

CLIMATE CHANGE – KEY ELEMENTS OF KEY DOCUMENTS

Framework Convention on Climate Change – Concluded 1992, entered into force 1994.

- Vague commitments on stabilization of emissions of greenhouse gases for industrialized countries at 1990 by 2000, no rules on compliance.
- Principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities
- Financial and technical support for developing countries recognized.
- Institutional and process rules established, including an annual Conference of Parties.
- Most important result on substance: adoption of an “ultimate objective”: “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”.

Kyoto Protocol – Concluded 1997, entered into force 2005.

- Precise, differentiated, quantitative commitments for industrialized countries covering the period 1990-2008/12, (EU -8%, US -7%, Japan -6%, Russia 0 etc.), on average calculated at -5.2%.
- Provisions for accounting for the removal of carbon through sinks (forests and soils).
- Establishment of a crediting system through mechanisms such as emissions trading, joint implementation and/or Clean Development Mechanism.
- Establishment of a compliance system.
- A separate Meeting of the Parties of the Protocol.
- Rules on sinks, mechanisms, and compliance were not complete in the Kyoto text.

Marrakech Accords – Agreed in 2001.

- Agreement on details concerning outstanding issues in Kyoto Protocol such as sinks, market mechanisms, and compliance.
- Formalisation of funding offer from a group of developed countries and agreement on structure of support funds, concerning i.a. adaptation and least developed countries.

Montreal Decisions – (COP 11 - COP/MOP 1) – 2005.¹

- Formal adoption of Marrakech Accords.
- Improvement of operation of Clean Development Mechanism.
- Review of Annex I commitments after 2012.
- Establishment of dialogue on post-2012 general climate regime.

¹ COP = Conference of Parties to the Convention; COP/MOP = Conference of Parties serving as Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. In practice, this has meant that USA is only an observer in COP/MOP.

Bali Plan of Action – (COP 13 – COP/MOP 3) – 2007.

- Agreement on “Road Map” for negotiation of the post-2012 regime, to be concluded by 2009 at COP 15 – COP/MOP 5 in Copenhagen. Agreement on main components of this regime: Mitigation, adaptation, technology, and financial resources.
- Announcement of ratification of Kyoto Protocol by Australia. USA is now only major country which has not accepted the Protocol. Nevertheless, USA agrees to participate in forthcoming negotiations for a post-2012 regime.
- Developing countries, including China and India, agree in principle to consider reduction of emissions, supported by technology and finance transfers, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner.
- Agreement on negotiations to elaborate approaches to reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries.

Copenhagen Accord - COP 15 – COP/MOP 5 (Copenhagen December 2009).

- Failure to reach agreed outcome, but majority of countries accepted – though without a formal decision - a document called “Copenhagen Accord”, which together with a decision to let the Bali negotiating groups continue, would form a background for further negotiations with a view to reaching agreement at COP16 - COP/MOP 6.
- The Accord was heavily criticised by many observers, and the result of continued negotiations during 2010 was disappointing. Therefore, expectations for COP-16 in Cancún in December 2010 were very low..

COP 16 – COP/MOP 6 (Cancún, December 2010).

- Decisions in principle were taken on a number of points including a confirmation of the 2 degree Celsius objective; and some other issues, related to financing, adaptation, forestry, and technology.
- This meant formalizing – through COP decisions - important parts of the Copenhagen Accord. However, there were still limited prospects for a global agreement on the future of the Kyoto Protocol or on a new legally binding instrument on action by the international community.

COP 17 – COP/MOP 7 (Durban, December 2011).

- After difficult negotiations a reasonably satisfactory result with the following main components:
 - Agreement on a transitional regime, to be agreed by 2015, aiming at “a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force” to cover the period beyond 2020;
 - Acceptance of a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol by the EU and possibly other developed countries;
 - Firm decisions on Cancún deal, particularly on the Green Fund, a framework for adaptation, and a technological mechanism;
 - Continued attention on voluntary national reduction objectives as foreseen in Copenhagen

