



FROM LIMA TO PARIS

Negotiating a new climate treaty

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THE 20th Conference of Parties (COP20) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ended in Lima, Peru almost 36 hours after the official closing with the adoption of the "Lima Call for Climate Action". This sets up the final round of detailed negotiations leading to a new climate treaty, to replace the Kyoto Protocol, at COP21 to be held in Paris, France in December 2015.

At one point it looked like there might not be any agreement in Lima when the Environment Minister of Peru, who was also the President of COP20, took over from the negotiators and added an extra day of consultations and negotiations which enabled a result to be achieved.

The final outcome is not to everyone's liking as many issues were dropped as they could not be resolved in time. Nevertheless there is enough there for countries to continue negotiating between now and December 2015.

The main issues of contention are described below.

Common but differentiated responsibilities:

The UNFCCC divided the world into the rich, polluting countries (listed in Annex 1 of the convention and hence called "Annex 1 countries") and the rest, called "non-Annex 1 countries". The former accept that they have a greater responsibility to reduce their emissions of Green House Gases (GHGs) and also to provide financial support to the poorer developing countries to tackle climate change. The latter, developing countries, who negotiate under the umbrella called "G77 and China" initially did not accept any responsibility to reduce their emission,

but have now done so, in exchange for technology and finance.

The vehicle by which all countries will now indicate their plans to reducing their respective emission of GHGs, is called the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) which are due to be submitted by all countries by March 2015. The argument for the G77 and China was that without knowing how much finance will actually be available the INDC would not be ambitious enough.

There were also issues around whether the INDC should be about mitigation only or also include adaptation.

Adaptation:

The developing countries, led by Africa have demanded that the Paris agreement include a Goal for Adaptation as well as one that already exists for Mitigation (which is to restrict global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Centigrade). This is being opposed by the developed countries as they want only a mitigation goal and feel that it is too difficult to agree on an adaptation goal as adaptation is mostly local and it is difficult to develop a global goal (other than for financing adaptation).

This issue was not resolved in Lima but will go to Paris.

Loss and Damage:

The topic of Loss and Damage from human induced climate change was resolved to some extent at COP19 in Warsaw, Poland in December 2013 with the creation of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and damage and an Executive Committee and Work-plan to address the issue.

However, in Lima the developing countries, led by the alliance of small island states (AOSIS) and least developed coun-

tries (LDCs) also wanted it included in the Paris text. In the end it was not included as a decision but was mentioned in the preamble, This means that the fight is not yet over but will carry on to Paris.

Finance:

The developed countries have already promised to provide 100 Billion US Dollars a year starting from 2020 to developing countries to tackle climate change (both mitigation as well as adaptation) and all parties have created a new fund called the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with its Secretariat in Korea. The good news is that during the COP in Lima the fund received over 10 Billion US Dollars in pledges from a number of developed countries and can start disbursing funds soon. The GCF Board (on which Bangladesh has a seat representing the LDC Group) has already decided to allocate half its funds to Adaptation and to prioritise the LDCs and small island developing states (SIDS).

The bigger question remains how the developed countries will reach the figure of 100 Billion by 2020 when the 10 Billion is supposed to cover four years and not just one.

As always, finance always becomes the most difficult sticking point and this will remain the case until the last minute of the last day of Paris in December 2015.

Bangladesh's role:

Bangladesh had a relatively small contingent in Lima with the Secretary of Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF) leading the delegation for the first week and the Minister for the second, high level, week. The Bangladesh delegation is quite well organised and has been playing an excellent role in the negotiations for many years as part of the LDC Group and did so again in Lima.

Bangladesh is also one of the founding members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) which is a group of vulnerable countries' leaders which was created before Copenhagen by the President Nasheed of the Maldives. Then President Tong of Kiribati took over and then Prime Minister Hasina took over and hosted a summit meeting in Dhaka, After that it went to the President of Costa Rica.

During the Lima COP, Costa Rica handed over the leadership of the CVF to the Philippines at a Press conference with the two countries' ministers where the leader of the Bangladesh delegation was also present. The Philippines will host a summit meeting of the CVF before the Paris COP next year.

Next steps:

The UNFCCC will meet at least twice (and possibly a third time) before arriving in COP21 in Paris in December 2015. The first meeting will be in Geneva in February and then in Bonn in June (and possibly somewhere else in October). Hence the next twelve months will consist of almost non-stop negotiations (if one takes all the non-UNFCCC meetings into account). If Bangladesh wishes to play a significant role in this process, the Prime Minister should seriously consider appointing a full time Climate Change Special Envoy as many other countries have done, including LDCs such as the Gambia and Tuvalu.

The outcome of COP21 in Paris will be critical for the future of Bangladesh, and indeed of the entire world, so it merits greater attention from the government for the next twelve months.