

# RACE TO THE TOP: DRIVING AMBITION IN THE POST-2020 INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE AGREEMENT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2015, countries are scheduled to conclude negotiations on a new international climate agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to address how to shift the world's economy onto a low-carbon and climate-resilient pathway in a manner that is ambitious, equitable, and transparent. An approach to this agreement is needed that can provide predictability and clarity for the future pathway for emissions reductions and support greater and more rapid action in emissions reductions.

This paper reviews past practice in the UNFCCC and examines some of the most promising options to improve the effectiveness of the UNFCCC and drive greater ambition into the future with the new international climate agreement. By creating a more predictable and dynamic architecture, nations are more likely to be in a better position to drive ambition forward on a regular basis. Predictable, as there will be a clear process forward for years to come. Dynamic, as governments will be able to increase commitments at any time. Governments, business, investors, and the public will have a clearer understanding of the role of the UNFCCC in supporting the pathway to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.

We identified the following promising options to create such an architecture, all of which could be adopted together. Parties could:

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1. further specify a global long-term goal for emissions, such as a phase-out of greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by mid-century, carbon neutrality, or a global emissions reduction goal;
2. create a predictable commitment cycle to strengthen national contributions on a regular schedule—for example, five or ten years—and continue to do so until the collective long-term goal is met. That cycle should include a series of clear steps to ensure that the Parties have adequate and dependable information and analysis;
3. decide up front that every cycle will result in greater emissions reduction or scale up actions for each Party, aiming towards a long-term goal;
4. create an assessment and revision process for each cycle that supports the Parties in identifying additional options to reduce emissions or strengthen low carbon policies and measures and areas of support and collaboration.

### Setting a long-term pathway

Further specifying the long-term mitigation goal of the agreement could assist in providing clarity and predictability for investors, business and governments, concerning the pathway for emissions reduction and a context and direction for increased ambition in future national contributions.

There are two options, which are not mutually exclusive, to be considered at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2015:

1. The inclusion of a long-term mitigation goal in the core agreement that is more concrete than a temperature limit of 2°C or 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. There are a number of options for such a goal that many Parties have noted or are implementing, including carbon neutrality, a phase-out, global decarbonization, or/and percentage reduction goals.
2. The inclusion of a decision that every Party's commitment in the future will be more ambitious than what it was in the past until the global long-term goal is met.

### Rolling Cycle of National Ambition

The authors propose to set up regularly scheduled rounds—for example, every five or ten years—to decide commitments for the next period.

Such a schedule and cycle—over a longer time frame and beyond just one commitment cycle and until the long-term goal is met—would provide more clarity for national decision makers in their own deliberations around climate policy as they would have an understanding of what other Parties will contribute in each round as all Parties will table proposed contributions at the same time. This would inform national contributions by allowing Parties to align the timing of their national processes with those of other countries and provide an opportunity to compare the level of ambition and implementation amongst countries. The proposed rolling cycle would feature the steps outlined as follows.

### Inputs to the Cycle

The cycle would require analytical inputs, some of which already exist, including:

- **Review of Parties' performance in the previous cycle (already existing process):** Information on a Party's national circumstances and implementation generated through the existing Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) processes would continue to be an input into the cycle, both for the benefit of each Party and for other Parties to understand their peers' current circumstances.
- **Global aggregate assessment of the gap between the long-term target and the current level of implementation (already existing process):** In the past, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has assessed the level of country implementation against the level of mitigation required to stay below the currently agreed goal of 2 degrees. Such assessments should be continued, based on the latest available science from the IPCC. Lessons from the UNFCCC 2013–2015 review could be also leveraged.
- **Equity guidance (new process):** Parties could ask an institution (e.g. IPCC, one of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Bodies, United Nations Environment Programme, or an independent technical panel) to develop an equity framework including e.g. set criteria and metrics. Such an equity framework would be an

input into future cycles. Parties could then decide how such a framework should be applied in future cycles.

- **Country-specific suggestions on how to increase ambition of action (new process):** The MRV process could be augmented to include country-specific suggestions by technical experts on how a country can increase ambition. The process could include mitigation potential but also policy areas that best fit national circumstances. In the case of developing countries, this could include an analysis of what type and how much and what kind of support would be necessary to secure more forceful and vigorous action on climate change mitigation.
- **Assessment of support (build on existing process):** For some countries, the level of ambition in the future will partially be determined by what kind and what level of financial, capacity-building, and other support is provided. Existing and ongoing processes related to assessments of support and their outputs could be drawn on and made more streamlined. Examples include processes under the Standing Committee on Finance, international assessment and review or international consultation and analysis (IAR/ICA), Green Climate Fund capitalization, technical needs assessments, etc.

- The Secretariat could set up an electronic bulletin board that allows Parties and stakeholders to post comments and for a Party to respond.
- An aggregate global assessment of the gap in meeting a long-term goal could be requested by an institution identified by the Parties. Such an assessment would leverage the outcome of individual country assessments and other reviews of implementation mentioned above.

- **Revise and finalize stage:** A Party would revise and finalize its strengthened contribution.
- **Anchoring the strengthened contribution:** A simplified procedure on how new contributions will be agreed upon and enter into force could be beneficial, especially if contributions are updated regularly. The new contributions could be adopted by consensus or by majority decision making (for example, a three-fourths majority) within the UNFCCC. This paper refers to those adopted contributions as commitments. The possibility of majority voting could significantly expedite and facilitate decision making. If the Parties do not wish to have an international process for the acceptance of contributions, the contributions could be deemed accepted once the Party submits its final contributions.

## Steps in the Cycle

A series of steps in a continuous cycle of revising goals and contributions would be necessary (see Figure 1):

- **Proposal stage:** At the core of the cycle would be the proposed contribution from the Party itself.
- **Assessment stage:** The proposals would be assessed in multiple ways:
  - A domestic consultation process could be undertaken in the lead-up to a country's putting forward its proposed contribution, thereby ensuring a strong linkage between national and international processes.
  - A set of parallel independent inputs by organizations, experts, and think tanks outside UNFCCC (through electronic boards, Web sites, or in consultations) could be encouraged and recognized by the Parties.
  - The UNFCCC Secretariat could prepare a "synthesis of national contributions."

## INTRODUCTION

In December 2015, countries are scheduled to conclude negotiations in Paris on a new international climate agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). If successful, this agreement will shift the world's economy onto a low-carbon and climate-resilient pathway in a manner that is ambitious, equitable, and transparent. More than 20 years of experience in the UNFCCC provides much history from which lessons can be learned. The new negotiation provides an opportunity to focus on the key functions this agreement must fulfill in order to achieve a turning point in addressing climate change. The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report has outlined the short timeline the world is working against in order to avoid the worst impacts as well as the opportunities that lie ahead in the solutions.<sup>1</sup>

While countries have been negotiating for many years, and the UNFCCC has catalyzed change and action, a different approach is needed that provides predictability and clarity concerning the future pathway for emissions

reductions and that drives ambition and rapid action. In Warsaw in 2013, the Parties decided that one part of the 2015 agreement is the formulation of “intended nationally determined contributions” (INDCs) that each Party would put forward in the first quarter of 2015. Negotiations are under way to decide what the INDC process should entail. The issues under consideration include the information to be presented, the type of review or assessment to be conducted, how contributions should be anchored in the 2015 agreement, and how to build an enduring arrangement that promotes more ambition and faster action. The process involving INDCs will have a substantial impact on whether the agreement can ensure increasingly vigorous action in the future and ensure fairness between nations.

At the same time, however, the Parties need to consider what happens after the COP in 2015 (COP 21). Once contributions are put forward and anchored in an international architecture, how can the agreement drive increasing emissions reductions on a regular basis? Given the growing attention to this issue in international negotiations,<sup>2</sup> this paper looks at the past for lessons and then outlines the options for ways in which the cycle of contributions could be established for the period after 2015.<sup>3</sup> The terminology used throughout this paper for intended nationally determined contributions for the next set of contributions is the following: “Proposed contributions” refers to proposals that the Parties put forward; the word “commitment” is used once the proposed contribution has been finalized and anchored in the agreement.

This paper focuses on greenhouse gas mitigation but recognizes the rationale for a similar process that is applicable for adaptation and support.

## HISTORY AND LESSONS

Both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol provide for a review of the adequacy of mitigation commitments.<sup>4</sup> These provisions were put in place because both treaties included relatively short-term mitigation commitments (by 2000 and 2008–2012, respectively) that were considered by many to be only modestly ambitious. Scientific reports such as the IPCC, however, recognize that climate change operates on long time horizons, in terms of impacts, actions, and investments. The Parties therefore deemed it essential that commitments should evolve dynamically over time and signal to markets and the public that the Parties are serious about addressing this issue over the long term.

The set of provisions and decisions related to review processes have led to mixed results. Article 4.2(d) of the Convention required a review of the adequacy of a Party’s commitments at the first session of the Conference of the Parties (1995). This review led to a finding of inadequacy of the commitments in articles 4.2 (a) and (b)<sup>5</sup> and a negotiating mandate that produced the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Subsequent reviews of the adequacy of commitments under the convention have not materialized because of disagreement over whether such reviews should concern the commitments themselves or implementation of the existing commitments (by developed countries).

Article 9 of the Kyoto Protocol mandates a “periodic” general review of the protocol. Two reviews were conducted in 2006 and 2008 without tangible outcomes. Article 3.9 of the Kyoto Protocol does not specifically require a finding of inadequacy but states that negotiations should be initiated at least seven years before 2012, the end of the first commitment period, and in time for a second commitment period to be agreed to, ratified, and entered into force.<sup>6</sup> The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol acted on this mandate in 2005 by establishing the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Kyoto Protocol.

At COP 13 in 2007, the Parties agreed on the Bali Road Map, which chartered the way towards negotiations of country commitments after 2012 in two work streams: one on the Kyoto Protocol (Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Kyoto Protocol) and one including all Parties (Ad-Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action) focused on reaching an “agreed outcome” by 2009.<sup>7</sup>

In 2010, the Parties agreed in the Cancun Agreements<sup>8</sup> to limit temperature rise to a maximum of 2°C above preindustrial levels and to consider lowering that maximum to 1.5 degrees in the near future based on a review of that long-term target.<sup>9</sup> A process also began to clarify the Cancun pledges through a series of workshops. The Parties presented and answered questions about its pledge. In Durban in 2011, there was political agreement on a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and to “launch a process to develop a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties, through a subsidiary body under the Convention hereby established and to be known as the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action.” The working group set a schedule for the next agreement to be finalized by 2015.<sup>10</sup>

In Doha in 2012 at COP 18, an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol was adopted establishing the second commitment period. The agreement reached in Doha included elements facilitating an increase in the level of reduction of the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol including scheduled reviews, triggered revisiting of the commitments, and automatic adjustments. See Annex for a description of this Kyoto ambition mechanism.

## Lessons Learned

The history of review processes in the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, and related decisions demonstrates clear gaps and challenges:

- **The need for a scheduled strengthening of pledges with a clear timetable.** The provisions outlined above in the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol are linked to relatively uncertain timeliness (such as within a certain number of years following the end of a future, undefined commitment period), or the provisions are vague. Because the provisions for review in the Convention did not include clarity of scheduling, there was therefore no predictability regarding the pathway of the negotiations in the future, creating uncertainty for governments, investors, and the public.<sup>11</sup>
- **The need to effectively leverage existing scientific and policy-relevant inputs and processes<sup>12</sup>** and, where needed, try to synchronize any new inputs<sup>13</sup> so that the Parties have as much information as possible to put forward and then assess proposed contributions.<sup>14</sup>
- **The benefits of creating processes for the agreement to capture greater commitment** by each Party whenever the Party wishes to put forward an enhanced contribution to the UNFCCC. The aforementioned Kyoto ambition mechanism (see Annex) includes many positive elements, but the fact that it is only applicable for a small set of Parties makes it less effective. Provisions enabling all Parties to increase their level of effort of their own accord could allow the agreement to be more dynamic and respond to upward swings of political will when they occur in any country.
- **The need for a more systematic assessment of pledges as they are tabled.** The Cancun clarification process did not provide the ability to look across countries to understand a number of issues

including comparability with others. In addition, there were no built-in recommendations on how a country could overcome barriers or how the process could help countries identify further potential to increase pledges. Therefore, the process did not lead to an increase in ambition, although it was clear to all Parties that the aggregate level of emissions reductions of all pledges was not sufficient to be compatible with the agreed 2°C goal.<sup>15</sup>

- **The importance of linking international review processes with national decision making as much as possible.** This would enhance the implementation of existing and future COP decisions.<sup>16</sup>
- **The importance of the provision of support for developing countries to complement their domestic efforts.** The lack of sufficient human, technical and financial resources has likely hindered developing countries from achieving the full potential in both the shift to a low carbon resilient economy.<sup>17</sup>

Areas of improvement to be addressed in the 2015 agreement could therefore include:

- a clear timetable for strengthening future commitments;
- effective and timely use of information and analysis;
- maintaining the opportunity for all Parties to increase level of reductions at any time;
- lining up of decision making on future commitments so that the Parties are on the same schedule and so they can understand what other Parties are tabling when they put forward their proposed contribution; and
- exploration of ways to scale up the means of implementation (finance, technology transfer, and capacity building) and make them more transparent so that they are commensurate with the level of actions required.

The Paris Agreement offers the opportunity for Parties to learn lessons from the past and make changes that create a more effective and ambitious international agreement. This paper addresses the question of how to create a more ambitious regime moving forward after Paris by focusing on mitigation contributions and issues related to them. At the same time, we recognize the potential added value of

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a regular process in parallel to increase adaptation action and support for that action.

The intended nationally determined contributions process (INDC), decided in Warsaw,<sup>18</sup> is taken as a foundational element of the agreement now and into the future. However, the authors acknowledge that some processes may need to be reviewed and changed over time.

## DIRECTION: LONG-TERM GOAL

To provide clarity and predictability regarding an emissions reduction pathway, the Parties could further specify the global long-term mitigation goal of the agreement. If nations adopt a dynamic process that involves a cycle of negotiations over time, establishing such a collective global goal could provide a key context for future action. Without a more specific mitigation goal, the ultimate end point that the Parties are aiming to reach would not be clear. Setting a goal, on the other hand, can further clarify the long-term objective of an iterative approach to securing more vigorous commitments.

The Cancun Agreements started with the aim to limit global average temperature increase to 2°C as a common goal for all Parties. One option to strengthen the effectiveness of the goal would be for the Parties to set a more directive pathway for emissions than in the past. The 2°C goal from the Cancun Agreements does not request or require Parties themselves to reduce their national GHG emissions in a specific or quantifiable manner. The 2°C goal leaves large room for interpretation (To be achieved by when? With which probability? By whom?), and there is limited signal or guidance given by the UNFCCC regarding future emissions trends of either individual countries or an aggregate level of reductions required.

Understanding the urgency of the problem, as clearly outlined in the latest IPCC reports, and the fact that global emissions have to peak before 2020 for a likely chance of meeting the 2°C target with least costs,<sup>19</sup> the Parties should go beyond previous general signals. The following two complementary options are presented for consideration:

1. The inclusion of a global long-term mitigation target in the core 2015 agreement that is more concrete than a temperature limit of 2°C or 1.5°C. There are a number of options for such a goal that could be based on approaches that many Parties have noted or are implementing at a national level. The options range

from carbon neutrality goals<sup>20</sup> to a global decarbonization goal,<sup>21</sup> percentage reduction goals,<sup>22</sup> the amount of fossil fuels that can be used before the 2°C threshold is crossed,<sup>23</sup> or a phase out of GHGs to net zero by a certain time frame, for example, mid-century.<sup>24</sup> Other options could be focused on the energy sector, for example, 100 percent renewables or phasing out of fossil fuels.

Parties could be encouraged to use this global goal to inform a long-term national goal such as the United Kingdom's long-term goal. Coupling short-term goals with such a long-term goal can help ensure that a long-term emission reduction pathway is realized. (See forthcoming Greenhouse Gas Protocol Mitigation Goals Accounting and Reporting Standard, Chapter 4.)

2. The inclusion of a decision in Paris that every Party's commitment in the future will be more ambitious than what it was in the past until the long-term goal is met. For countries with economy-wide targets, this would mean that every time negotiations on future commitments occur, the national target would be strengthened. This could be done by increasing the national reduction number, by expanding the coverage of sectors, by including more gases, etc. For Parties with commitments based on policies and measures, these commitments would also be strengthened. For example, a country with a renewable energy policy of 20 percent renewables could increase that top-line number to, for example, 30 percent; or an energy efficiency standard could be strengthened or additional products with standards could be added. Such countries that do not yet have economy-wide or GHG quantifiable targets could include those in a commitment. This would build upon a "no backsliding" approach but go further, sending a signal that the Parties will continue to increase their commitments over time.

If these two options were combined, the agreement would send a clear signal to policymakers, business, and the public that the low-carbon economy is going to continue to be implemented and that there will be no road back to a high-carbon world.

## COMMITMENT CYCLE

In order to avoid some of the flaws in previous review processes, particularly their ad-hoc quality, Parties need to consider a clearer process than has been used in the past, including a schedule to set contributions. (See also, Briner et al. 2014,<sup>25</sup> Bodansky and Diringer 2014<sup>26</sup>.) One of the key decisions at COP 21 in Paris will need to be a process to revise and strengthen commitments far into the future, a so-called commitment cycle.<sup>27</sup>

There are many options that could be pursued. This paper identifies two:

1. Parties could adopt a process that would result in automatic increases in the level of reduction of the Parties by a certain percentage or other metric on a regular schedule every certain number of years. The schedule and the reduction rate for each Party could be negotiated in advance so that the Party would know what rate of reduction is expected.
2. Parties could decide to set up regularly scheduled strengthening of commitments to decide commitments for the next period (for example, this could occur every five or ten years depending on the time frame for the mitigation commitments that countries make). For this option, the rate of reduction would not be determined in advance, but the Parties would table a next national commitment, potentially for assessment from other Parties, based on a continuation and strengthening of the INDC approach that is in place for the negotiations leading to the 2015 agreement.

Although there are merits to the first option, including greater predictability of national emissions pathways, the authors judge that such an approach is not politically possible at this time. The Warsaw decisions creating the INDC process have placed greater emphasis on the national role in setting contributions, rather than an international mechanism to determine future levels of commitment. For that reason, this paper focuses on the second option and on the issues and choices the Parties would have to consider in strengthening their commitments over time. The paper particularly highlights the role that the agreement could play in catalyzing national processes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over time and increasing the ambition of those proposed commitments.

To clarify terminology in the paper: The schedule is the timeline of the process. The cycle is the process that would be carried out each time new commitments are set.

If implemented, a regular schedule for strengthening commitments over time would allow efficiencies to be built around information gathering and the negotiating process. For example, scientific inputs and reviews could be scheduled so as to be finished before the next cycle. These inputs are outlined in section 7.

Such a schedule and cycle, over a longer time frame, would also provide more clarity for national decision makers in their own national deliberations over climate policy as they would have an understanding of what other Parties will contribute in the next round. This would allow decision-makers to align the timing of their national processes with those of other countries, as much as possible, so as to provide an opportunity to compare the level of ambition and scheduled implementation to inform national commitments. This would create a kind of rolling cycle, the steps of which are outlined below.

## TIMING FOR THE COMMITMENT STRENGTHENING PROCESS

One key decision is how often and when the Parties should put forward and anchor their proposals for the next strengthened commitments in the future. There are a number of questions to be considered:

- Should all Parties have the same timing of their cycle and respective end date for their commitments in the future? That is, should there be a series of cycles where all Parties, or a large subset of Parties, set the next level of ambition? If it is important for one Party to know the future pathway of another in deciding its own level of commitment then it will be key to have the same end date for every country commitment. If there are varying end dates across countries, it may be very difficult to have a collective assessment of ambition or an understanding of comparable effort. In addition, the creation of international political moments where countries together make decisions provides focus and attention at the appropriate level.
- How quickly should the strengthening cycle be repeated? The regularly scheduled strengthening negotiation should logically coincide with the length of the commitment. If the Parties decide to have a five-year

Table 1 | **Current Processes for Measurement, Reporting, and Review Processes and Five- and Ten-Year Strengthening Cycles**

		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Current Processes	IPCC Assessment Reports		AR 5					
	Developing Country National Communications		Non-A1 Nat Com				Non-A1 Nat Com	
	Review of Developed Country National Communications		A1 Nat Com Review			A1 Nat Com Review		
	Developed Country National Communications	A1 Nat Com				A1 Nat Com		
	Assessment by the Standing Committee on Finance		SCF		SCF		SCF	
	Developing Country International Consultation and Analysis	ICA		ICA		ICA		ICA
	Developing Country Biennial Update Report		BUR		BUR		BUR	
	Developed Country Biennial Reports	BR		BR		BR		BR
	National Inventories	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI
5-Year Strengthening Cycle	Country Nationally Determined Commitments			NDCs for 2025				NDCs for 2030
	Assessment of Commitments Ex-ante			Assess ex-ante				Assess ex-ante
	Revisit/ Readjustment of Country Commitments							
	Anchor Commitments			Anchor NDCs				
	Assessment of Commitments Ex-post							
10-Year Strengthening Cycle	Country Commitments			NDCs for 2030				
	Assessment of Commitments Ex-ante							
	Revisit/ Readjustment of Country Commitments							
	Anchor Commitments			Anchor NDCs				
	Assessment of Commitments Ex-post							

GLOSSARY

**A1 Nat Coms:** Developed country National Communications  
**A1 Nat Com Review:** Review of developed country National Communications  
**Adjust NDCs:** Revisit and readjust nationally determined country commitments

**Anchor NDCs:** Anchor nationally determined country commitments to the agreement  
**Assess ex-ante:** Assess country commitments before anchoring  
**Assess ex-post:** Assess country commitments after anchoring  
**AR (5, 6, 7):** IPCC Assessment Reports



Table 1 | **Current Processes for Measurement, Reporting, and Review Processes and Five- and Ten-Year Strengthening Cycles (continued)**

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026		
AR 6						AR 7	IPCC Assessment Reports	Current Processes
		Non-A1 Nat Com				Non-A1 Nat Com	Developing Country National Communications	
A1 Nat Com Review							Review of Developed Country National Communications	
	A1 Nat Com				A1 Nat Com		Developed Country National Communications	
SCF		SCF		SCF		SCF	Assessment by the Standing Committee on Finance	
	ICA		ICA		ICA		Developing Country International Consultation and Analysis	
BUR		BUR		BUR		BUR	Developing Country Biennial Update Report	
	BR		BR		BR		Developed Country Biennial Reports	
NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	NI	National Inventories	
				NDCs for 2035			Country Nationally Determined Commitments	5-Year Strengthening Cycle
				Assess ex-ante			Assessment of Commitments Ex-ante	
Adjust NDCs					Adjust NDCs		Revisit/ Readjustment of Country Commitments	
Anchor NDCs					Anchor NDCs		Anchor Commitments	
	Assess ex-post					Assess ex-post	Assessment of Commitments Ex-post	
				NDCs for 2040			Country Commitments	10-Year Strengthening Cycle
				Assess ex-ante			Assessment of Commitments Ex-ante	
					Adjust NDCs		Revisit/ Readjustment of Country Commitments	
					Anchor NDCs		Anchor Commitments	
						Assess ex-post	Assessment of Commitments Ex-post	

**BR:** Developed country Biennial Reports

**BUR:** Developing country Biennial Update Reports

**ICA:** Developing country International Consultation and Analysis

**NI:** Country National Inventories

**Non-A1 Nat Com:** Developing country National Communications

**NDCs for [YEAR]:** Announcement of nationally-determined country commitments for a given timeline

**SCF:** Assessment by the Standing Committee on Finance

commitment time frame, then the negotiations for the next cycles should occur every five years. Some would argue for short commitment periods so that the level of commitment can be regularly assessed and changed as needed and prevent locking in low ambition for too long. Others argue for longer commitment periods to bring greater long-term certainty for investors. Parties could also consider the possibility of a combination of shorter-term commitment periods (for example, five years) combined with an indicative medium-term target/action (for example, within the next 10 years), in addition to a long-term global goal.

Clearly the commitment cycle needs to take into account other ongoing processes in the convention. Table I below outlines current processes for measurement, reporting, and review processes already in place and inserts two options for the timing of the commitment cycle (five or ten years).

This table demonstrates that, if the Parties maintain the reporting and verification cycle under the current MRV framework, a five year commitment cycle would allow for either two or three biennial update reports (BURs)<sup>28</sup> and IAR/ICA<sup>29</sup> cycles completed as well as one national communication for each Party.<sup>30</sup> The five-year cycle provides more certainty regarding the revisiting of national commitments while building up experience and thus momentum around these practices. On the other hand, a 10-year cycle provides less opportunity for consistent learning and revising on a more regular basis.

## Additional Triggers

In addition to these regularly scheduled commitment cycles, the Parties could consider including some of the following additional triggers or opportunities for strengthening:

1. Parties could individually and independently decide to increase their commitments or put forward new commitments any time. For example, a new government may wish to increase the level of its commitments before the next official cycle, or particular events (for example, a major climate impact) may accelerate national climate action. Given past experience with the Kyoto Protocol, which provided limited opportunities for the Parties to increase commitments, incorporating this provision in the new agreement could make it more effective than provisions in the past.
2. The Parties could decide to include additional external qualitative or quantitative triggers,<sup>31</sup> such as major technological breakthroughs, that would prompt an increase in ambition. These would be especially important if the commitment periods are longer than five years.
3. The Parties could decide to automatically ratchet up or begin negotiation around the ambition of a Party that has already met its commitment far in advance.

The agreement could also include an explicit provision so that a Party could ask for a decrease in level of effort in case of force majeure, which could be decided by a compliance committee. (Force majeure is generally acknowledged under international law.<sup>32</sup>)

During each of these strengthening moments, it will be important for countries to align national and international processes so that strengthened international commitments can be implemented without delay.

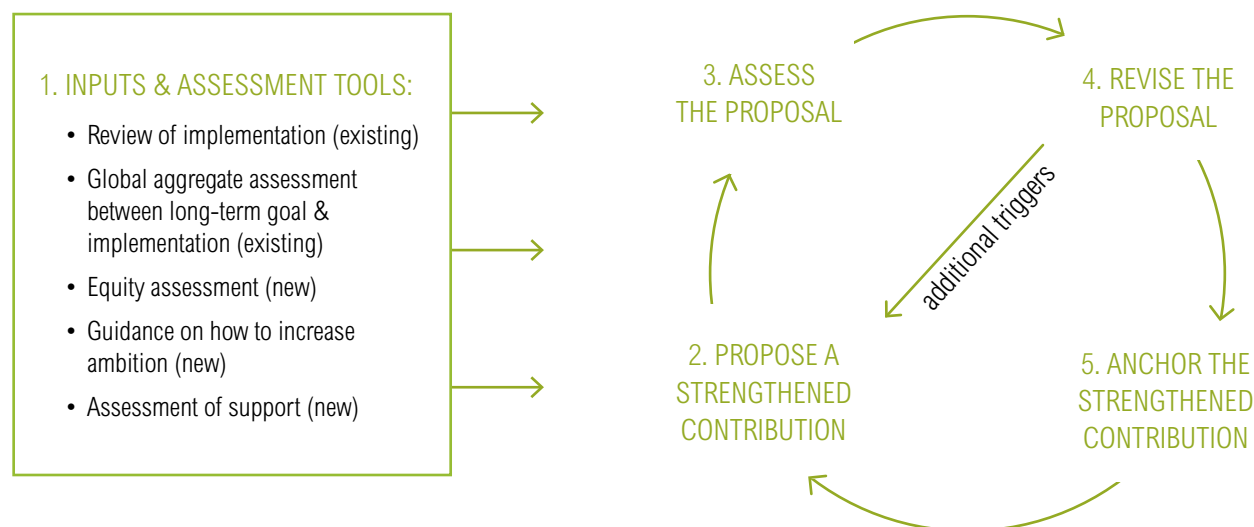
## STEPS FOR THE COMMITMENT STRENGTHENING PROCESS

In addition to deciding whether to have a regularly scheduled strengthening process and a long-term mitigation target there are a number of steps that the Parties could decide to include in a detailed process to strengthen commitments over time. This section outlines a series of steps in a continuous cycle of revising commitments for the post-2020 timeframe, that is, post-Paris.

### Leveraging Inputs, Assessments, and the Existing Review Process

Throughout the cycle there are a number of inputs and assessments that could enhance the process, both in the ex-ante and ex-post phases. In both the proposal and assessment phases noted in Figure 1 above, the Parties could decide to ask an institution or institutions to provide information, analysis, and assessment that would be useful both in setting the new commitments and in assessing them over time. Some of the inputs are already part of the UNFCCC institutional system (for example, MRV documents), while others would be new. The following inputs and assessments could be considered:

Figure 1 | Steps in a continuous cycle of commitments



### REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTIES

As demonstrated in Table 1 above, a significant amount of information concerning a Party's national circumstances and implementation is generated through the existing MRV processes focused on past emissions reporting and mitigation performance. This information can provide useful information for the Parties as they put forward their next commitments in the cycle.

### GLOBAL AGGREGATE ASSESSMENT

The Parties have agreed to keep global average temperature to below 2°C, in comparison with preindustrial levels, and could decide to include an additional complementary mitigation goal such as those noted on page 6. In the past, the United Nations Environment Programme has assessed the level of country implementation against the level of mitigation required to stay below 2 degrees.<sup>33</sup> This has been a helpful study to inform the Parties and society about the gap in mitigation action. The IPCC has recently included similar information in its AR5. However, the Parties could choose to have more formalized arrangements for assessing the current scale of the mitigation ambition gap so as to ensure that this information is formally integrated into future commitment cycles. As an input before countries begin developing the next commitment and

once all Parties have tabled their proposals, an assessment could be undertaken to evaluate how close the Parties' proposals are to levels needed to keep temperature change below 2°C. The UNFCCC 2013–2015 adequacy review is currently under way, and its outcome is still unclear. Lessons from this process and the dialogue of experts involved in the review could, however, inform the design of such aggregate assessments.<sup>34</sup>

### EQUITY INPUT AND ASSESSMENT

Equity has been and will remain a core part of the Convention. Parties and experts are now considering various proposals for ways in which equity can be integrated into the 2015 agreement.<sup>35</sup> This paper assumes that equity will be a continuing central factor after 2015 in any cycle of contributions. To facilitate consideration of equity, an equity framework could be developed<sup>36</sup> to be used in future negotiation cycles. Various indicators could be incorporated into such a framework, potentially including emissions responsibility, development indicators, vulnerability to climate impacts, relative costs of action, and benefits of action.<sup>37</sup> Such a framework could be used both to inform Parties in the development of their proposals and to assess those proposals against an equity framework once they have been tabled.

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## ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL TO INCREASE AMBITION AND INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY ASSESSMENTS

The degree to which each Party could increase its commitment is one of the key questions to be addressed during each cycle. ‘Good practice’ policy menus could be developed to show generic options for the ways in which countries can increase mitigation action and how much support is necessary for each option.<sup>38</sup> The UNFCCC has already started to prepare such menus.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to information on the mitigation action gap and the status of each country’s implementation of its mitigation commitments, it would also be helpful to have country-specific analysis on what exactly the country could do to increase its level of action and how much it could reduce emissions moving forward. Such analysis could provide recommendations for overcoming barriers and enhancing or scaling up efforts. In the case of developing countries, this could include analysis on how much and what types of support would be necessary in order to enable greater levels of action.

Once each Party has tabled its proposed contribution, an institution (options identified below) could undertake an assessment, analyzing the difference between what was proposed and what the country-specific analysis indicated was possible. A set of recommendations could be provided to the Party to guide it in further thinking through its proposal and to other Parties to encourage greater understanding of potential action by the Party.

## ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT

For many developing countries, the level of ambition in the future will partially be determined by what kind and level of financial, capacity-building, and other support is provided and will be provided in the future. It will be vital for any future continuous commitment strengthening cycle to take the level of support into account.

Parties could consider a similar commitment support cycle that runs in parallel to the commitment cycle in order to inform the process.

Previous and existing processes related to assessment of support and their outputs should be employed, for example, those under the Standing Committee on Finance, IAR/ICA, Green Climate Fund capitalization, technical needs assessment, etc. The timing of outputs should be lightly aligned with this process in a way that facilitates coordination.

## Institutional Choices

A number of institutions could provide the inputs and assessments described here:

1. The IPCC could be requested to work on one or more technical reports that occur on a regularly scheduled basis.
2. The UNFCCC Secretariat could be mandated to undertake certain compilation and synthesis analyses.
3. Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI)/Subsidiary Body for Science and Technological Advice (SBSTA) could be tasked to undertake summary analysis and assessment and provide a space for Parties and non-state actors to share their views.
4. The ICR/ICA assessment process could be expanded to include a forward look and not focus only on reviews of implementation.
5. UNEP or another UN organization could be requested to continue the gap assessment.
6. An independent technical expert panel could be created to undertake the various types of assessments suggested in this paper.

The first five of these options are relatively familiar options in the UNFCCC. In the case of the sixth option, the Parties could consider creating an independent technical panel or committee made up of independent experts, mandated by the UNFCCC to provide inputs as requested by the COP on the items noted above. This panel could draw from the experience of other such panels such as the UK Committee on Climate Change<sup>40</sup> and the Montreal Protocol’s TEAPs.<sup>41</sup> The function of the panel would be to provide technical inputs to the Parties for their consideration in the commitment cycle process. Such a panel could be staffed by experts serving in their personal capacity, and they could be organized into teams to respond to the various tasks. The panel would need to include adequate geographical and technical expertise (including mitigation generally, specific sectors, finance).

No matter which institutional arrangement the Parties decide to adopt, they could also decide to encourage and recognize parallel assessment by organizations and experts and think tanks outside the UNFCCC (for example, through electronic boards and Web sites or in the consultations).

Naturally, the Parties will have to choose among those options. The following set of criteria could assist in making such choices:

- capacity of existing institutions to deliver timely information and analysis
- level of technical expertise required to undertake the task
- balance between technical expertise and political considerations
- cost of implementation
- level of independence required for effective implementation

## Proposal Stage

At the core of the cycle will be the contribution proposal put forward by each Party itself. The format for the strengthened contribution could be based on the final decision of Parties in the negotiations leading up to the 2015 agreement regarding what information a Party should include in putting forward its contribution. Future proposed contributions in negotiating cycles after 2015 could also follow that format, which could be further strengthened, as appropriate. Each Party could put forward its proposal in a timely manner for discussion and review, and the process could follow the process decided upon for the INDC process to be used in 2015.

It would be useful if the Parties learned from the current process soon after it has been completed at COP 21 in 2015 in order to improve future cycles. To do so, they could decide to review the INDC process by 2017 in order to inform the next cycle of negotiations.

## Assessment Stage—Post-2020

The Parties should consider what kind of assessment stage could occur once the proposed contribution has been put forward by a Party. The Cancun clarification of pledges process offers some lessons, noted earlier, that can be used to inform the formulation of the process for the future cycle of contributions. While the Cancun review of pledges process was informative, it was difficult to compare country pledges to one another. For example, the fact that each Party put forward different types and amounts of information made it difficult to understand the background and implications of each pledge. Moving forward, there is an opportunity to learn from this and other experiences in developing an assessment stage.

There are two options for undertaking such an assessment:<sup>42</sup>

1. as part of IAR/ICA, perhaps enhancing the process to consider issues not originally in the mandate
2. as a new process, outlined below

The first option may be challenging, given that the current mandate focuses that process on assessing past performance, rather than looking at future potential action. In addition, that process is demanding to implement; adding additional tasks may affect its ability to successfully achieve the necessary objectives. However, the ICA/IAR process is an existing one that Parties may wish to build upon, rather than create something new.

The second option draws from past experience and lessons learned and includes elements that would allow for a more robust assessment process, if the Parties so decide. As mentioned above, there would be a global assessment of the gap between the proposed commitments and the 2 degrees goal, as well as a process to assess individual country support. These assessments could be undertaken by the institutions listed in Section 6, both in the lead-up to the proposed contribution to inform it and then once again once the proposed contributions of the Parties have been tabled. In addition to those elements, the following supplemental elements of an assessment phase could be included:

- an agreed common set of metrics and information for the submissions of the proposed contributions that facilitate their assessment while acknowledging the diverse range of actions and different capabilities among countries. This could occur as part of the review of Paris decisions on this matter noted above.
- domestic consultation processes in the lead-up to putting forward the Party's proposed contribution, helping ensure a link between national and international processes.
- presentation of the Parties' proposed contributions internationally in an agreed consistent format, allowing a more systematic review across countries.
- a request that the Secretariat prepare a summary that captures information provided across all of the categories in the up-front information presented by the Parties (for example, x number of economy-wide targets, y policy proposed commitments, X number of countries include Y gas).

- a request that the Secretariat set up an electronic bulletin board that allows Parties and stakeholders to post comments and for a Party to respond and discuss.

Table 1 also conveys the significant number of reporting and review (or assessment) processes that already exist and that would accompany a regular strengthening cycle of the commitments. Since the UNFCCC is already struggling to implement the existing cycle of ex-post review, the Parties may wish to consider the following means for rationalizing these assessments:

- use a staggered approach so that the 192 countries may not be assessed at the same time or at the same frequency;<sup>43</sup> as in other multilateral processes (for example, the World Trade Organization), major economies could be assessed more frequently and at the same time.
- explore the possibility of regional or “group of countries” assessments; and
- establish permanent teams for undertaking the various assessments (to overcome the current scarcity and availability of experts).

All options could enable submissions from non-Party actors. Such inputs could come from competent expert institutions, companies, or cities and other subnational governments. Non-state inputs are recognized in a number of multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.<sup>44</sup> Non-state input could be facilitated by an electronic bulletin board where Parties and non-state actors could post comments and the Party concerned could respond. This would be an effective means of empowering NGOs, independent “think tanks,” and international organizations to have a voice,<sup>45</sup> thus enhancing the attention paid to Party contributions and, as a result, improving effectiveness and efficiency.<sup>46</sup>

In deciding what type of assessment phase option would be most appropriate for the future, the Parties should consider the following criteria:

- the importance of cross-country comparison and understanding

- the amount of time and resources required for such assessments and whether every Party should undergo such a process
- the weight of Article 6 of the convention on information and education

## Revise and Finalize Stage

A key part of the cycle is whether and how a Party revises and finalizes its proposed commitment, once the assessment is undertaken.

Morgan et al. identified three options for revision and finalization.<sup>47</sup>

- **Option 1:** Parties could assess the comments within its own internal governmental process, but there would be no requirement to provide a formal response.
- **Option 2:** A decision could require Parties to respond by providing additional information without a requirement to resubmit their offer.
- **Option 3:** A decision could require Parties to respond to the comments and to resubmit an offer, which could be the same as the original offer; and/or the Parties could explain why it is not feasible to submit a new offer.

If an in-depth domestic policy process has occurred to formulate the original proposed commitment, it may be challenging for a Party to revise it. At the same time, if an international architecture is to enable greater ambition in achieving the convention’s objective, some sort of revision stage may need to be a core function.

There may be instances where a Party does not put forward a contribution at all. In this case, there are a number of options to consider:

- The nation loses its privileges in the agreement.
- If a compliance body is created, the Party could be referred to it and asked to explain why it has not put forward a proposed commitment. The body would then explore ways to help the Party put forward a contribution.
- An automatic rate of emissions reduction could be applied.

## Anchoring the Strengthened Commitment

The Parties also will have to decide how the new commitments will eventually be agreed upon and entered into force. The new commitments could be adopted by consensus or by majority decision making (for example, a three-fourths majority). The possibility of majority voting could significantly expedite and facilitate decision making. In the case of majority decision making, the interests of the Party concerned could be further protected by allowing each Party to refuse its own commitment (which would abrogate it). If Parties did not wish to have any international process governing the adoption of commitments, the final commitments could be deemed automatically adopted upon submission by the Party.

Options also exist for the entry into force of the new commitments. If the commitments become part of the legal agreement itself or one of its annexes, those commitments could enter into force once a certain number of Parties have ratified the new commitments. Alternatively, the commitments could enter into force automatically upon expiration of a certain time period after their adoption (for example, 90 days). If the new commitments were only part of a COP decision that COP decision could determine from which date onwards they would be applicable (while they would not formally enter into force and thus have the same level of legal force).

Commitments could both be adopted and enter force automatically under some circumstances. For example, the agreement could determine that mitigation commitments be strengthened automatically without the need for any kind of international decision and without the need for domestic ratification if a party requests for itself a new or strengthened commitment or if its emissions drop below a certain threshold (or rise above a certain threshold).

The adoption and entry into force is also related to the legal nature or form of the commitments. For example, whether the mitigation commitment itself or the existence of national laws and regulations towards that mitigation commitment are legally binding may have an impact on the acceptability of simplified or even automatic adoption and entry into force.

## CONCLUSIONS

Having reviewed past practice and assessed the options for moving forward, there are some promising options to improve the effectiveness of the convention and drive greater emissions reductions in the future. By creating a more predictable and dynamic architecture, the Parties will be in a better position to increase the level of ambition on a regular basis. Predictable, as there will be a clear process forward for years to come. Dynamic, as governments will be able to increase commitments at any time. Governments, business, investors, and the public will have a clearer understanding of the role of the UNFCCC in supporting the pathway to a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.

We see the following promising options for the Parties to consider:

1. Further specify the long-term goal, for example, a phase-out of greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by mid-century, carbon neutrality, or a global emission reduction goal.
2. Create a predictable commitment cycle to strengthen national contributions on a regular schedule—for example, five years—and continue to do so until the long-term goal is met. That cycle should include a series of clear steps that are followed every cycle and should ensure that the Parties have adequate and dependable information and analysis to strengthen their commitments.
3. Decide up-front that every cycle will result in greater ambition for each Party aiming towards a long-term goal.
4. Create an assessment and revision process that supports the Parties in identifying greater reduction opportunities and areas of collaboration and that creates confidence globally.

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## ANNEX. ELEMENTS TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF EMISSIONS REDUCTION IN THE SECOND COMMITMENT PERIOD OF THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

The Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol establishes an “ambition mechanism” that facilitates the strengthening of existing mitigation commitments. The provisions for the adoption and entry into force of such “adjustments” are contained in the amended treaty text, whereas a schedule for the revisiting of existing mitigation commitments is established in the accompanying decision. The ambition mechanism has the following three main elements, which are a mixture of process and target-related issues:

Revisiting of ambition, with simplified adoption and entry into force

- Any party to the Kyoto Protocol with a mitigation commitment for the second commitment period may propose a strengthening of its mitigation target (at least three months before the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties at which it is proposed for adoption. Article 3.1 ter).
- Such a strengthened mitigation target is considered adopted unless more than three-fourths of the parties object and enters into force automatically (that is, without national ratification) on 1 January of the year following the communication by the depositary (the UN Secretary-General) of the adopted adjusted target to the Parties (Article 3.1 quarter).

## Obligation to Review

Decision 1/CMP.8 furthermore requests each Party with a mitigation commitment for the second commitment period “to submit to the secretariat, by 30 April 2014, information relating to its intention to increase the ambition of its commitment.” The decision specifies three elements of such information, namely

- “progress made towards achieving its [the Party’s] quantified emission limitation and reduction commitment,”
- “the most recently updated projections for greenhouse gas emissions until the end of the second commitment period,” and
- “the potential for increasing ambition.”

This information is to be considered “at a high-level ministerial round table to be held during the first sessional period in 2014.” (Decision 1/CMP.8, para. 10).

## Setting a Lower End of Ambition

Commitments of individual Parties for the second commitment period are essentially capped at the average annual emissions for the first three years of the first commitment period (2008–2010) (Article 3.7 ter). This figure determines the lower end of ambition of the nationally determined commitments, which is known to the Parties, both on a national and collective level, before they ratify the amendment.

## ENDNOTES

1. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Fifth Assessment Report (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York): Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014.
2. Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), “Reflections on Progress Made at the Fifth Part of the Second Session of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action” (2014a).
3. Many of these options are relevant for the ongoing negotiations regarding decisions in the lead-up to the Paris COP. The authors recommend reviewing these matters shortly after 2015 on decisions taken in Paris in order to inform the next cycle. Issues that should be included in a review include the level of up-front information, the assessment process and the institutional framework.
4. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Article 4.2(d), 4.2 (f), 7.2 (1992). UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol Articles 3.9 and 9 (1998).
5. UNFCCC, FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add. (1995).
6. UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, Article 3.9, Article 3.1, 3.9, and Article 9 (1998).
7. UNFCCC, FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1 (2008). “The Conference of the Parties... decides to launch a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to, and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision at its fifteenth session.”
8. UNFCCC, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 (2011).
9. UNFCCC, FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1 V. 138 (2011). “The Conference of the Parties... decides to periodically review the adequacy of the long-term global goal referred to in paragraph 4 above, in the light of the ultimate objective of the Convention, and overall progress towards achieving it, in accordance with the relevant principles and provisions of the Convention.”
10. UNFCCC, FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1 Decision 1/CP.17 (2011).
11. Commitments with a limited duration do not have continuity, thus making the regime less predictable. “A regime that provides greater certainty may promote stronger participation and compliance. Certainty is also critical to the firms that in the end must deliver on a government’s commitments.” J. Aldy, J. Ashton, R. Baron, D. Bodansky, and S. Chamoritz, “Beyond Kyoto: Advancing the International Effort against Climate Change” (2003).
12. Briner, G., Kato, T., and Hattori, T (2014) “Built to Last: Designing a Flexible and Durable 2015 Climate Change Agreement,” Climate Change Expert Group, Paper No. 2014(3); X. Ngwadla, X., and L. Rajamani, L. Operationalising an Equity Reference Framework (ERF) in the Climate Change Regime: Legal and Technical Perspectives (Cape Town: Mitigation Action Plans and Scenarios (MAPs), (2014).
13. J. Wherli, “Clustering Assessment: Enhancing Synergies among Multilateral Environmental Agreements.” Governance and Sustainability Issue Brief Series: Brief 3. (Boston: University of Massachusetts, Center for Governance and Sustainability, (2012); United Nations General Assembly, “Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment,” A/61/583 (New York, New York: United Nations General Assembly, 2006). A/61/583. (2006).
14. Unlike the assessment provisions under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which included provision for independent technical, economic, environmental and scientific information as well as their assessments, the UNFCCC review processes did not incorporate a full-scale assessment process. See, for example, Decisions I/3, II/13, III/12, IV/13, VII/34, XI/17, XV/53 of the Montreal Protocol. Its assessment panels have helped the Parties reach informed decisions that have assisted to the high level of implementation of the Montreal Protocol. See the website: [http://ozone.unep.org/new\\_site/en/assessment\\_panels\\_main.php](http://ozone.unep.org/new_site/en/assessment_panels_main.php) .
15. UNEP. (2013).
16. Both the Kyoto Protocol with its top-down approach and the Copenhagen Accord with its bottom-up pledge-and-review system maintain a separation between international review and national decision making. There needs to be a middle ground “to ensure that national actions, in aggregate, achieve internationally agreed goals.” H. van Asselt, M. Mehling and C. Kehler Siebert. (2014). There is still a need for improvement in the implementation of various directives of environmental accords at the domestic level. Countries need to put in place normative frameworks to meet commitments, and many countries face difficulty in developing and adopting rules and robust institutions to implement decided actions. UNEP. UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, Negotiating and Implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements: A Manual for NGOs (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme, 2007).
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- gies, as well as providing capacity and know-how, are key to achieving equitable and effective outcomes.” P. Joffe, D. Waskow, K. DeAngelis, W. Bevins, and Y. Dagnet, “Equity Lessons from Multilateral Regimes for the New Climate Agreement.” Working Paper (Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, 2013). Joffe, P. et al. (2013). Both the section “financing emission cuts” of the Issue Brief by the Council on Foreign Relations (2013), “The Global Climate Change Regime” <http://www.cfr.org/climate-change/global-climate-change-regime/p21831#> and the introduction of Neuhoff et al. 2009, “International Support For Domestic Action - Structuring International Financial Support to Support Domestic Climate Change Mitigation in Developing Countries”, *Climate Strategies*, specify how the UNFCCC so far failed to address support adequately.
18. UNFCCC, FCCC/CP/2013/10/Add.1 (2014).
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  22. The 2007 G8 proposed a reduction of at least 50 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. G8, “Growth and Responsibility in the World Economy: Summit Declaration” (2007).
  23. IPCC (2014).
  24. A. Gurría, “A Call for Zero Emissions,” *World Economic Forum Blog* (2014); The Prince of Wales UK Corporate Leaders Group (UK CLG), “The Trillion Tonne Communiqué” (2014); N. Höhne, P. van Breevoort, Y. Deng, J. Larkin, and G. Hänsel, “Feasibility of GHG Emissions Phase-Out by Mid-Century” (2013); E. Haites, F. Yamin, and N. Höhne, *Possible Elements of a 2015 Legal Agreement on Climate Change* (Paris, France: Institut du développement durable et des relations internationales, 2013).
  25. Briner, G., et al. (2014).
  26. D. Bodansky and E. Diring (2014).
  27. ADP (2014b).
  28. The Biennial reports (BR) and biennial update reports (BUR) for developed and developing countries respectively were agreed to in Cancun and require reporting, according to a decided format, every other year. See UNFCCC (2011) for details.
  29. Reviews of developed-country implementation are undertaken through international assessment and review (IAR) procedures. Developing countries are reviewed through a separate process called international consultation and analysis (ICA). See UNFCCC (2012) for details.
  30. This report and review process is focused on reviewing past implementation and, particularly for developing countries, does not include much information about future projections or policies and measures. They therefore can be an important input to the commitment cycle but are not likely to be a basis. This issue is covered more fully below.
  31. A “trigger” could be any exceptional circumstance, such as a technological breakthrough, that leads to consultation. G. Briner et al. (2014).
  32. L. Donat and R. Bodle, “A Dynamic Adjustment Mechanism for the 2015 Climate Agreement,” *Carbon and Climate Law Review* 2014(1): 23–34. Donat, L., Bodle, R. (2014).
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  40. The Committee on Climate Change is an independent, statutory body that provides advice to the UK government on emissions targets and reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change. The Committee on Climate Change, “About Us” (2014).
  41. The Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP), together with the Scientific Assessment Panel and the Environmental Effects Assessment Panel, make up the three assessment panels under the Montreal Protocol. The three panels carry out a periodic assessment at least every four years.
  42. J. Morgan, D. Tirpak, K. Levin, and Y. Dagnet, “A Pathway to a Climate Change Agreement in 2015: Options for Setting and Reviewing GHG Emission Reduction Offers,” Working Paper (Washington, DC: World Resources Institute 2013).
  43. J. Ellis, G. Briner, Y. Dagnet, and N. Campbell, “Design Options for International Assessment and Review (IAR) and International Consultations and Analysis (ICA), OECD” (2011).
  44. K. Raustiala, *Reporting and Review Institutions in 10 Selected Multilateral Environmental Agreements* (Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme, Raustiala, K. (2001).
  45. Morgan et al. (2013).
  46. Raustiala (2001).
  47. Morgan et al. (2013).

## ACT 2015 Working Papers

This ACT 2015 paper is part of a series on elements of the 2015 climate agreement. It should be read in conjunction with the papers on adaptation and loss and damage; an ambition mechanism; characteristics of commitments; equity; finance; legal form; measurement, reporting, verification (MRV) and accounting; options for a compliance mechanism; and variable geometry and incentives.



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## ABOUT ACT 2015

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