

B.A. (Prog.) Semester VI GE
Paper: Sustainability and Development
Unit 4. Inclusive Development

Subtopic: Policies and Global Cooperation for Climate Change (Part 1.)

Background

The threat of climate change is being addressed globally by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): the long-term objective is 'to stabilise atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system'. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to keep global warming below 2 °C, emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) must be halved by 2050 (compared with 1990 levels). Developed countries will need to reduce more – between 80 % and 95 % by 2050; advanced developing countries with large emissions (e.g. China, India and Brazil) will have to limit their emission growth.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty adopted on 9 May 1992 and opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. It then entered into force on 21 March 1994, after a sufficient number of countries had ratified it. The UNFCCC objective is to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". The framework sets non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries and contains no enforcement mechanisms. Instead, the framework outlines how specific international treaties (called "protocols" or "Agreements") may be negotiated to specify further action towards the objective of the UNFCCC.

Initially, an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) produced the text of the Framework Convention during its meeting in New York from 30 April to 9 May 1992. The UNFCCC was adopted on 9 May 1992 and opened for signature on 4 June 1992. The UNFCCC has 197 parties as of December 2015. The convention enjoys broad legitimacy, largely due to its nearly universal membership.

The parties to the convention have met annually from 1995 in Conferences of the Parties (COP) to assess progress in dealing with climate change. In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was concluded and established legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their

greenhouse gas emissions in the period 2008–2012. The 2010 United Nations Climate Change Conference produced an agreement stating that future global warming should be limited to below 2.0 °C (3.6 °F) relative to the pre-industrial level. The Protocol was amended in 2012 to encompass the period 2013–2020 in the Doha Amendment, which as of December 2015 had not entered into force. In 2015 the Paris Agreement was adopted, governing emission reductions from 2020 on through commitments of countries in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), with a view of lowering the target to 1.5 °C

Progress of the world towards climate action

1992— The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted and opened for signatures in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit. 154 signatories to the UNFCCC agreed to stabilize "greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous interference with the climate system." The United States was the fourth nation to ratify the UNFCCC, and the first industrialized nation to do so. The treaty is not legally binding because it sets no mandatory limits on GHG emissions. Instead, the treaty provides for future negotiations to set emissions limits. The first principal revision is the Kyoto Protocol.

1994— The UNFCCC Treaty entered into force after receiving 50 ratifications.

1995— The first Conference of the Parties (COP 1) to the UNFCCC was held in Berlin, Germany. Parties agreed that mechanisms under the UNFCCC were inadequate and agreed to what would be called the Berlin Mandate, which allows parties to make specific commitments. Non-Annex 1 countries are exempted from additional obligations.

1996— COP 2 was held in Geneva, Switzerland. Attendees endorsed the results of the IPCC's second assessment report. The Geneva Ministerial Declaration, which in part called on parties to accelerate negotiations on a legally binding protocol, was noted, but not adopted.

1997— COP 3 was held in Kyoto, Japan. On December 11, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted by consensus with more than 150 signatories. The Protocol included legally binding emissions targets for developed country Parties for the six major GHGs, which are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. The Protocol offered additional means of meeting targets by way of three

market-based mechanisms: emissions trading, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and Joint Implementation (JI). Under the Protocol, industrialized countries' actual emissions have to be monitored and precise records have to be kept of the trades carried out.

The United States signed the Kyoto Protocol, but the Clinton administration never sent it to Congress for ratification. In July 1997, the Senate expressed its opposition to the terms of the Berlin Mandate by passing the "Byrd-Hagel" Resolution (95-0 vote).

1998— COP 4 was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Parties adopted the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, allowing a two year period to develop mechanisms for implementing the Kyoto Protocol. The COP also decided to review the financial mechanism of the Convention every four years.

1999— COP 5 was held in Bonn, Germany. According to the UNFCCC, Parties continued negotiation efforts with a focus on “the adoption of the guidelines for the preparation of national communications by [developed] countries, capacity building, transfer of technology and flexible mechanisms.”

2000— COP 6 part I was held in The Hague, Netherlands. Negotiations faltered, and parties agreed to meet again.

2001— COP 7 was held in Marrakesh, Morocco. The detailed rules for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol were adopted and called the Marrakesh Accords. The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) was established to “finance projects relating to: adaptation; technology transfer and capacity building; energy transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management; and economic diversification.” The Least Developed Countries Fund was also “established to support a work programme to assist Least Developed Country Parties (LDCs) carry out, inter alia [among other things], the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs).”

2002— COP 8 was held in Delhi, India. Parties adopted the Delhi Ministerial Declaration that, among other things, called for developed countries to transfer technology to developing countries.

2003— COP 9 was held in Milan, Italy. New emissions reporting guidelines based on IPCC recommendations were adopted. The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the

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on issues relating to development and transfer of technologies; land use, land use change and forestry; the UNFCCC's financial mechanism; [developed countries'] national communications; capacity building; adaptation and response measures; and UNFCCC Article 6 (education, training and public awareness) examining the issues of adaptation and mitigation, the needs of least developed countries (LDCs), and future strategies to address climate change.”

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COP 6 part II was held in Bonn, Germany. Consensus was reached on what was called the Bonn Agreements. All nations except the United States agreed on the mechanisms for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. The U.S. participated in observatory status only.

2005— COP 11/CMP 1 were held in Montreal, Canada. This conference was the first to take place after the Kyoto Protocol took force. The annual meeting between the parties (COP) was supplemented by the first annual Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP). The countries that had ratified the UNFCCC, but not accepted the Kyoto Protocol, had observer status at the latter conference. The parties addressed issues such as “capacity building, development and transfer of technologies, the adverse effects of climate change on developing and least developed countries, and several financial and budget-related issues, including guidelines to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).” (UNFCCC)

2006— COP 12/CMP 2 were held in Nairobi, Kenya. Financial mechanisms were reviewed, and further decisions were made about the Special Climate Change Fund.

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2007— COP 13/CMP 3 were held in Bali. COP parties agreed to a Bali Action Plan to negotiate GHG mitigation actions after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. The Bali Action Plan did not require binding GHG targets for developing countries.

2008— COP 14/CMP 4 were held in Poznan, Poland. Countries began negotiations on the financing mechanism to help poor countries adapt to the effects of climate change. Negotiations continued about what would succeed the Kyoto Protocol.

2009— June – As part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process, governments met in Bonn, Germany, to begin discussions on draft negotiations that would form the basis of an agreement at Copenhagen.

December – COP 15 was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. It failed to reach agreement on binding commitments after the Kyoto Protocol commitment period ends in 2012. During the final hours of the summit, leaders from the United States, Brazil, China, Indonesia, India and South Africa agreed to what would be called the Copenhagen Accord which recognized the need to limit the global temperature rise to 2°C based on the science of climate change. While no legally binding commitments were required by the deal, countries were asked to pledge voluntary GHG reduction targets. \$100 billion was pledged in climate aid to developing countries.

U.S. State Department: U.S. Submission on Copenhagen Agreed Outcome

2010— January-November – The United States and over 130 nations agreed to the Copenhagen Accord that was announced in December 2009.

November-December – COP 16 was held in Cancun, Mexico. Parties officially adopted major tenets of the Copenhagen Accord including limiting global warming to 2°C, protecting vulnerable forests, and establishing a framework for a Green Climate Fund meant to deliver funds to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation actions.

2011— November-December – COP 17 was held in Durban, South Africa. Parties agreed to the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action which is framework to establish a new international emissions reduction protocol. Under the Durban Platform, the details of the new protocol are to be finalized by 2015 and it will come into force in 2020. The European Union also agreed to extend their Kyoto Protocol targets, which were slated to expire at the end of 2012, into a second commitment period from 2013-2017. Russia, Japan and Canada did not commit to new targets.

2012— COP 18 was held in Doha, Qatar. Parties agreed to extend the expiring Kyoto Protocol, creating a second commitment phase that would begin on January 1, 2013 and end December 31, 2020. This is considered as a bridge to the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, agreed upon in 2011, and set to come into force in 2020. Parties failed to set a pathway to provide \$100 billion per year by 2020 for developing countries to finance climate change adaptation, as agreed upon at COP 15 in Copenhagen. The concept of "loss and damage" was introduced as developed countries pledged to help developing countries and small island nations pay for the losses and damages from climate change that they are already experiencing.

2013— COP 19 was held in Warsaw, Poland. Parties were expected to create a roadmap for the 2015 COP in Paris where a legally binding treaty to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is expected to be finalized (in order to come into effect in 2020). Differences of opinion on responsibility of GHG emissions between developing and developed countries led to a flexible ruling on the wording and a plan to discuss further at the COP 20 in Peru. A non-binding agreement was reached among countries to set up a system tackling the "loss and damage" issue, although details of how to set up the mechanism were not discussed. Concerning climate finance, the United Nations' Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) Program, aimed at preserving the world's forests, was formally adopted. Little progress was made on developed countries committing to the agreed upon plan of providing \$100 billion per year by 2020 to developing countries.

2014— December – The 20th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 20) is take place in Lima, Peru.

The Paris Agreement builds upon the Convention and for the first time brings all nations into a common cause to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so.

2015- The Paris Agreement is a landmark environmental accord that was adopted by nearly every nation in 2015 to address climate change and its negative impacts. ... The agreement includes commitments from all major emitting countries to cut their climate-altering pollution and to strengthen those commitments over time.

The Paris Agreement central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5

degrees Celsius. Additionally, the agreement aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change. To reach these ambitious goals, appropriate financial flows, a new technology framework and an enhanced capacity building framework will be put in place, thus supporting action by developing countries and the most vulnerable countries, in line with their own national objectives. The Agreement also provides for enhanced transparency of action and support through a more robust transparency framework.

COP22- Marrakech

The main thrust of COP 22 was to develop rules for operationalizing the Paris agreement and advance work on Pre-2020 actions.

- The “Marrakech Action Proclamation for our climate and sustainable development” initiated work on Adaptation Fund to serve the Paris Agreement. The Pre-2020 action, including mobilization of \$ 100 billion per year and other support to developing countries was a key element of the Proclamation.
- The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action aims to mobilize climate actions quickly and to reap the benefits in efficiency and effectiveness through partnerships and coordination between different actors. It lists out some of the progressive steps taken and benefits of Climate action in the Yearbook of Global Climate Action 2018-
- About 60% of the initiatives are producing outputs that put them on a path to achieving their desired environmental or social outcomes.
- The outputs from cooperative initiatives are increasingly being delivered in low- or middle-income countries. This reflects increased climate action in developing countries and increased international cooperation.
- Climate action is re-shaping the financial sector to help transition to a net-zero carbon and resilient society. Businesses and investors are also reporting on and are managing climate risks and opportunities and implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)

COP23 - Bonn (chaired by Fiji):

- Talanoa dialogue a facilitative dialogue in 2018, to take stock of the collective efforts of Parties in relation to progress towards the long-term goal referred to Paris Agreement and to inform the preparation of nationally determine contributions (NDCs) was launched.

- Pre-2020 implementation and ambition: Parties agreed that there will be two stock-takes to discuss pre-2020 commitments - in 2018 and 2019 - before the Paris Agreement becomes operative in 2020.

- Gender Action Plan: The first ever Gender Action Plan to the UNFCCC was adopted at COP23.

COP24- KATOWICE

The COP24 climate change conference, held in Katowice, Poland, from 3 to 15 December 2018, agreed detailed rules for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, with the exception of rules on market mechanisms, a subject on which international negotiations will continue throughout 2019. In December 2018, three years after the conclusion of the Paris Agreement, the 24th conference of the parties (COP) to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change was held in Katowice -- the third COP hosted by Poland. In October 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had released a special report on global warming of 1.5 degrees, as requested by COP21 in 2015. It concluded that global emissions would need to drop rapidly during the next decade to avoid the worst consequences of global warming exceeding 1.5 degrees. Delegates at COP24 argued over how to acknowledge the IPCC report. They decided to welcome its timely completion, but stopped short of endorsing its contents.

Outcomes

The Katowice decisions constitute the 'rulebook' for the Paris Agreement. They give an operational interpretation to the Agreement and top-down direction to complement the bottom-up approach of 'nationally determined contributions' (NDCs). A key issue in the negotiations was the long-standing differentiation between developed and developing countries. The rulebook binds all parties to the same reporting standards, but allows flexibility (time limited) for countries that need it. Moreover, developed countries are expected to have economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets. The agreed rulebook: gives guidance on the content and format of NDCs, including a structured summary which forms the basis for regular reporting; sets out a regime for transparency and accountability, with common rules for measuring and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, finance and adaptation; defines processes for the five-yearly global stocktake of the effectiveness of climate action, which includes information-gathering, a technical assessment and a consideration of the outputs; establishes a committee to review non-performance of parties

(such as failure to submit NDCs or reports or not acting on technical reviews), with the consent of the concerned party.

However, no agreement was reached on rules for international cooperation in achieving national pledges, such as voluntary carbon markets. Draft rules to avoid double counting of emission cuts were opposed by Brazil. Negotiations on this issue will continue in 2019, with a view to reaching agreement at the next COP. Concluding the Talanoa dialogue, the presidents of COP23 and COP24 issued a non-binding call for action.

Conclusion

Climate change is happening and it is caused largely by anthropogenic activity. Its impacts are beginning to be felt and will be worsen in the decades ahead unless we take action. The increasing rate of global warming—courtesy of carbon dioxide and other green house gases emissions from human activities—have led to climatic changes and environmental degradation, which in turn have resulted to great challenges in relation to diseases and human health. It is therefore important that stakeholders and decision makers at industrial, government and international policy levels come up with stringent and workable means of cutting down on green house gases emission to combat the spread of global warming effects, and the resultant climate change, which has produced devastating impacts especially among poorer nations. Further, there should be increased funding of adaptation and coping programs and projects in affected areas to minimize the impacts on human health and curtail the spread of diseases