

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) State of Play and Perspectives for West Africa

Climate Conference in Copenhagen (Source: IIED, 2009)

Summary

1. From Rio (1992) to Cancun (2010)

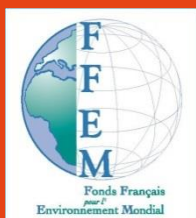
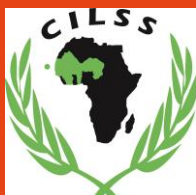
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Synthesis

After the publication of the Brundtland Report in 1987, alerting the international community about the dangers of global changes, including climate changes, the Intergovernmental Panel of Experts on Climate Change (IPCC) is established in 1988.

Soon after, at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the UNFCCC is created. It adopts an armed wing in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol, which enters into force in 2005.

The first commitment period of the Protocol (2008-2012) did not address the issue, covering less than a third of global Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions and setting a modest target in terms of GHG emissions reduction (-5.2% in 2008-2012 compared to 1990).

The opposition of the United States to any reduction of their GHG emissions ("The American way of life is not negotiable!" - George Bush, 1992) has often been put forward to explain the low ambition of the Protocol.

The reality is less simple: the climate negotiations involve more than 190 countries with diverse interests and have become complex, far exceeding climate and abating on geopolitical or even philosophical issues.

This Protocol was supposed to be strengthened in 2009 at the Climate Conference in Copenhagen.

Political tension was high before this Conference: "No plan B in case of failure" (Barroso, 2009). Five years later, the Plan B is still under negotiation...

Agreeing on a multilateral treaty on the post-2020 climate regime - by 2015 at the COP21 in Paris - is even more urgent that all signals are red, as evidenced by the last IPCC Report (2013).

In addition, the last to pollute will be the first affected: developing countries that have low GHG emissions compared to industrialised countries already bear the brunt of the effects of climate change and will suffer even more.

In this context, the West African countries ardently defend their positions:

- Applying the principles of "Common But Differentiated Responsibility" (CBDR) and "Transparency" and asking the developed countries to be exemplary;
- Increasing greatly climate finance in particular for adaptation;
- Integrating agroforestry in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM);
- Operationalising the "Loss and Damage Mechanism".

Introduction

This note reminds in its first section the main features of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, presents the Parties involved and summarises the negotiations that took place between the Climate Conferences of Bali (2007) and Cancun (2010).

The second section outlines the results of the recent Climate Conferences, after the failure of the Copenhagen Conference in 2009: creation of the Durban Platform in 2011, adoption of an amendment to the Kyoto

Protocol in Doha in 2012, creation of the Doha Gateway to achieve a Treaty on the post-2020 regime, and latest advances at the Climate Conference in Warsaw (2013).

Finally, the last section presents some of the key challenges for West African countries and their related positions, as part of the preparation for the post-2020 agreement: CBDR and transparency, climate finance, agro-forestry and CDM, "Loss and Damage Mechanism".

1. From Rio (1992) to Cancun (2010)

UNFCCC

Elaboration: Earth Summit in Rio, 1992

Entry into force: March 1994

Ratification: 195 Parties

Main Objective: "To stabilise Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system"

Annexes to the UNFCCC: I = 41 Developed countries; II = 24 Richest Countries

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Elaboration: 3rd Climate Conference in Kyoto, 1997

Entry into force: February 2005

Ratification: 193 Parties

Main Objective: To set binding GHG emissions reduction commitments. Globally: - 5.2% of GHG emissions in 2008/2012 compared to 1990.

Annexes to the KP: A = 6 GHG included: CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFC, PFC, SF₆, B = 39 Countries with binding commitments

I.1. UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol

After the creation of the Intergovernmental Panel of Experts on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 and the release of its first report in 1990, science and climate negotiations have progressed in parallel:

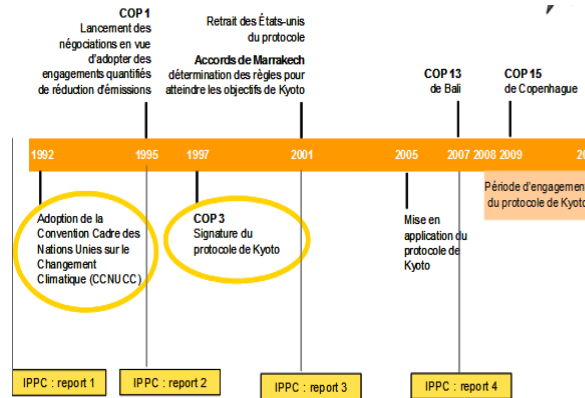


Figure 1 - Negotiations from 1992 to 2012 (Source: Organisation internationale de la francophonie, 2009)

The first step of the negotiations was the adoption of the UNFCCC in the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, simultaneously with the Biodiversity and Desertification Conventions.

Five years later, the UNFCCC will be completed by an "armed wing", the Kyoto Protocol, in order to compel the developed countries to reduce their GHG emissions.

The Kyoto Protocol innovates by creating "flexible mechanisms": Carbon Market, Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and Joint Implementation (JI).

Assuming that the emission of one ton of CO₂ at any location in the world has the same impact in terms of greenhouse effect, these mechanisms allow a State or a company to buy carbon credits (GHG emissions reduction) to third parties.

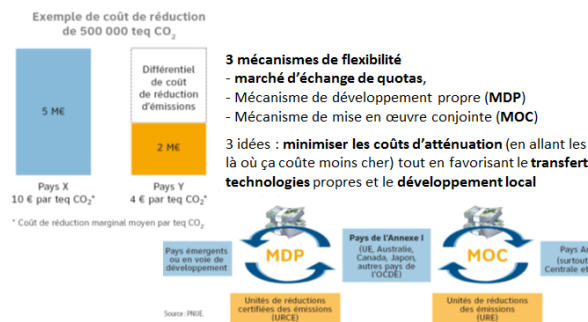


Figure 2 – Flexible mechanisms (Source: Caisse des dépôts et consignations – Climat, 2007)

I.2. Parties Involved

The 195 Parties are gathered into two blocks: « non-Annex I » vs « Annex I »:

The two main blocks of negotiations

→ 154 "non-Annex I" Parties, mostly included in the G77 + China, with sub-blocks:

- "Panicking" countries of the Alliance of Small Island States: **AOSIS**;
- "Undergoing" countries, affected by the worst effects of climate change: **Least Developed Countries - LDCs** (many are part of the **African Group**);
- Countries "on the defensive": **BASIC** = Brazil, South Africa, India, and China;
- "Protesting" countries of the Bolivarian Alliance: **ALBA**.

→ 41 "Annex I" Parties, industrialised countries almost all in the **OECD** (28 Parties) and/or "Economies in Transition" (15 Parties), with "sub-blocks":

- "Passive" countries of the **Umbrella Group** (Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, USA);
- "Active" countries of the Umbrella Group, with marginal influence: Norway, Ukraine;
- "Most Active" countries but isolated: 28 countries of the European Union.

Figure 3 – Blocks in the climate negotiations (Source: SalvaTerra, 2013)

Most West African countries are members of three sub-blocks within the "non-Annex I" block:

- G77 + China. It includes 130 countries, plus China as "associate member". These countries were historically part of the Non-Aligned Movement established at the Bandung Conference in 1955;
- Least Developed Countries (LDCs). They are 49, including 33 in Africa, 15 in Asia, and 1 in the Caribbean. These poor countries are the least GHG emitters but the hardest hit by climate change;
- African Group. It includes 53 countries, mostly poor and middle-income countries, low GHG emitters, and among the hardest hit by climate change.

1.3. From Bali (2007) to Cancun (2010)

In 2006, the findings of the Stern Report on the economics of climate change are very clear: (i) the action (mitigation and adaptation) will be expensive (1% of global GDP to remain under +3°C), doing nothing will cost even more (up to 5% of global GDP), (ii) all of humanity is concerned, unevenly: developing countries, which have the lowest historical responsibility in the greenhouse effect, will be most affected.

In 2007, the 4th IPCC report says that to have a good chance to remain under +2°C, it is necessary that (i) the developed countries reduce their emissions by 25% to 40% by 2020 compared to their 1990 levels, (ii) developing countries inflect their emissions of 15% to 30% by 2020 compared to their BaU emissions trends.



With these findings, the international community adopted the Bali Action Plan in late 2007.

After two years of intense negotiations, it is the failure at the Climate Conference in Copenhagen in late 2009: there will be no multilateral treaty, but only an unambitious agreement between 28 countries (signed to date by 141 countries).



The only numerical target is "Limiting greenhouse effect to +2°C. The objective of providing 30 billion US\$ of climate finance for developing countries in 2010-2012 and 100 billion US\$/year by 2020 is "indicative".



After long claimed that there would be no "Plan B" in case of failure in Copenhagen and after generating high expectations on the part of civil society and the media, negotiators are forced to imagine a Plan B in 2010, at the Climate Conference in Cancun, with a significant precondition: keeping the multilateral negotiating process alive!

2. From Durban (2011) to Warsaw (2013)

2.1. Durban Platform (2011)

The Conference took place in Africa: 54 countries (out of nearly 190 in the world) which weigh only 4% of global GHG emissions... but who bear the brunt of the effects of climate change. This symbolic location was not sufficient to transcend the debate.

Developing countries and developed countries had diverged more and more, and negotiations had dragged on more than 36 hours after the scheduled time...

Finally, the Conference adopted the "Durban Package", which includes four decisions: (i) Establishment of the "Durban Platform" (ADP), (ii) Conclusions of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative action (AWG-LCA), (iii) Conclusions of the Ad Hoc working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP), and (iv) Creation of the Green Climate Fund.

The ADP was thought as a third way to make up for the stagnation of the negotiations in the other two pathways: opposition to the AWG-LCA by emerging countries, to the AWG-KP by "bad students" among developed countries. Its purpose is to lead to a single Treaty by 2015, which would enter into force from 2020 and would apply to all countries.

The ADP includes two negotiation tracks: Track 1 on the post-2020 multilateral Treaty to be adopted in 2015; Track 2 on the increase of the level of ambition for Kyoto post-2012 (see 2.2. below).

2.2. Doha Gateway (2012)

At Doha, Decisions taken the year before in Durban materialised: the two negotiation tracks (AWG-LCA and AWG-KP), established five years before by the Bali Action Plan, were closed and the ADP was officially launched with the adoption of an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol for the period 2013-2020 (also called Kyoto post-2012).



Bali Action Plan

Decision 1/CP.13: **2007-2009 Roadmap for the negotiations** under the Convention (AWG-LCA) and under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) to build a **multilateral Treaty with regard the post 2012 climate regime, to be adopted in 2009.**

Why 2009? To allow **parliamentary ratifications** between 2009 and 2012 and to have a **continuity** with the 1st commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (which ended late 2012)

Five pillars: **Shared Vision, Technology Transfer, Financing, Adaptation, and Mitigation.**

Kyoto post-2012: The account is not there!

1st period of the Kyoto Protocol, from 2008 to 2012: 55% of global GHG and -5.2% compared to 1990 → **-2.9%** of global GHG compared to 1990

2nd period of the Kyoto Protocol, from 2013 to 2020: 14% of global GHG (4 times less) and -18% compared to 1990 → **-2.5%** of global GHG compared to 1990

Challenges of COP21 in Paris, late 2015

After the missed opportunity in Copenhagen in 2009 and the partial success of Doha in 2012, all energies are mobilised to get a multilateral climate Treaty by COP21 in Paris.

In this context, the submissions of **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)** is of utmost importance and was recalled during the Bonn talks in June 2014 (Cf.

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2014/adp2/eng/17drafttext.pdf>)

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The USA still refuse to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and its amendment; Canada leaves it; Japan, Russia and New Zealand are in the Protocol but do not take commitment. In Doha, the pledges reach -18% in 2020 compared to 1990 levels ... Far from -25% to -40% recommended by the IPCC!

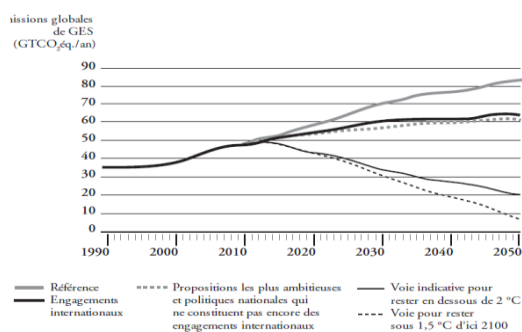


Figure 4 – Ideal VS real trends (Source: *Climate Action Tracker / Ecofys / Climate Analytics / PIK, 2012*)

The current level of ambition is too low to expect to remain under the +2°C ... Yet, beyond +2°C, the IPCC warns against the risk of climate runaway, that is to say, self-accelerating climate disruptions!

2.3. Warsaw Conference (2013)

Following this conference, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) deplored "the catastrophic gap in terms of ambition." The African Group called on developed countries to urgently ratify the Doha Amendment and deplored the lack of progress on the CDM.

Political will was lacking to COP19. Funding announcements have been limited: a few million US\$ pledged by South Korea and seven EU countries... while the needs are expressed in billions of US\$. The Green Climate Fund, supposed to be at the heart of the system, received only 6.9 million US\$.

Mistrust, came to light after the failure of Copenhagen and the failed attempt to impose an agreement at 28, has never disappeared. It has even been revived in recent Conferences, with the adoption of "last minute packages of Decisions - take it or leave it", despite strong opposition from certain countries.

3. COP21: Challenges for West Africa

3.1. CBDR and Transparency

Debates about the "Common But Differentiated Responsibility" (CBDR) and Transparency are transversal to all negotiation topics.

Developing countries expect developed countries to be exemplary.

Some developed countries make their GHG emission reduction commitments conditional upon commitments of some emerging countries.

→ West African countries oppose attempts by developed countries to reorganise the rights and obligations of the Parties: Kyoto post-2012 has to set a target of -40% by 2017 compared to 1990 (CILSS/ECOWAS Workshop in Ouaga - Oct. 2013).

3.2. Climate Finance

Developing countries request for increased, new, and additional public climate finance. The developed countries are reluctant to engage in the short term and wish to negotiate first the issue of post-2020 climate finance. Countries of the Umbrella Group support the idea that climate finance should primarily be private.

→ The multilateral funding for adaptation globally reach 700 million US\$ (end of 2013: 346 for the LDCs Fund, 162 for the Special Climate Change Fund, and 180 for the Adaptation Fund) ... While the sole costs of restoration of degraded land in the CILSS/ECOWAS countries amount to 100 million US\$ per country! Climate finance need to increase dramatically: at least two billion US\$ for the ecosystems of the 17 CILSS/ECOWAS countries (CILSS/ECOWAS Workshop in Ouaga – Oct. 2013)

3.3. Agroforestry and CDM

Africa hosts less than 4% of the CDM projects. The two reasons for this marginalisation are the following: (i) there is little mitigation potential in the fossil sectors and agroforestry is not eligible for the CDM, (ii) temporary credits used for forest carbon are not easily traceable, hence the ban on entry into the European carbon market, the main carbon market today.

→ Agroforestry must be integrated in the CDM: (i) it is necessary to broaden the scope of the CDM to agroforestry, (ii) temporary credits must be abandoned and forest carbon removals be paid by calculating their equivalence with avoided fossil emissions (CILSS/ECOWAS Workshop in Ouaga – Oct. 2013)

3.4. Loss and Damage Mechanism

In Warsaw, this mechanism has been intensely debated and ultimately adopted. Unfortunately, it remains vague: its composition will be decided end of 2014 and its mode of operation will be specified end of 2016.

→ All type of slow onset events (rising sea level, saline intrusion, drought, etc.) must be integrated in the mechanism and this last shall be operational as soon as possible (CILSS/ECOWAS Workshop in Ouaga – Oct. 2013)