implementation of gender-related decisions and mandates in the UNFCCC process”²⁸⁷.

Jennifer Tollman, policy adviser at E3G: “This outcome will make the UK’s job harder next year in terms of the negotiation items. The UK has a pretty big lift next year in terms of doing that diplomatic outreach”.²⁸⁶

The WRI concluded in a published piece: “Trust and confidence among countries were significantly damaged in Madrid. The main challenge and task for the future UK presidency will be to restore that trust to finalize the Paris Agreement’s rules and raise ambition. The lack of progress at COP25 is no excuse for countries to lose their focus on stepped-up commitments in the run-up to COP26. The need for climate action has never been more pressing. This is the moment to heed the warnings of science and the generations that will come of age as the world warms.”²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ Dagnet, Y. et al. 2019. *COP25: What We Needed, What We Got, What’s Next*. World Resources Institute. <https://www.wri.org/insights/cop25-what-we-needed-what-we-got-whats-next>

COP26, 2021: Glasgow, United Kingdom

President: Mr. Alok Sharma.

Parties (states) attending: 197; Observer states: 1²⁹⁵.

Backdrop

Delayed a year by the COVID-19 pandemic, COP26 was most likely the most anticipated Conference with the greatest media coverage. COP26 was characterised by the ambitious UK presidency, by unprecedented civil society and private sector engagement, and ultimately breakthrough deals, crucially on coal and finance.

With hindsight, the extra year for preparations enabled significantly more to be achieved, with Alok Sharma having more than a year to visit countries globally - specifically to discuss climate issues and COP26 – and more than a year for the large civil service team beneath him to make inroads with civil society, the diplomatic community, and the private sector²⁹⁶. The UK's commitment of significant resources, including 220 civil servants working full time on COP26, behind COP26 preparations enabled an inclusive process, so that the Presidency understood well different stakeholder's objectives from the start²⁹⁷. Alok Sharma's initiatives on increasing inclusivity, transparency, and the comprehensiveness of preparations included the Civil Society and Youth Advisory Group and the appointment of key climate champions, such as Nigel Topping²⁹⁸. Mark Carney, the former Bank of England governor and recently UN special envoy on climate change, was also appointed as the PM's finance advisor for COP26²⁹⁹.

In this significant preparation period, the most effective push on new commitments came as the Presidency called on countries to declare their NDCs well-ahead of the summit. This started in September 2020, when Alok Sharma welcomed Jamaica, the Marshall Islands, Moldova, Norway, and Chile's more ambitious updated NDCs, calling on others to update theirs as "we will only succeed in tackling climate change by working together internationally"³⁰⁰. Sharma pinpointed the Climate Ambition Summit, co-hosted by the UK and France in December 2020, as the venue for raising ambition on a global stage³⁰¹. PM Johnson opened the Climate Ambition Summit by assessing the progress on COVID-19 vaccines, which had just begun to be rolled out in the UK, saying "And so my message to you all, is that together we can use scientific advances to protect our entire planet, our biosphere against a challenge far worse, far more destructive even than coronavirus. By the promethean power of our invention we can begin to defend the earth against the disaster of global warming. And by that I mean that together we can reduce our emissions, we can radically cut our dependence on fossil fuels, we can change our agricultural practices, and in short we can reverse the process by which for centuries, humanity has been quilting our planet in a toxic tea-cosy of greenhouse gases. And at the same, we can create hundreds of thousands of jobs, millions of jobs across the planet as we collectively recover from

²⁹⁵ UNFCCC. *Participants*. <https://unfccc.int/process/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties-convention-and-observer-states>

²⁹⁶ Taylor, H. The Guardian. 2021. *COP26 president Alok Sharma flew to 30 countries in 7 months*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/aug/06/cop26-president-alok-sharma-flew-to-30-countries-in-7-months>

²⁹⁷ Murray, J. BusinessGreen. 2022. *Alok Sharma confirms COP26 team to be shrunk by around a third*. <https://www.businessgreen.com/news/4043056/alok-sharma-confirms-cop26-unit-shrunk>

²⁹⁸ UNFCCC. 2021. *Meet the champions*. <https://racetozero.unfccc.int/meet-the-cop26-champions/>

²⁹⁹ BBC News. 2021. *Mark Carney at COP26: Countries should have a carbon price*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/business-59147390>

³⁰⁰ World Nuclear News. 2020. *COP presidents call for enhanced NDCs by December*. <https://www.world-nuclear-news.org/Articles/COP-presidents-call-for-enhanced-NDCs-by-December>

³⁰¹ Climate Ambition Summit. <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/>

coronavirus. If you doubt our ability to do that, let me tell you that when I was a child of six, this country depended on coal for 70% of our energy needs. That coal dependency is now down to 3% or less and since 1990, the UK has cut our CO2 emissions by 43% - more than any other G20 nation – and yet our economy has grown by 75%. Today, we're putting our foot to the accelerator – in a carbon friendly way of course – with a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.”³⁰² The Summit was a success, marking a “major stride towards a resilient, net zero emissions future today” – 75 leaders announced new NDCs, sending parties “into 2021 and the road to Glasgow COP26 with much greater momentum”³⁰³. Notable NDCs included net-zero commitments by 2030 for Barbados and the Maldives, 2035 for Finland, 2040 for Austria, and 2045 for Sweden. Vitally, 45 countries also announced 2030 (interim) NDCs, which signified a further increase in ambition³⁰³.

In the final run up to COP26, world leaders corralled around increasing ambition in Glasgow. New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, announced its ambition to price agricultural carbon emissions as part of its legislated commitment to 1.5C, saying “we will never use our size [0.1% of global emissions] as a reason not to lift ambition”³⁰⁴. Ardern also called on global action, with specific reference to Pacific climate refugees as a symptom of the growing problems caused by climate inaction³⁰⁴.

Negotiations

Early progress was made on methane at COP26. By the third day of the summit, Biden announced that the US had joined a quickly growing list of more than 100 countries to commit to reducing methane emissions by 30% by 2030, saying “we can probably go further than that” because methane emissions explain half of the warming experienced³⁰⁵. This ‘Global Methane Pledge’ was, however, a voluntary commitment and so not of a legally binding nature³⁰⁶. The hope was, however, that this pledge was one of many routes to ‘keeping 1.5C alive, which became a slogan of the Presidency and the conference³⁰⁷. MiQ – a ratings agency for company’s methane emissions performance – did express concerns over the “missing ingredient” on how this global initiative “will intersect with the current market {...and} how, at the asset, facility, and basin level change will be delivered that is transparent to buyers and sellers when gas is traded in the markets”³⁰⁶. Bloomberg were optimistic, however, citing the Global Methane pledge as the “single biggest effort governments can make to limit warming to 1.5C”³⁰⁸. Politically, signing up to the pledge was quite easy for most countries, thanks mostly to the nature of methane as a particularly potent GHG and to the 30% target being achievable by primarily focusing on reducing methane

³⁰² Gov.uk. 2020. *PM Climate Ambition Summit opening remarks: 12 December 2020*.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-by-cop26-president-alok-sharma-on-the-ndc-synthesis-report>

³⁰³ UN. *Summit shows new surge in action and ambition on road to Glasgow Climate Conference*.

<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/climate-ambition-summit-release.pdf>

³⁰⁴ BBC News. *Jacinda Ardern: ‘We know we need to do more’ to tackle climate change*.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-asia-59144313>

³⁰⁵ BBC News. 2021. *COP26: Joe Biden says methane reduction pledge will make ‘huge difference’*.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/science-environment-59131945>

³⁰⁶ MIQ. 2021. *Methane: COP26*. <https://miq.org/methane-cop26/>

³⁰⁷ COP26. 2021. *COP26 Keeps 1.5C Alive and Finalises Paris Agreement*. <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-keeps-1-5c-alive-and-finalises-paris-agreement/>

³⁰⁸ Rodriguez, L. Global Citizen. 2021. *The Global Methane Pledge at COP26: Everything You Need To Know*. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-global-methane-pledge-cop26-explainer/>

leaks from fossil fuel³⁰⁹. China, India, and Russia did not sign up, however, which some related to these countries' lagging infrastructure in preventing leakages³⁰⁹.

Loss and damage took centre stage, as developing nations made powerful calls for greater finance commitments. An activist from Papua New Guinea opened the eighth day of the conference in the Blue Zone with the poem: "We will never know when the tide raises and swallows our homes. Our cultures, our languages and our traditions will be taken by the ocean. When you say by 2030 to 2050, how can you see deadlines 9 to 29 years away when my people have proved that we must act now and not waste any more time."³¹⁰ This was one of many calls from civil society heard at the conference, pushing developed nations on the \$100bn per by 2020 commitment they made many years prior.

Halfway through the summit, Sharma held a 'stock take event', discussing with parties the current state of negotiations. Here, the lack of progress on finance became clear – developing countries "made a strong call to resolve remaining items left on the agenda with a special emphasis on finance"³¹⁰. A minister from Guinea remarked "a COP without a concrete finance cannot be called successful" and various AOSIS nations lamented the lack of progress still outstanding on achieving the \$100bn goal³¹⁰. The Paris rulebook was also a concern, because – remaining unfinished – created concern among parties on whether commitments would even be achieved. The representative for Bhutan called for progress on the Paris rulebook: "We came to Glasgow with high expectations. We need strong commitments to ensure the survival of the billion people living in the LDCs in the future. There are still key items in the negotiations that we need to resolve this week"³¹⁰.

In a moment of (pleasant) diplomatic surprise, only a few days before the end of the summit, the US and China announced a bilateral agreement to work together on addressing the gap between both countries' actions and the steps necessary to limit warming to 1.5-2C³¹¹. The pledge to cooperate on climate action was described by China's climate change envoy, Xie Zhenhua, as reflective of "more agreement between the US and China than divergence, making it an area of huge potential for cooperation. By working together our two countries can achieve many important things that are beneficial not only to our two countries but the world as a whole"³¹¹. US Special Climate Envoy, John Kerry, added "every step matters right now, and we have a long journey ahead of us"³¹¹. The pledge included establishing a working group, which would "meet regularly to address to climate crisis and advance the multilateral process, focusing on enhancing concrete actions in this decade"³¹². The pledge was well-received among environmental NGOs and other parties, especially as the agreement came as a surprise increase in ambition from the two highest polluting countries³¹².

Another key policy focus was coal, which had been passionately brought into the COP arena a couple of years earlier (notably by Claire Perry etc.). For the first time, coal was discussed as a focus of COP negotiations³¹³. The original draft text on coal proposed by the Presidency was simply: "Calls upon Parties to accelerate the phasing-out of coal and

³⁰⁹ Vaughan, A. New Scientist. 2021. *COP26: 105 countries pledge to cut methane emissions by 30 per cent.* <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2295810-cop26-105-countries-pledge-to-cut-methane-emissions-by-30-per-cent/>

³¹⁰ UN News. 2021. *A matter of life or death: At COP26, vulnerable countries tell developed nations it's time to keep their promise in climate finance.* <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1105222>

³¹¹ UN News. 2021. *UN chief welcomes China-US pledge to cooperate on climate action.* <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1105512>

³¹² Frangoul, A. CNBC. *China's shock climate deal with the US sparks some cautious optimism.* <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/11/cop26-us-china-declaration-on-climate-welcomed.html>

³¹³ BBC News. 2021. *What was agreed at the Glasgow climate conference?* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-56901261>

subsidies of fossil fuels”³¹⁴. However, the phrasing was deemed too binding by China and India, both of which led calls for weaker language. In particular, China was calling for “phase down” instead of “phase out” and India was calling for the text to only cover (ambiguously) “inefficient” coal, especially in reference to subsidies³¹⁵. John Kerry (US) retorted, however, that fossil fuel subsidies are the “definition of insanity”³¹⁶. This sudden hurdle in negotiations was in the final few moments of the Conference; Alok Sharma later lamented: “China and India are going to have to explain themselves to the most climate vulnerable countries in the world” on why they insisted on a last-minute dilution of the text³¹⁷. With the risk of a collapsing agreement, Sharma assembled John Kerry (US), Xie Zhenhua (China), Frans Timmermans (EU) and Bhupender Yadav (India) in a room behind the plenary hall³¹⁵. China and India were steadfast in their objections to the original text, so negotiators – despite resistance from the EU, US, and developing nations – agreed on the final text: “Calls upon Parties to accelerate the development, deployment and dissemination of technologies, and the adoption of policies, to transition towards low-emission energy systems, including by rapidly scaling up the deployment of clean power generation and energy efficiency measures, including accelerating efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, while providing targeted support to the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support towards a just transition.”. Alok Sharma was teary when announcing the weakened coal agreement to the summit, “May I just say to all delegates, I apologise for the way this process has unfolded, and I am deeply sorry. I also understand the deep disappointment, but as you have noticed it is also vital that we protect this package”, pausing for a significant amount of time to hold back tears, which raised an applause of support from negotiators. He then continued, “Delegates, thank you friends {...} Given what interventions we’ve had {...} hearing no objections it is here decided [on coal agreement]”³¹⁸.

The last minute negotiations were described by Politico as: “*The atmosphere was tense. The Chinese were willing to put the whole conference on the line {...} Sharma was attempting to keep delegates from small island states and the least developed countries informed, moving in and out of the room, a U.K. official said. But China and India had blindsided the entire conference, and the U.K. presidency, by waiting for the last possible moment to spring their surprise demand. Xie and the U.K. lead negotiator, Archie Young, had a heated discussion on the floor of the plenary. Andrea Meza, Costa Rica’s environment minister, said she had no idea it was coming. “The coal thing? No, not all. That was unexpected.” Huddled together across the hall, another meeting was taking place. Spanish Minister for the Ecological Transition Teresa Ribera called it an “informal European Council:” the body of ministers representing the EU’s 27 member states. Timmermans, who takes his mandate from the governments of the union, was jogging between the back room and the Europeans as they discussed whether the EU could back a weaker text. None of them were happy about it, but ultimately India and China — after Yadav had called back to New Delhi to confirm his instructions — emerged from the room with most of what they wanted. Sharma refused to present the “phase down” change as a presidency text and said he wanted it to be read out on the floor in the final open meeting, the U.K. official said, in order to allow for objections. “We have talked to the stakeholders and parties*

³¹⁴ CarbonBrief. 2021. *COP26: Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Glasgow*.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/cop26-key-outcomes-agreed-at-the-un-climate-talks-in-glasgow>

³¹⁵ Mathiesen, K. Politico. 2021. *The last-minute coal demand that almost sunk the Glasgow climate deal*.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/11/13/coalglasgow-climate-deal-521802>

³¹⁶ Levitt, T. et al. The Guardian. 2021. *COP26: deadline for agreeing crucial climate deal passes but negotiations set to continue*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2021/nov/12/cop26-live-reaction-to-latest-draft-as-negotiations-enter-final-day-un-climate-negotiations?filterKeyEvents=false&page=with%3Ablock-618e90248f08b698cb94ffc4>

³¹⁷ Bishop, K. CNBC. 2021. *China and India will have to explain themselves on coal, COP26 president says*. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/14/china-india-will-have-to-explain-themselves-on-coal-cop26-president.html>

³¹⁸ Rappler. 2021. *FULL VIDEO: COP26 plenary on India’s proposal of phasing coal ‘down’ not ‘out’*. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pDZGSOELiw&list=TLPQMTQwMTIwMjk4mTAVmKtCYg&index=2>

concerned and carried out consultation with a view to the success of this meeting,” China’s Vice Minister of Ecology and Environment Zhao Yingmin told the meeting. Yadav suggested the language be changed. Kerry was silent. Timmermans called it a “further disappointment” but “this should not stop us from deciding today on what is a historic, historic decision.” The mood of the meeting, which had been jubilant earlier at the prospect of closing out years of brutal negotiations on the rules governing the 2015 Paris Agreement, plunged. Islanders and some Europeans expressed their shock at the display of raw power that had left them sidelined. For Pacific islanders, whose fate hangs on the eradication of coal power, it was bitterly hard to watch. Fiji’s Attorney General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum summed it up: “What we would like to express is not just our astonishment but our immense disappointment at the manner in which this has been introduced.”³¹⁵

The weakened text left open the timelines for “phasing down” coal, as well as providing scope for some level of ‘dirty’ coal by using the term “unabated”, which has various interpretations just like “inefficient”. The coal agreement was still deemed historic. Jennifer Morgan of Greenpeace said: “They changed a word, but they can’t change the signal – that the era of coal is ending”³¹⁴. Further, this was the first time India had agreed to any text involving ‘coal’, and it was noteworthy that major coal exporters, including Australia, Indonesia, and Colombia had accepted the text³¹⁴.

The major outstanding challenge – on top of the Presidency’s raising ambition agenda – was to finalise the Paris rulebook a great 6 years after Paris. Negotiations on this spanned the entire two weeks of the conference. Finance was the most contentious issue across the remaining rules to establish. COP26 started with a call from the group of 55 countries, the Climate Vulnerable Forum, for the \$100bn a year goal to be achieved as part of a Climate Emergency Pact³¹⁴. This was echoed by the High Ambition Coalition, which comprises the EU and some developing nations. Calls were ultimately unsuccessful, however, as the COP failed to see \$100bn pledged. Instead, developed nations agreed on the Climate Finance Delivery Plan, which expects the \$100bn a year target to be met in 2023, increasing thereafter³¹⁹. Pledges at COP26 for 2022 were estimated to be \$96bn³²⁰. The EU was accused of being the “missing leader” in the High Ambition Coalition, as they had been previously, which partially explained the inability to reach the finance goal³³⁵. Luca Bergamaschi, the founder of the Italian think tank Ecco, said: “There is this huge mismatch, the negotiators are accepting low-ball deals. [EU Green Deal chief Frans] Timmermans and [European Commission President Ursula] von der Leyen haven’t spoken up so they are the missing leaders. The EU is definitely the missing leader.”³³⁵

On loss and damage, which was mentioned in a section of non-legally binding text of the Paris Agreement, developed nations quickly ruled out any such mechanism. The G77 and China were calling for the creation of a Glasgow Loss and Damage facility, which was immediately opposed by the US, Australia, and the EU³²¹. While developed nations were open to considering the contribution of funds to repair loss and damage, they ruled out taking liability for loss and damage (reflecting the understanding of how mammoth such losses/damages from climate change could be)³²⁰. In the end, parties only agreed on establishing a Glasgow Dialogue as part of the Glasgow Climate Pact, aimed at discussing the future financing of the loss and damage experienced by vulnerable developing nations³²⁰.

Adaptation was an unexpected focal point in negotiations. Successful calls from developing nations and the EU on the value of adaptation efforts led to parties agreeing on text that

³¹⁹ Ares, E. and Loft, P. House of Commons Library. 2021. *COP26: Delivering on \$100 billion climate finance*. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/cop26-delivering-on-100-billion-climate-finance/>

³²⁰ Morris, C. BBC News. 2021. *COP26: How much are poor countries getting to fight climate change?* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/57975275>

³²¹ UNEP/DTU. 2021. *Loss and Damage at COP26*. <https://unepdtu.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ld-cop26.pdf>

called on parties to “at least double finance for adaptation” by 2025³²². Associated ‘nature-based solutions’ were brought to the fore in the push for adaptation and holistic mitigation efforts, which contributed to significant momentum behind a huge diplomatic win on deforestation. 110 countries, vitally including Brazil, committed to a commitment to end and reverse deforestation by 2030, backed up by \$19.2bn of public and private funds to kickstart efforts³²³. The UK was also a signatory, with PM Johnson saying “We have to stop the devastating loss of our forests {...and} end the role of humanity as nature’s conqueror, and instead become nature’s custodian”³²². The second largest tropical rainforest also had a fund established for its protection, which will raise \$1.1bn³²².

On carbon markets, a marked success of COP26 was the ultimate agreement on article 6, which had been wildly contentious at the two/three previous summits. This finalised the Paris rulebook, a crucial step in seeing credibility from countries in meeting more and more ambitious targets. The UNFCCC also noted that the Paris rulebook will “give certainty and predictability to both market and non-market approaches in support of mitigations as well as adaptation”³²⁴. Crucially, parties managed this by ruling out the possibility of double counting while still facilitating carbon trading as a core part of the Paris Agreement, which has always been favoured as a cost saving measure. However, there were some concerns the rules were not stringent enough (as a result of compromises in a bid to finally secure the article), particularly in article 6 allowing for ‘zombie credits’ – existing credits – to continue in circulation for some time to bridge the gap between voluntary carbon markets and new top-down markets³²⁵. This would inaccurately inflate climate achievements, while also dampening private incentives for decarbonisation according to certain observers.

COP26 was accompanied by a bustling Green Zone for observers. While “few businesses” attended Paris, they arrived “in their droves in Scotland” so that “the mood on the ground in Glasgow is that if governments fail to rise to the climate challenge, it is up to the private sector to pick up the slack”, as reported by Maitland³²⁶. The finance and wider private sector played a pivotal role in shaping the direction of economies globally. Mark Carney successfully convened a huge number of firms from across financial services, launching on COP26’s Finance Day the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero³²⁷. 450 finance firms in 45 countries, together managing \$130tn of assets, committed to the alliance for “transitioning the economy to net-zero”³²⁵. With the initiative’s workstreams led by industry leaders, including investment bank Macquarie’s CEO leading the workstream on mobilising private capital for critical climate solutions in emerging markets, private capital became – for the first time – a powerful player in climate action, dwarfing public climate finance and demonstrating the private sector’s unilateral momentum³²⁸. Mark Carney announced the progress, saying it committed \$130tn of assets to net-zero by 2050 but also to 50% emission reductions by 2030 as an interim target: “The core message today is that the money is there,

³²² UNFCCC. 2021. *COP26 Reaches consensus on key actions to address climate change*.

<https://unfccc.int/news/cop26-reaches-consensus-on-key-actions-to-address-climate-change>

³²³ Rannard, G. and Gillett, F. BBC News. 2021. *COP26: World leaders promise to end deforestation by 2030*.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-59088498>

³²⁴ Hedley, A. et al. 2021. *COP26: Paris Agreement Article 6 success – a long time coming*. Reed Smith LLP.

<https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=75d8c877-c351-494d-a14b-44ebe0f899e4>

³²⁵ Brooks, C. and Adler, K. IHS Markit. 2021. *COP26: Article 6 rulebook updated, but remains work in progress*.

<https://cleanenergynews.ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/cop26-article-6-rulebook-update-but-remains-work-in-progress.html>

³²⁶ Withey, C. 2021. *COP26: The private sectors’ time to shine*. Maitland.

<https://www.maitland.co.uk/insights/article/cop26-private-sectors-time-shine/>

³²⁷ UN News. 2021. *COP26: ‘Not blah blah blah’, UN Special Envoy Mark Carney presents watershed private sector commitment for climate finance*. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/11/1104812>

³²⁸ Race to Resilience. 2021. *GFANZ launches emerging markets workstream*.

<https://racetozero.unfccc.int/gfanz-launches-emerging-markets-workstream/>

the money is there for the transition, and it's not blah blah blah" - a reference to Greta Thunberg's activist efforts and her ridiculous denouncement of announcements at COP26 as "build back better, blah, blah, blah. Green economy, blah blah blah..."³²⁹. COP26 also saw 60 of the UK's FTSE100 companies pledge net-zero targets, joined by over 2500 small from the UK and 5200 globally³³⁰. The great spillovers from the push for country NDCs were the ambitious and numerous private sector net-zero commitments.

Key Agreements

Parties adopted the Glasgow Climate Pact, a package of decisions to 'keep 1.5C alive'. Summarised:

- Finalisation of the Paris rulebook, in particular article 6 and transparency rules, facilitating the entering into operation of multilateral mechanisms, including emissions trading, to help countries reach NDCs.
- Reaffirmed commitment to \$100bn a year with an action plan to achieve this by 2023.
- Phase-down of unabated coal and subsidies of inefficient fossil fuels.
- Mention of loss and damage to be discussed at future COPs.
- Outlining of adaptation finance measures moving forward³²¹.

Sentiment

On methane commitments:

Justin Trudeau matched the IEA's assessment of how fast methane emissions would have to be cut to achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2050, pledging Canada's methane emissions from its gas/oil infrastructure would be cut by 75% by 2030³⁰⁹. This is a clear shift in the ideological position of Canada with respect to its historically significant role as a reluctant member of the umbrella group.

Ursula von der Leyen: "we cannot wait for 2050, we have to cut emissions fast – and methane is one of the gases we can cut fastest {...} today, methane emissions grow faster than they have ever in the past {...} [cutting methane] is the lowest hanging fruit"³⁰⁹.

World leaders:

Alok Sharma: ""We can now say with credibility that we have kept 1.5 degrees alive. But, its pulse is weak and it will only survive if we keep our promises and translate commitments into rapid action. I am grateful to the UNFCCC for working with us to deliver a successful COP26."³²¹

Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change: "I congratulate all Parties on finalizing the rulebook. This is an excellent achievement! It means that the Paris Agreement can now function fully for the benefit of all, now and in the future."³²¹

³²⁹ Carrington, D. The Guardian. 2021. 'Blah, blah, blah': Greta Thunberg lambasts leaders over climate crisis. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/sep/28/blah-greta-thunberg-leaders-climate-crisis-co2-emissions>

³³⁰ Gov.uk. 2021. COP26 sees UK businesses lead the world in climate change commitments. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cop26-sees-uk-businesses-lead-the-world-in-climate-change-commitments>

PM Johnson: COP26 “sounded the death knell for coal power”³³¹.

Obama attended COP26, contributing to various fringe discussions while also contributing to one plenary: “International cooperation has always been difficult; it is made more difficult by misinformation and propaganda that comes out of social media these days... Getting people to work together on a global scale takes time, and that’s time we don’t have ... If we work hard enough for long enough, those partial victories add up.”³¹⁰

Bhupender Yadav, India’s environment and climate minister: “Developing countries have a right to their fair share of the global carbon budget and are entitled to the responsible use of fossil fuels within this scope. In such a situation, how can anyone expect that developing countries can make promises about phasing out coal and fossil fuel subsidies?”³³²

On finance/loss and damage:

LDC’s Gebru Jember, representing less developed countries: “Delivering US\$100 billion by 2023 isn’t soon enough {...} there is not enough [finance pledged] for adapting to climate change, which was promised to be 50% of the US\$100 billion.”³¹⁹

Dr Emmanuel Tachie-Obeng, Climate Vulnerable Forum: “I believe that the money is there – they don’t want to release it. Because looking at Covid... billions of dollars have been used over the years to take care of Covid. Do you think Covid is more important than climate change?”³¹⁴.

PM of Antigua and Barbuda: “Should no formal mechanism for loss and damage compensation be established, member countries of the UN may be prepared to seek justice in the appropriate justice bodies”³¹⁴.

Rachel Kennerley of Friends of the Earth: “The road to 1.5C just got harder when these talks should have cleared the way to making it a whole lot easier. The UK government cunningly curated announcements throughout this fortnight so that it seemed rapid progress was being made. Here we are though, and the Glasgow get-out clause means that leaders failed to phase out fossil fuels and the richest countries won’t pay historic climate debt.”³³³

On the Paris rulebook:

Kelly Kizzier, EDF Vice President for Climate Change: Article 6 “give countries the tools they need for environmental integrity, to avoid double counting and ultimately to clear a path to get private capital flowing to developing countries”³²³.

On deforestation:

Prof Simon Lewis, UCL: “It is good news to have a political commitments to end deforestation from so many countries, and significant funding to move forward on that

³³¹ Swinford, S. and Burgess, K. The Times. 2021. *COP26: ‘We won. Now China and India will have to explain themselves’*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cop26-we-won-now-china-and-india-will-have-to-explain-themselves-0k73c8lh9>

³³² Spencer, B. and Burgess, K. The Times. 2021. *COP26: Alok Sharma in tears as India and China dilute pledge to phase out coal*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cop26-alok-sharma-in-tears-as-india-and-china-dilute-pledge-to-phase-out-coal-hfd29x7t6>

³³³ The Guardian. 2021. *COP26 reactions: ‘Rich nations have kicked the can down the road’*. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/13/cop26-reactions-rich-nations-have-kicked-the-can-down-the-road>

journey". But, he also referenced a similar declaration in 2014, which "failed to slow deforestation at all"³²².

Jo Blackman, head of forests and advocacy at Global Witness: "While the Glasgow Declaration has an impressive range of signatories from across forest-rich countries, large consumer markets, and financial centres, it nevertheless risks being a reiteration of previous failed commitments if it lacks teeth."³³⁴

On private finance:

Laurence Tubiana, one of the architects of the Paris Agreement: "If the EU won't lead now and build the high ambition coalition we need, no one else will", saying such leadership was necessary to send a signal to financial institutions³³⁵.

Lord Stern, LSE: "There is so much work to do over the next 12 months ahead of Cop27 in Egypt. The work on finance will be crucial to raising ambition. If we are slow to unlock the finance, we will be slow to raise the ambition."³³¹

³³⁴ Taylor, M. Global Citizen. 2021. *Will COP26 Deforestation Pledge Be a Game-Changer or More Broken Promises?* <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/cop26-deforestation-pledge-climate-action/>

³³⁵ Mathiesen, K. Politico. 2021. *EU accused of being the 'missing leader' at COP26 climate talks.* <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-missing-leader-cop26-climate-talks-glasgow/>