

NTS ALERT

Climate Change Negotiations: the Road from Bali to Poznan

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007 was a landmark meeting which culminated in the creation of the Bali Action Plan – a roadmap for a two-year process of formal negotiations in devising the specifics for a post-Kyoto Protocol agreement – to mitigate and adapt to the problem of global warming. This edition of NTS Alert therefore takes a look at how far negotiations have come a year on since Bali.

Pit Stops on the Road to Poznan

In the lead up to the 14th Conference of Parties (COP14) in Poznan, Poland, three preparatory meetings were held in 2008 to formulate a framework for discussion – specifically in Bangkok, Thailand; Bonn, Germany; and Accra, Ghana. This section takes a brief look at what was discussed during these three meetings, and more importantly, the deliberations of two Ad Hoc Working Groups – the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP). The former was created during the COP13 in Bali in December 2007 with the aim of enabling the full, effective and sustained implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change (UNFCCC) through long-term cooperative action, up to and beyond 2012, so as to come to a consensus and adopt a decision at the COP15 in Copenhagen in late 2009. The AWG-KP was established in 2005 and serves as a platform to discuss future commitments for industrialised countries under the Kyoto Protocol, also with the aim of completing its deliberations in Copenhagen.

Bangkok Climate Change Talks

Three months after the landmark meeting in Bali, a meeting was held in Bangkok from 31 March to 4 April 2008. According to UNFCCC's Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer, the Bangkok meeting was fruitful as countries identified how issues would be addressed specifically in 2008. This included, in particular, issues raised in Bali that needed further exploring or fine tuning. The Bangkok meeting also mapped out the focus of the next major climate change conference, to be held in December 2009 in Poznan, Poland, which will address the issue of risk management and risk reduction strategies, technology and the key elements of a shared long-term vision for joint action in combating climate change, including a long-term target to reduce greenhouse gas

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emissions. In a video address during the opening session of the meeting, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an environmentally sound, long-term solution based on common but differentiated responsibilities, and a “delicate balance” between globally inclusive action and poverty eradication.

Mr. de Boer then highlighted the main challenges facing participants in formulating the post-Kyoto agreement in the span of one and a half years. First, to fully engage major developing countries in the deliberations. Second, to effectively provide financial resources that will make it possible for these developing countries to engage in environment-friendly practices without harming their primary concerns surrounding economic growth and poverty reduction. However, Mr. de Boer added that such finances would not begin to flow unless major industrialised countries make significant emission reduction commitments.

In highlighting the limited time available to conclude negotiations, Mr. de Boer also emphasised the importance of negotiating a clear work programme for the newly established AWG-LCA, which was meeting for the first time in Bangkok. He also looked forward to fruitful discussions during the AWG-KP session, which would revisit the rules that govern and define the emission reduction commitments of Annex I Parties.

During the thematic workshop for the AWG-KP, participants agreed that the use of emissions trading, in particular the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation programme, should be continued and improved as the means for developed countries to meet emission reduction targets and at the same time contribute towards sustainable development. Such an agreement signals the importance of improving market-based mechanisms so as to effectively engage businesses in addressing climate change. The AWG-KP also agreed to include forest-related activities as a means to achieve emissions reductions in the Kyoto Protocol’s second commitment period after 2012. There were, however, diverging views on the inclusion of the international aviation and

maritime transport sectors in greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets in the post-2012 framework. While some states called for tougher global regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from ships and airplanes, others felt that inclusion of such sectors would be a blow to their economies.

The AWG-LCA’s inaugural session reflected a positive start, as parties agreed on the group’s work programme, which would structure negotiations on various aspects of climate change mitigation and adaptation into manageable and realistic work commitments in the lead up to the Copenhagen meeting in late 2009. It was also agreed that all five main elements of the negotiations - adaptation, mitigation, technology, finance and a shared vision for long-term cooperative action – would be used in the succeeding climate change talks for the year.

“It is my firm belief that we will only address those challenges in a process where people feel their legitimate interests are respected at the negotiating table.”

- UNFCCC’s Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer

Bonn Climate Change Talks

The five elements of the negotiations, as agreed in the Bangkok Climate Change Talks, were discussed via three workshops, which looked at (1) Advancing adaptation through finance and technology, including national adaptation programmes of actions (NAPAs); (2) Investment and financial flows to address climate change; and (3) Effective mechanisms and enhanced means for the removal of obstacles to technology transfer to developing countries.

At the workshop on advancing adaptation through finance and technology there was a convergence of views on the importance of national planning for adaptation, as it was considered as an instrument to raise national political awareness and mobilise national capacities and resources for adaptation actions. In the case of developing countries, it serves as a means of attracting external financial and

technological support. A range of presenters – such as Bangladesh, Cook Islands, Gambia, Slovenia and the United States of America – suggested that NAPAs should be undertaken by all developing countries, with external support. There were also calls for such plans to have a broader scope than NAPAs, to identify national adaptation priorities, to be integrated with national sustainable development plans or programmes, to encourage enabling policy and institutional environments for adaptation, and to be coherent with national communications to the COP. In addition, a recurring theme raised during the presentations and discussions was the difficulty faced by developing countries in accessing multiple external funding sources for national adaptation actions.

Substantial progress was made in the workshop on investment and financial flows to address climate change, as several countries made concrete proposals that appear to have the

potential to increase the financial resources available to address climate change (See Table A for selected proposals). Many participants also noted the urgent need for development of economic valuation or assessment tools to enable determination of the actual costs of adaptation. In light of these developments, participants provided innovative ideas for consideration in the post-2012 agenda, especially suggestions that espouse predictable and sustainable financial resources for mitigation, adaptation and technology cooperation. Participants also agreed that some requirements can be met through funds under the Convention and market mechanisms, while others can be met through enabling policies that influence private-sector investments.

The workshop on effective mechanisms and enhanced means for the removal of obstacles to technology transfer to developing countries also produced several innovative proposals and ideas. Participants noted that the lack of human and

Table A – Proposals made during Workshop on Investment and Financial Flows

Proposal	Member states
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a convention adaptation fund under the guidance and authority of the COP. • An insurance mechanism and a technology fund to fast-track development of renewable energy technologies 	Association of Small Island States (AOSIS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World climate change fund to support mitigation, adaptation and technology cooperation through financial contributions from developed and developing countries based on criteria such as emissions, population and gross domestic product (GDP) 	Mexico
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaling up funding from developed countries through a percentage of GDP in addition to existing official development assistance to support an adaptation fund and a multilateral technology acquisition fund 	China
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptation should be financed through auctioning a share of assigned amount of units of all Parties included in Annex I to the Convention (Annex I Parties) 	Norway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing countries should earn credits for implementing nationally appropriate mitigation actions and a market for such credits should be created by demand originating from deeper emission reductions commitments for Annex I Parties 	Republic of Korea
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A global carbon tax with an exemption for countries whose annual per capita emissions are less than 1.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide. • Resources generated would flow into a multilateral fund for adaptation and insurance along with a national climate change fund 	Switzerland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New financing architecture which consists of different financing streams to address specific requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ technology acquisition and a technology transfer fund ○ venture capital fund for emerging technologies ○ collaborative climate research fund 	India

*Source: Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention, Second Session, (6 June 2008), Report on the workshop on investment and financial flows to address climate change, Bonn, 2-12 June 2008





institutional capacities – including the capacity to absorb new technologies – was one of the key barriers for developing countries in better adopting, operating, maintaining and diffusing environmentally sound technologies. It was therefore proposed that enhanced capacity building could be the key element of an enhanced technology transfer framework. There was also a need to formulate mechanisms and means for the removal of obstacles to the scaling up of deployment, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including the removal of barriers to domestic and international financing.

In deliberating the details of establishing a new international mechanism or enhanced framework for the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, many participants raised the idea of creating a multilateral technology acquisition/cooperation fund. Various suggestions were made regarding the functions of this fund, including

- (a) to develop a means of disseminating existing technologies and purchase of licences of patented technologies;
- (b) to support international cooperation on research and development, support venture capital based on a public-private partnership and remove barriers. For small island developing states, the fund could be used to fast-track the development of renewable technologies;
- (c) to provide performance assessment and monitor the speed and range of technology flow and the cost-effectiveness of resulting emission reductions; and
- (d) to provide incentives to reward and credit development and transfer of technologies.

These suggestions and others would be tabled for further discussion in Poznan.

Accra Climate Change Talks

The third major UNFCCC gathering – since the Bali Conference – was held in Accra Ghana in August 2008. The meeting examined a number of crucial issues related to enhanced action on mitigation. These included reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries, which account for around 20 percent of global

emissions. In his address during the opening session of the talks, the President of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor, highlighted the grave extent to which his country had been affected by climate change – with serious drought and flooding occurring in the northern regions. Greater financial and technological assistance from developing states is therefore crucial in mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change in developing countries such as Ghana. Such views were also echoed by Eduardo Dopazo, Fund manager of the Carbon Finance Unit in the World Bank. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Accra Talks, he noted that a total of 170 billion US dollars would be required between now and 2030 to enable developing countries to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change. Moreover, with insufficient funding from the UNFCCC to support efforts in developing countries, the private sector would be expected to account for 80 percent of the sum.

During the AWG-LCA's deliberations, participants noted that most of the challenges and complexities associated with the implementation of sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions were related to national economic, social and political circumstances. Some of these challenges included:

- (a) the costs and social implications of sectoral restructuring and diffusion of advanced environmentally sound technologies;
- (b) a lack of qualified human resources and weak infrastructure for policy enforcement;
- (c) the diversity of sectors and industries as well as of factors that determine emissions (or reduce them);
- (d) a lack of homogeneity of technologies, processes and other factors preventing the setting of norms; and
- (e) inhibited technological innovation resulting from closely held intellectual property rights.

Nevertheless, concrete proposals were made to address these issues, and included crediting mechanisms involving sectoral crediting targets; the identification of sector-specific actions based on the analysis of emission reduction potentials and indicators; and the setting of a target for emissions from international shipping. There

"The clock is ticking... We need to be pragmatic and move beyond rhetoric to make progress as we move towards Copenhagen".

- Ghanaian President John Kufuor during opening session of the Accra Meeting

were also suggestions of using indicators such as energy and carbon intensity and activity levels.

Other areas that need to be further discussed include the nature and type of cooperative sectoral approaches and sector-specific actions. Effective support mechanisms that involve technology, finance and capacity building are also needed to enhance the implementation of Article 4, paragraph 1(c), of the Convention – which refers to addressing areas such as the energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management sectors. The possible contribution of sector-specific actions to nationally appropriate mitigation actions in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner should also be discussed.

In the deliberations of the AWG-KP, further discussions were conducted in analysing the means that may be available to Annex I Parties to reach their emission reduction targets and on identifying ways to enhance their effectiveness and contribution to sustainable development. These means included (1) Emissions trading and project-based mechanisms; (2) Land use, land-use change and forestry; (3) reviewing greenhouse gases sectors and source categories; and (4) Possible approaches targeting sectoral emissions. Amongst the various suggestions put forward, several participants raised the point that incentives should be based on national reference emission levels, which should be revised periodically and take into account national circumstances. It was also proposed that reference emission levels should be based not only on historical data but also by taking into account emission trends.

The meeting ended with participants noting that further discussions were needed on issues related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, exploring the use of non-

market financial resources and market-based mechanisms as policy approaches and positive incentives, as well as assessing the implications of different options to address issues related to permanence, addition and displacement of emissions. Speaking to reporters on the final day of the meeting, Mr. de Boer noted that the Accra meeting was significant as it provided “the basis for real negotiations to begin in Poznan” and that negotiations had gained momentum thus reflecting the willingness and commitment of governments to address climate change.

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Arriving in Poznan

The 14th United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP14, was held on 1-13 December 2008 in Poznan, Poland. The conference was attended by ministers from 192 countries and over 11,500 participants. The Poznan meeting was a milestone towards the





commitments to be reached in Copenhagen in 2009.

Was There Any Achievement?

The COP14 ended with mixed feelings amongst the participants. Environment activists, NGOs and representatives from the developing countries largely argued that the meeting in Poznan did not make substantial progress. However, some countries and UN representatives responded by noting that the COP14 was never expected to result in a groundbreaking outcome; rather, it was meant to serve as a preparatory ground for the COP15 at Copenhagen in 2009.

Despite the criticism about the result of the conference, there were several main outcomes worth noting. First, and probably the most significant progress made, was the agreement on

the management of a UN Adaptation Fund to help developing countries. This means that a mechanism by which financial assistance to help countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change in conducting adaptation had been legalised and is expected to be disbursed some time in 2009. The lobbying by developing countries for easier access to the money succeeded and the negotiations were supported by international NGOs such as, among others, Oxfam, Christian Aid and Tearfund. On another note, this showed the significant role played by NGOs in reaching agreements on some of the tough issues. Nevertheless, the amount of the transferable funds made available to the developing countries is a contested issue that will be elaborated further in the next section.

Second, progress was made on how environment-friendly technology could be transferred to

The Journey of the COP

The task of the Conference of Parties (COP) is to review the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and any related legal instruments and to make the decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention.

COP1 Berlin, 1995

COP2 Geneva, 1996

COP3 Tokyo, 1997

→ the Kyoto Protocol was adopted. The Kyoto Protocol sets individual, legally binding targets for industrialised countries prepared to take positive steps to curb emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) from sources within their remit.

COP4 Buenos Aires, 1998

COP5 Bonn, 1999

COP6 the Hague, 2000 continued in Bonn, 2001

→ Bonn Agreements was adopted.

COP7 Marrakech, 2001

→ Marrakech Accord was adopted.

COP8 New Delhi, 2002

COP9 Milan, 2003

COP10 Buenos Aires, 2004

COP11 Montreal, 2005

→ The Kyoto Protocol came into force on 16 February. The first Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

COP12 Nairobi, 2006

COP13 Bali, 2007

→ Bali Roadmap that includes Bali Action Plan was approved.

COP14 Poznan, 2008

Source

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: Handbook. Bonn, Germany: Climate Change Secretariat, Bonn, Germany, 2006; <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/handbook.pdf>.

developing countries. It was marked by the endorsement of the Global Environment Facility's Poznan Strategic Programme on Technology Transfer. The programme aims to scale up the level of investment by pushing private investments that developing countries need both for mitigation and adaptation technologies. Prior to the meeting in Poznan, a similar topic was

discussed in a conference hosted by the Chinese government in collaboration with the UN in November 2009. The conference focused on the development and transfer of the climate-friendly technologies (see the box below).

Third, there was an agreement that deforestation needed to be reduced. An initial sign of tangible

Beijing High Level Conference on Climate Change: Technology Development and Technology Transfer

As noted in the Bali Action Plan, progress in the development, deployment and transfer of cleaner climate-friendly technologies is essential in addressing climate change. To this note, Xie Zhenhua, the Vice-Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of China added that the Chinese government considers technology transfer to be a high priority and that it would like to take a more sustainable development path than the one that resulted in the climate change impact we are now facing. In keeping with this line, China in collaboration with the UN hosted a high level conference on climate-related technology development and transfer in Beijing on 7-8 November 2008. More than 30 ministerial-level representatives, four heads of UN agencies, and over 700 participants from over 70 countries participated in the Conference.

In the opening session, Wen Jiabao as the Premier of the State Council of China announced China's commitment to combating climate change by declaring its policies, measures and achievements in addressing climate change. Premier Jiabao also conveyed the multiple challenges of having to grow the economy, eliminate poverty and reduce greenhouse gas emission that confronted China at the same time. He said that China realises that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the UN Millenium Development Goals and the framework of sustainable development must be upheld altogether in addressing climate change. Similarly, in his address, Yvo de Boer, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC stated that "climate change action should not jeopardise developing countries' overriding goals of poverty eradication and economic growth".

The conference looked into the current status and development of climate-related technologies and the current status and trends in technology transfer as well as the obstacles to it. It was recognised that the weak capacity of developing countries in technology development and deployment demanded for a transfer of climate-friendly technology. It was also noted that difficulties remain in international cooperation owing to the lack of effective policy guidance, incentives, necessary financial supports as well as a fair and effective institutional arrangement for the such cooperation. The conference then discussed policy options and possible mechanisms to enhance international cooperation in technology transfer to developing countries under the UNFCCC.

China reaffirmed the significance of international cooperation in this area. Thus, the conference ended with China's initiative to create an effective international cooperation in terms of technology development and transfer that should be led by the developing countries, involve the role of market as well as private sector, and be based on differentiated responsibilities.

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progress in this area was the statement by the Brazilian environment minister to significantly reduce deforestation in the Amazon forest.

Fourth, a shared vision for long-term cooperative action on climate change was affirmed. A work plan for 2009 was also agreed upon together with the vision so that the UNFCCC can aim to deliver an ambitious outcome in Copenhagen. Moreover, Professor Maciej Nowicki, the Environment Minister of Poland, argued in this meeting that the partnership between the developing and developed countries to combat climate change has shifted beyond rhetoric and turned into real action. In the meeting it was noted that developing countries such as Mexico, South Africa and Indonesia have worked on new climate change strategies; India, China and Egypt have adopted climate change plans and programmes while Nigeria, Angola and Pakistan are developing theirs.

The Lack of Progress in Poznan

Apart from the abovementioned progress, there have been several criticisms of the outcome of the Poznan meeting. According to Xie Zhenhua, Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of China, the process of negotiations had been tough and failed to meet expectations as the developed countries and their developing counterparts were at odds in their stances on a number of issues.

One such issue was with regard to the Adaptation Fund. Earlier discussions on the Adaptation Fund had noted that financial resources for the fund would come from two percent of certified emission reductions (CERs) issued for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) projects. The fund, which was approved during the Bali climate talks last December, has yet to disburse any money to the developing countries owing to legal and technical complications in 2008. During discussions in Poznan, some developing countries suggested that the two percent levy on CERs be increased to three percent. This would provide additional money for the current 80 million dollar fund that helps poor countries protect themselves against floods, drought and storms. However, while industrial nations – in particular the

European Union, Japan, Canada, Australia and Russia – admitted that billions of dollars are needed for the challenging task, they did not agree to an increase in the carbon market levy. As such, the developing and emerging economies accused the industrialised nations of "callousness" and a "vision gap". The discussion hence collapsed after about three hours into the start of the final plenary session of the UN conference.

According to Prodipto Ghosh, member of the Indian Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, the discussions fell apart because of the refusal of some countries to tolerate the least loss of profits from trading in carbon. UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer, also commented that the meeting had caused bitterness owing to its failure to resolve the adaptation issue. He noted the importance of engaging developing countries in arriving at a deal during the COP15 in Copenhagen. Moreover, an important part of engaging developing countries is mobilising resources. Rich countries, he suggested, refrained from committing because they see it "as part of a financial package to deliver a broader agreement".

This was also compounded by the current global financial crisis, which resulted in richer countries being less willing to part with their fund. Such was the view of members of the European Union, who felt that allowing easy access to cash in an economic downturn could set an incongruous precedent. According to German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel, the developed states wanted to ensure that the credibility of projects and that the funds channelled into them would be put to effective use. Such a stance seemed to question the EU's role as a leader in the fight against climate change and was aptly summed up by Guyana's President Bharrat Jagdeo's response: "If Europe sends a signal that it can make deep cuts only in prosperous times, what signal does this send to India and China?"

There were also disagreements in discussions regarding targets for reducing carbon emissions. To the dismay of developed countries, developing countries insisted that the

industrialised countries should slash 25-40 percent of their emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. China went a step further by suggesting that the 25-40 percent target of the developed countries should be a "minimum" amount to leave more room for their developing counterparts. Moreover, China felt that it was important to include a mid-term emission cut target, to ensure that the long-term targets would be achieved. However, United States negotiators – who were part of the outgoing Bush administration – remained rather silent during the meeting given the upcoming change in the administration in Washington. Nevertheless, there was a sense amongst participants in the meeting that the incoming President of the United States, Barack Obama, would provide a greater impetus to addressing climate change. Till then, negotiations on emission cuts seem to be at a standstill.

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