



Durban Climate Conference

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Author: Dr Elena Ares

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The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17) to the UN Framework on Climate Change took place in Durban between 28th November and 11th December 2011.

Background on previous annual meetings can be found in the Library Paper on the [Copenhagen](#) conference in 2009 and in the Standard Note on the [Cancun](#) conference in 2010.

Many of the decisions that were not taken in Cancun - such as what would succeed the Kyoto Protocol - were no nearer to being resolved when the conference began, with little progress during preparatory meetings. Despite this consensus was reached on drawing up an agreement by 2015, that would include all developed and developing countries making some kind of commitment to reduce emissions, which would come into force from 2020. The EU also agreed to a second commitment period of the Kyoto protocol.

There was also progress in other areas, such as climate finance for developing countries, forestry, and inclusion of carbon capture and storage in the Clean Development Mechanism.

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1 Background

Background on previous annual UN climate conferences, and their outcome, can be found in the Library Paper on the [Copenhagen](#) conference in 2009 and in the Standard Note on the [Cancun](#) conference in 2010.

The outcome of Cancun after two weeks of negotiations was modest, but the meeting was considered a success on the basis that the negotiations did not collapse as they did in Copenhagen. Although there was little progress in negotiating a successor to the Kyoto Protocol progress was made on several issues including technology transfer, funding and forestry. In addition, there was agreement (mediated by India) that both developed and developing countries would commit to reduce emissions; and that both would be subject to some form of monitoring and verification. The [Agreement](#) was supported by all member countries, with the exception of Bolivia.

The Department of Energy and Climate Change summarised the main points of the agreement as follows:

Objective: agreed to peak emissions and an overall 2 degree target to limit temperature rise.

Emissions: bringing details of what developed and developing countries are doing to tackle climate change, promised in Copenhagen, into the UN system so they can be assessed.

Monitoring, Reporting and Verification of emission (MRV): agreed a system so we know how countries are living up to their promises to take action on emissions

Long-term finance: established the Green Climate Fund and will start to get it ready to help developing countries go low carbon and adapt to climate impacts.

Deforestation: agreed to slow, halt and reverse destruction of trees and agree the rules for delivering it and for monitoring progress.

Technology/Adaptation: set up the mechanisms to help developing countries access low carbon technology, and adapt to climate change.²⁹

Many of the difficult decisions were postponed until [Durban](#), including the decision on what will succeed the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. Many [Annex I](#), or industrialised countries, would like to see an agreement in which all countries make some form of legal commitment to reduce emissions. [Non-Annex I](#) countries, which are currently not obliged to reduce emissions, would like to see the Protocol continue in some form. While these less developed countries do not have significant historical emissions they now include some of the most important and rapidly increasing greenhouse gas emitters, including China, India and Brazil.

[COP 17](#) was scheduled to take place in Durban from 28th November to 9th December 2011. As usual it was likely that any agreement would only be reached during the last few days of the conference.

2 Emissions and Temperature Updates

2.1 Global Emissions

The European Commission Joint Research Centre published a report [Long-term trend in global CO²](#) in September 2011:

- Global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) – the main cause of global warming – increased by 45 % between 1990 and 2010, reaching an all-time high of 33 billion tonnes in 2010.
- The report shows that increased energy efficiency, nuclear energy and the growing contribution of renewable energy are not compensating for the globally increasing demand for power and transport, which is strongest in developing countries.
- This CO₂ increase took place despite emission reductions in industrialised countries during the same period. Even though different countries show widely variable emission trends, industrialised countries are likely to meet the collective Kyoto target of a 5.2 % reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 as a group
- Continued growth in the developing countries and emerging economies, and economic recovery by the industrialised countries are the main reasons for a record breaking 5.8% increase in global CO₂ emissions between 2009 and 2010. Most major economies contributed to this increase, including China, USA, India and EU-27. The CO₂ emissions in the EU-27 remain lower in absolute terms than they were before the crisis (4.0 billion tonnes in 2010 as compared to 4.2 billion tonnes in 2007).

The full report, which contains extensive analysis of the data, is available on the JRC website.

2.2 Carbon Dioxide Levels

The World Meteorological Organisation published its Greenhouse Gas Bulletin on 21 November 2011:

Carbon dioxide is the single most important man-made greenhouse gas in the atmosphere and contributes about 64% to total increase in climate forcing by greenhouse gases. Since the start of the industrial era in 1750, its atmospheric abundance has increased by 39% to 389 parts per million (number of molecules of the gas per million molecules of dry air). This is primarily because of emissions from combustion of fossil fuels, deforestation and changes in land-use.

Between 2009 and 2010, its atmospheric abundance increased by 2.3 parts per million – higher than the average for both the 1990s (1.5 parts per million) and the past decade (2.0 parts per million).

For about 10,000 years before the start of the industrial era in the mid-18th century, atmospheric carbon dioxide remained almost constant at around 280 parts per million.

The bulletin also reported that the levels of methane and nitrous oxide, both powerful greenhouse gases but not as abundant as carbon dioxide, also continued to rise.

2.3 Emissions Gap

The United Nations Environment Programme published its report [Bridging the Gap](#) on 23 November 2011. The gap refers to the difference between the reductions in emissions that Governments committed to in Copenhagen and what is need to attempt to keep global average temperatures below 2°C:

Although the country pledges help in reducing emissions to below a business-as-usual level in 2020, they are not adequate to reduce emissions to a level consistent with the 2°C target, and therefore lead to a gap. Estimates of this gap (6-11 GtCO₂e) are larger than reported in the 2010 UNEP Emissions Gap report (5-9 GtCO₂e) but are still within the range of uncertainty of estimates.

The size of the gap depends on the extent to which the pledges are implemented and how they are applied, what accounting rules are assigned, and the desired likelihood of staying below a particular temperature limit.

As a reference point, the gap would be about 12 GtCO₂e (range: 9-18 GtCO₂e) between business-as-usual emissions (i.e if no pledges are implemented) and emissions consistent with a “likely” chance (greater than 66 per cent) of staying below the 2°C temperature target. This figure is nearly as large as current total greenhouse gas emissions from the world’s energy supply sector.

The report also suggested key areas for the negotiations in Durban:

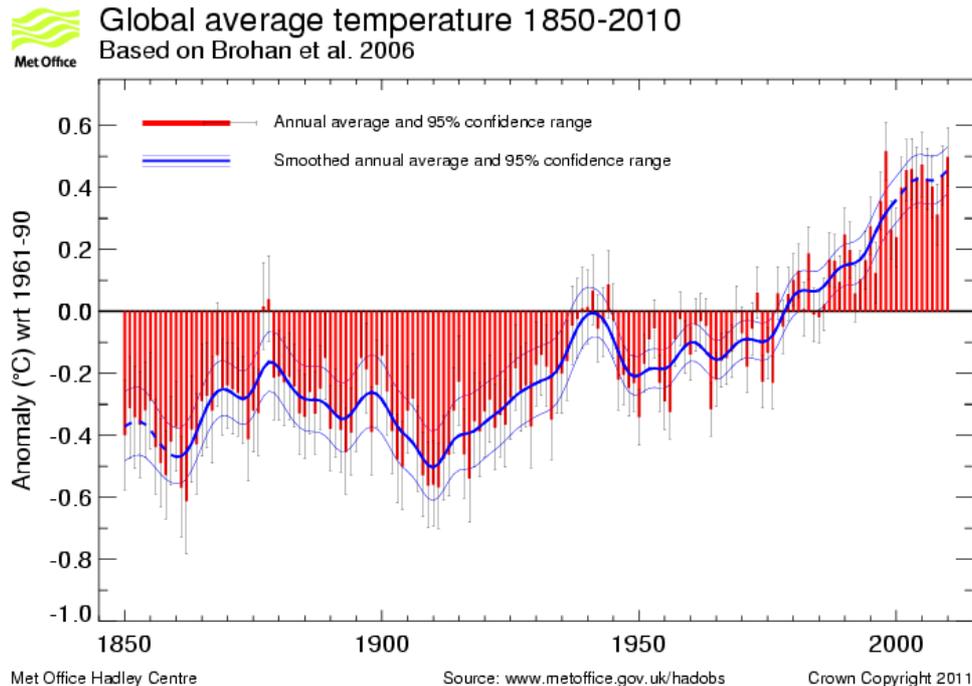
The gap can be narrowed by resolving some immediate climate negotiation issues. Possible actions to narrow the gap include:

- Implementing the more ambitious “conditional” pledges. This would reduce the gap by 2-3 GtCO₂e

- Minimizing the use of “lenient Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) credits” and surplus emission credits. This would reduce the gap by 2-3 GtCO₂e
- Avoiding the double-counting of offsets and improving the additionality of CDM projects. Double-counting could increase the gap by up to 2 GtCO₂e.

2.4 Global Average Temperature

Global average temperatures have continued to increase over the last year. The temperature record below from the Met Office Hadley Centre shows that temperatures continue to rise.



Two other existing data sets - one from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ([NOAA](#)) and the other from NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies ([GISS](#)) - show similar trends. More recently a new group has produced a new analysis, [Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature](#), which has confirmed the warming trend.

3 Post-Cancun

There has been limited progress since the Cancun meeting. A summary by the [Guardian](#) of the preparatory meeting which took place in Bonn in June emphasised the slow progress made:

Two weeks of tense global climate talks wrapped up on Friday, with countries insisting they had made progress on technical issues but accepting they were still nowhere near agreement in the three key areas of finance, greenhouse gas emission cuts and the future of the Kyoto protocol.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN climate secretariat, defended the UN against charges by non-governmental groups that the talks were painfully slow and convoluted, saying the economic crisis in Europe and elsewhere was making it harder to make progress.

The [World Resources Institute](#) summarised progress as follows:

After a difficult start for the Bonn climate negotiations, countries finally began discussing how to implement the Cancun Agreements decided last December. However, not enough progress was made, and it will be difficult, if talks proceed at this pace, to decide the Cancun rule book by Durban. Still hanging in the air are questions about the future of the Kyoto Protocol and whether the Cancun rules will be plugged into a legally binding agreement. Durban will be the key moment when the future of the Kyoto Protocol, the detailed rules of the Cancun Agreements, and the legal character of future climate agreements should be resolved.

To resolve these core decisions, more substantive progress and more political will is needed that we witnessed these past two weeks. The warning signs of a changing climate are all around us – and the international community needs to come together to address this looming challenge.

4 Durban Conference – prospects for success

Following the Bonn Conference iisd published a [policy update](#) which examined the prospects for achieving substantial progress in. This concluded that the prospects for most areas were poor:

At this point in time, a gambler would probably be willing to bet that the Durban COP could achieve success in operationalizing at least some of the new institutions and processes agreed in Cancun. However, insiders are far less optimistic on the likelihood that the AWG-KP will conclude its work on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, or that the AWG-LCA will secure a comprehensive broader agreement. As things currently stand, an outright success for the AWG-LCA or AWG-KP must be considered extremely unlikely at COP 17.

While progress on new institutions in Durban should be warmly welcomed, it must be noted that only an ambitious global agreement could deliver the deep emissions cuts called for by the scientific community. Anything less will certainly commit the world to dangerous anthropogenic interference in our climate.

Of course, Durban will not be the last opportunity to achieve such a breakthrough. The UNFCCC road will continue with many more milestones and “key meetings” in the coming years. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that climate change will not wait indefinitely for negotiators to find a breakthrough.

A less pessimistic summary of the issues that need to be resolved in the run-up and during the Conference was set out by the EU President Jose Manuel Barroso in a [speech](#) to the UN in September:

I see three major elements that are key to making Durban a success:

One: Make Cancún real. It is essential for all Parties to implement the Cancún Agreements, for instance the Technology Mechanism.

Two: Tackle the Cancun leftovers: There are five key gaps we have to fill in Durban:

- The ambition gap – current reduction pledges are only 60% of what is needed. We need more countries signed up, and tougher targets.
- The transparency gap – we need stronger rules on "MRV" (Measurement, Reporting and Verification). Everyone has to be sure that countries are delivering on their commitments. Transparency and common, clear accounting rules are key for that.

- The cost-efficiency gap – all emitters, including developing countries in line with their capacities, need new market mechanisms to make mitigation as cost-efficient as possible.
- The coverage gap – we need to act in additional sectors like agriculture or international air and maritime transport.
- The finance gap - Instruments that catalyse investment are an essential part of a future global agreement. The important work of G20 Finance Ministers should feed into the Durban discussions.
- Finally we need to preserve the environmental integrity of Kyoto, with new conditions on forestry accounting rules, and on the surplus of emission rights from the first Kyoto period.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my third main point is: A balanced Durban package must include all major emitters and a clear roadmap and timeline towards a new, comprehensive, robust and legally binding framework. Only a comprehensive deal will work.

Some call for the establishment of a second Kyoto period. However, several major emitters have made clear that they do not intend to commit to this.

The EU is willing to consider a second commitment period – but only as part of a broader package. A package that improves Kyoto rules; that creates new market mechanisms; and in which other major emitters also commit to doing their fair share.

Let's be very clear on this: a second Kyoto period will not work if only the EU signs up. With just 11% of global emissions, the EU alone cannot solve the problem of global warming.

So, in reality, the question is not a second Kyoto commitment or not: the question is about creating a legal framework for all countries.

We need to find middle ground that converges the two tracks (Kyoto and the Convention) towards a single framework.

Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, was also fairly positive about the potential for the Durban conference to provide some progress, following the last preparatory meeting which took place in Panama in October:

Figueres revealed that optimism is mounting that significant progress towards an international deal can be made at the upcoming Durban Summit, despite continued deadlock over the future of the Kyoto Protocol.

She hailed last week's round of talks in Panama as the most encouraging set of negotiations in a long time and predicted Durban would see a number of key elements of any future treaty approved.

"[We expect to see] approval of the Green Fund, approval of technology mechanisms that will go into effect next year, [and] approval of an adaptation committee that can coordinate much better the fragmented approach to adaptation efforts," she said. "I also think we will see approval of the guidelines for monitoring, reporting and verifying emissions in both developed and developing countries... Those are very clear outcomes."

She also hinted some form of compromise agreement on the future of the Kyoto Protocol could be brokered, despite the stand-off between developing countries calling for a second commitment period of the deal and those industrialised countries that refusing to extend the agreement.

"I don't think we will see something definitive, but rather something that will probably become a transitional arrangement both under the Kyoto Protocol with a second commitment period as well as [through] pledges under the convention," she said.¹

One of the main sticking points has been the creation to a successor to the Kyoto Protocol. Prospects of this look increasingly uncertain with Russia, Japan and Canada stating they will not sign up to a further agreement unless all other countries do so on equal terms. [Australia and Norway](#) recently called for any new treaty to be delayed until 2015.

This proposal to delay agreement has been highlighted in a report from the Guardian which stated that in private most developed countries have given up on achieving an agreement before 2016, with no implementation before 2020.² Chris Huhne, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change wrote a letter to the paper in response to the article:

UK would like to see a global treaty signed straight away but some of the biggest economies, both developed and developing, are not ready. We aim at Durban to reach agreement on the need for a new treaty and to set out a timetable for its negotiation, concluding no later than 2015. The UK and our EU partners are also ready to agree to a second commitment period of the Kyoto protocol, as long as there is a hard commitment from the other major economies to a comprehensive global legal framework and to complete negotiations on it as soon as possible. This timeframe will have to be discussed in Durban, but we recognise global emissions will need to be peaking by 2020 to avoid dangerous temperature rises.³

The head of UNEP Achim Steiner was quoted as being highly critical of reports of a delay calling it a 'political choice':

Those countries that are currently talking about deferring an agreement [to come into force] in 2020 are essentially saying we are taking you from high risk to very high risk in terms of the effects of global warming. This is a choice – a political choice. Our role, working with the scientific community, is to bring to the attention of the global public that this is the risk that policymakers and governments will expose us to.⁴

5 Negotiating Positions

5.1 EU Position

The EU negotiating [position](#) was set out in the Environment Council in a statement on 10 October 2011. With regard to a successor to the Kyoto Protocol it made clear that it would prefer a global agreement that included all countries but was prepared to consider a follow on to Kyoto provided some conditions were met:

In the context of a stepwise approach, STRESSES the need to see balanced progress and robust outcomes within and across both the Kyoto Protocol and Convention tracks at the Durban Conference; While reiterating its preference for a single global and comprehensive legally-binding instrument, CONFIRMS its openness to a second

¹ Business Green, [HFigueres calls on businesses to break "vicious cycle" of climate inaction](#), 11 October 2011

² The Guardian, [HRich nations 'give up' on new climate treaty until 2020](#), 20 November 2011

³ The Guardian [HLetters](#), 21 November 2011

⁴ The Guardian, [HUN chief slams rich nations' plans to delay climate change treaty](#), 23 November 2011

commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol as part of a transition to a wider legally-binding framework, provided that:

- the essential elements of the Kyoto Protocol are preserved, its environmental integrity is guaranteed and its architecture is further enhanced, including on Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF), surplus of Assigned Amount Units (AAUs) and market based mechanisms as set out below;

- the Convention addresses the key outstanding issues and determines a roadmap, including a timeline with a final date and process taking into account the 2013-2015 review, for encompassing all the outcomes of this track in a multilateral, rules-based legal framework engaging all Parties, with convergence with the Kyoto Protocol track after a second commitment period; EMPHASISES that such a framework should include mitigation commitments from in particular all major economies, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

5.2 UK Position

The UK Government's position on the prospects for success at Durban was set out by the Chris Huhne, Secretary of State for the Department of Energy and Climate Change, in a Speech to the Grantham Institute on 24 November 2011:

The UK and the European Union wants a second commitment period. We do not believe that letting Kyoto run down will help the planet – or our green economies. But the EU has already surpassed its Kyoto target. If it signs up alone, without commitments from the other major players – the other big emitters and emerging economies – then we will not have moved very far forward.

At Durban, we need major economies to commit to a global legally binding framework – building on what Kyoto started, but going much broader. And we need negotiations on this new agreement to complete as soon as possible, and by 2015 at the latest.

That is not just what Britain wants: it is what much of the developing world wants, especially vulnerable islands and the poorest countries. We are ready take a clear step forward: but at the same time we need others to be ready to move too.

This does not mean that everyone will have the same type of commitments in 5 or 10 years time; just that all will be in the same legal framework. There will still be huge differences between countries then, just as there are now. China is not, and will not be, the same as Chad, or India.

We need to move to a system that reflects the genuine diversity of responsibility and capacity, rather than a binary one which says you are “developed” if you happened to be in the OECD in 1992. On this view of frozen history, rich Singapore is developing. Poor Bulgaria is developed. By itself, a second commitment period is not enough.

Some have criticised the UK and the EU for pursuing this commitment to a parallel agreement, arguing we are deferring a global deal to as late as 2020. Let me be clear: our clear preference is a Treaty framework covering everyone now. But some say it is premature.

Some big developing countries are saying we should not even begin the talks on the new Treaty framework until after 2015. So the call just for a mandate at Durban is not our ideal outcome, but it would be a significant step forward.

This does not mean we are locking in low ambition until 2020. The UK stands for more ambition now. We have led on the EU to move to a 30% commitment. We will push hard on this early next year.

We are also pressing in Durban for a decision that recognizes the scale of the emission gap, and identifies actions to narrow it. We want to ratchet up pressure towards the 2013-15 review of future ambition.

Only a comprehensive, legally binding agreement for all can provide the clarity we need. Businesses want certainty; people want action. Only the politics lags behind.⁵

The full speech, together with other recent ones on climate change, can be found on the [DECC website](#).

5.3 China's Position

China is now the biggest global emitter of greenhouse gases, although per capita emissions are still relatively low. As an Annex II signatory to the Kyoto protocol it currently has no obligation to reduce emissions.

An article in China Daily on 23 November 2011 reported on a press conference given by Xie Zhenhua, vice-minister of the National Development and Reform Commission setting out the Chinese Position.

China hopes to reduce the per-unit GDP greenhouse gas emission in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent from 2005 levels.

Xie said China is willing to reconsider its role under the UN Framework of Climate Change Convention beyond 2020, based on scientific reviews on global warming to be published in 2015.

"China is willing to shoulder its due obligations consistent with its development stage, but the fundamental principle of 'common and differentiated responsibilities' needs to be upheld," he said.

Climate talks were held in 2009 in the Danish capital, Copenhagen, but little progress was made.

He also praised the EU for taking a leading role on climate change.

The review of the science may refer to the [Fifth Assessment Report](#) on the science of climate change by the International Panel on Climate Change which is due to be published in sections between September 2013 and October 2014.

5.4 US Position

Whilst some countries left the preparatory meeting in Panama with some optimism about potential progress, this was not the view from the US, as reported in the New York Times:

At the UN climate change talks in Panama, the U.S. made it clear that they would not sign an agreement unless all major economies are included in reductions.

Speaking at a press conference afterwards, U.S. Deputy Envoy Jonathan Pershing acknowledged that:

"the uncertainty over a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol is a source of anxiety for many parties."

But in describing the E.U. proposal, Pershing said, "We do not believe that conditions are ripe in Durban for a legally binding agreement."

And

"We do not see a meeting of the minds on these issues," Pershing said. "We do not want to launch negotiations on an agreement we would not be able to join."⁶

5.5 Country Groupings

Before and during the negotiations countries with similar interests usually work together towards a common position, and negotiate as group during the conference.

An article in China.org summarised the outcome of a meeting of the **BASIC** countries in advance of Durban:

Ministers from Brazil, South Africa, India and China (the so called BASIC group) met for their Ninth BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change in Beijing from 31 October to 1 November 2011. They reached a consensus on a range of climate change issues ahead of the Durban Climate Change Conference, most notably on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol.

Xie Zhenhua, China's Vice-Minister of State Development and Reform Commission said: "There must be a Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol,"

and

"Countries should take action and put their promises into practice before 2020 and then further discuss the issues after that date on the basis of scientific analysis."

In the same article Alf Wills, South Africa's Conference of the Parties chief negotiator, said:

"What we hope to achieve, I think, is a common goal of all the BASIC countries and we hope to achieve a Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol."

"It's the view of the BASIC countries that the rule-based system of the Kyoto Protocol provides the benchmark and the cornerstone for the future of a climate change regime or system that we would want to see."⁷

The **G20** in their statement following their meeting in November committed to the implementation of the Cancun agreement but made no reference to the Kyoto Protocol:

We are committed to the success of the upcoming Durban Conference on Climate Change on 28 November - 9 December 2011. We support South Africa as the incoming President of the Conference. We call for the implementation of the Cancun agreements and further progress in all areas of negotiation in Durban.⁸

The **G77 + China** group made clear that it would not accept an end to the Kyoto Protocol in press release following the Panama preparatory meeting in October 2011:

⁶ New York Times, Nations Heading to Durban Climate Talks Remain Deeply Divided
[Hhttp://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2011/10/10/10climatewire-nations-heading-to-durban-climate-talks-remain-1993.html](http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2011/10/10/10climatewire-nations-heading-to-durban-climate-talks-remain-1993.html)H

⁷ China.org, [HBASIC Countries meet Kyoto Consensus](#)H, 2 November 2011

⁸ G20, [HCannes Summit Final Declaration](#)H, 4 November

Ambassador Jorge Argüello, chairman of the G77 and China group issued a statement on 4 October 2011 insisting that the group will not consider an end to the Kyoto Protocol.

And

"Much as some rich countries like to repeat that discussing scenarios that they oppose is not 'realistic' or 'practical', they must recognise that there is no point in insisting on a solution outside the Kyoto Protocol when 132 parties have strongly declared they can only accept a second commitment period as a meaningful outcome," he said.⁹

A new grouping of countries has formed, which includes those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The **Climate Vulnerable Forum** published its on declaration on 14 November 2011.

After a meeting in Dhaka on 13 and 14 November, nineteen climate vulnerable countries signed the Climate Vulnerable Forum 2011 Dhaka Declaration: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Maldives, Nepal, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam.

The declaration called on the Durban conference to ensure a second period of the Kyoto Protocol without a gap, leading to a legally binding agreement on greenhouse gas emission cuts. There was also a commitment to low carbon development and a proposal for a new global Climate Vulnerability Monitor on low-carbon development.¹⁰

6 International Climate Finance

The Cancun Agreement set out what developed countries agreed in Mexico in December 2010 with regards to climate finance for developing countries. Two streams were agreed, fast start and long term finance:

Fast Start Finance

Governments will endeavour to make the provision of an agreed fast-start finance for developing countries approaching USD 30 billion up to 2012 more transparent by regularly making information available on these funds. This will include ways in which developing countries can access these resources. Industrialized country Governments are invited to submit a complete overview of fast-start funding to the UN Climate Change Secretariat by May 2011, including ways in which developing countries can access these resources. The secretariat in turn has been tasked with making this information publicly available

Long Term Finance

In order to scale up the provision of long-term financing for developing countries, Governments decided to establish a Green Climate Fund that will function under the guidance of, and be accountable to the Conference of the Parties (COP).

The new fund will support projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing countries using thematic funding windows.

⁹ G77, HArguello: [Multilateralism is as stake](#), H 4 October 2011

¹⁰ Dara, HClimate vulnerable countries unite in Dhaka ministerial Forum pledging firm common stance ahead of COP17 in Durban, 14 November 2011

The fund will be governed by a Green Climate Fund Board, comprising 24 members with equal representation from developing and developed countries.

The fund will be administered by a trustee and supported by a professional secretariat. The World Bank will serve as the interim trustee. Governments decided to establish a Transitional Committee of 40 members to design the details of the fund. This design phase is to be concluded by the Durban Climate Conference at the end of 2011.

Furthermore, Governments decided to establish a Standing Committee under the COP, which will assist the COP in exercising its functions with respect to the mobilization, delivery and verification of long-term finance. The specific roles and functions of the Standing Committee are to be developed.

In the broad context of long-term financial support, industrialized countries committed to provide funds rising to USD 100 billion per year by 2020 to support concrete mitigation actions by developing countries that are implemented in a transparent way. These funds would be raised from a mix of public and private sources.¹¹

6.1 Fast Start Initiative

As part of the Cancun Agreements, participating countries were invited to submit information in annual reports to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) showing the pledges and disbursement of funds in connection with the fast-start initiative. The first such reports were due to be submitted in May 2011. All these reports are available on the [UNFCCC website](#). The [EU's report](#) is written on behalf of the European Commission, which provides its own fast-start contributions. An [annex](#) provides details on Member States' actions to support fast-start.

Details of up-to-date pledges on funds from developed countries can be found on the [Climate Funds](#) website. Fast start finance details can be found on the [Fast Start](#) and [World Resources Institute](#) website. The ODI produced a summary report in August 2011 in which it concluded that whilst much of the \$30bn had been pledged, little has so far been delivered:

While the collective pledges by developed countries almost meet this figure, less than half of the money has been committed or allocated to projects, and even less had been disbursed by June 2011.

Given the long procedures of different channels, part of this finance will be delivered – if it is delivered at all – after 2012, which marks the close of the FSF period.¹²

6.2 Green Climate Fund

At the G20 meeting held in Cannes in November reaffirmed its commitment to the Green Climate Fund and making it operational. It also restated the need for a wide range of sources to provide the required finance:

We reaffirm that climate finance will come from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including innovative sources of finance. We recognize the role of public finance and public policy in supporting climate-related investments in developing countries. We underline the role of the private sector in supporting climate-related investments globally, particularly through various market-based mechanisms

¹¹ UNFCCC, [The Cancun Agreement](#) [website as of 23 November 2011]

¹² ODI, [Fast-start finance to address climate change: what we know at the mid-point](#), August 2011

and also call on the MDBs to develop new and innovative financial instruments to increase their leveraging effect on private flows.¹³

The Transitional Committee for the design of the Green Climate Fund has now produced its final report before the Durban Meeting which includes a *Draft governing instrument for the Green Climate Fund*. This summarises the aim of the fund as follows:

The Fund will finance agreed full and agreed incremental costs for activities to enable and support enhanced action on adaptation, mitigation (including REDD-plus), technology development and transfer (including carbon capture and storage), capacity building and the preparation of national reports by developing countries.

The Fund will support developing countries in pursuing project-based and programmatic approaches in accordance with climate change strategies and plans, such as low-emission development strategies or plans, nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs), national adaptation plans of action (NAPAs), national adaptation plans (NAPs) and other related activities.¹⁴

6.3 UK Climate Finance

The level of UK spending on climate change, as part of aid funding, was summarised in a report by the National Audit Office for the Environmental Audit Select Committee in March 2011:

Spending directly attributable to environmental protection and climate change has risen in the last five years from £100 million in 2005-06 to around £360 million in 2009-10, but it still accounts for a relatively small proportion of total UK aid (around 4.5 per cent). Much of the increase in spending is due to the introduction in 2008 of the Environmental Transformation Fund (ETF), jointly funded by DFID and DECC and providing £800 million in aid from 2008-09 to 2010-11 (2.1 to 2.3).

The 2010 Spending Review has further increased the scale of resources available for climate change. It established a £2.9 billion cross-departmental International Climate Fund to follow on from the ETF so as to provide climate change related aid over the period 2011-12 to 2014-15. It is planned that the International Climate Fund will account for 7.5 per cent of UK Official Development Assistance by the end of the Spending Review period (2014-15) (2.5).

In response to the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, the UK government has pledged £1.5 billion in aid for climate change over the period 2010 to 2012. Some £500 million of this will be funded from the ETF in 2010-11. Most of the remainder will be funded from the International Climate Fund.¹⁵

And

The International Climate Fund will be managed by a high level cross-departmental project team with representation from DFID, DECC, and Her Majesty's Treasury. DEFRA will also be involved in decisions on the use of the International Climate Fund for forestry.

¹³ G20, [HCannes Summit Final Declaration](#), 4 November

¹⁴ UNFCCC, [HReport of the Transitional Committee for the design of the Green Climate Fund](#), 18 November 2011

¹⁵ NAO, [HAid and the environment.: A briefing for the House of Commons Environmental Audit Select Committee](#), March 2011

7 Outcome

The Durban conference overran by 36 hours, closing on Sunday 11th December. An agreement was reached in the end, although there are questions as to what it will achieve.

7.1 Future of the Climate Agreement

The EU, together with the Alliance of Small Island States and the Least Developed Countries, resisted a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol all parties agreed to a roadmap for a binding agreement for all countries, including developing ones. India and China resisted this but in the end consensus was reached that a new legally binding agreement would be reached by 2015, to enter into force from 2020. The final wording agreed was “a legal outcome with binding force”. The document can be found [here](#).

The second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol will “begin on 1 January 2013 and end either on 31 December 2017 or 31 December 2020”. Annex I countries have until May 2012 to submit their proposals for emissions reductions within that period. Several such as the US, Japan, Russia, and now Canada, are unlikely to do so. Commentators have noted that as a result the second commitment period will only cover around 15% of global emissions, as only Europe has agreed to any reductions.¹⁶

7.2 Other Developments

Agreement was reached in other areas, such as:

- the [structure](#) of the Green Climate Fund; although further work is needed to determine where it will be based and how the \$100bn a year will be delivered
- Forestry: REDD+ financing, which will now include market mechanism as well as private and public finance
- Progress was made on developing the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification framework
- Agreement was reached to include carbon capture and storage under the Clean Development Mechanism

7.3 Reactions to the Agreement

DECC summarised the agreement reached in a press release:

The UN climate talks in South Africa have been heralded a success after a climate change deal was struck in the early hours of Sunday morning. 194 parties have spent the past two weeks in Durban discussing how to cut emissions to limit global temperature rise to below two degrees to avoid dangerous climate change.

In a major realignment of support, well over 120 countries formed a coalition behind the EU's high ambition proposal of a roadmap to a global legally binding deal to curb emissions. African states together with the least developed countries such as Bangladesh and Gambia, and small island states vulnerable to rising sea levels, like the Maldives, joined with the EU to put forward a timetable which would see the world negotiate a new agreement by 2015 at the latest.

¹⁶ New Scientist, [HOur Climate's Dangerous Decade](#)H, 17 December 2011

The talks resulted in a decision to adopt the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol next year in return for a roadmap to a global legal agreement covering all parties for the first time. Negotiations will begin on the agreement early next year.¹⁷

The editorial in the journal *Nature* took a much more pessimistic view of the outcome in its editorial:

It takes a certain kind of optimism — or an outbreak of collective Stockholm syndrome — to see the Durban outcome as a significant breakthrough on global warming, as many are claiming. Outside Europe — which has set itself binding emissions goals over the short and long term beyond what it will inherit under its stated plan to carry on with unilateral cuts under an extended Kyoto — there will be no obligation for any nation to reduce soaring greenhouse-gas emissions much before the end of the decade. And that is assuming that all flows smoothly in future UN talks, and that a global deal with binding commitments proves easier to find in talks due to start in 2015 than it has so far.

The Durban deal may mark a success in the political process to tackle climate change, but for the climate itself, it is an unqualified disaster. It is clear that the science of climate change and the politics of climate change, which claims to represent it, now inhabit parallel worlds.

This has always been true up to a point, but surely the mask of political rhetoric has now slipped so far, to reveal the ugly political reality underneath, that it can never be replaced. How can politicians talk now with a straight face of limiting global warming to 2 °C? How will campaigners frame this result as leaving yet another 'last chance' to save the planet?

That does not make the political process redundant — far from it. Introducing policies to curb emissions was never about saving the planet or not, or stopping global warming or not. It is about damage limitation — the 3 °C or 4 °C of average warming the planet could experience in the long term, according to some analyses of the Durban outcome doing the rounds, is clearly much worse than the 2 °C used as shorthand for dangerous at present. But it is preferable to the 5 °C or 6 °C that science suggests is possible if emissions continue to rise unabated.¹⁸

¹⁷ DECC, [Road open to new global legal climate treaty](#), 11 December 2011

¹⁸ *Nature*, [The Mask Slips](#), 15 December 2011