

Climate and Development Outlook

Stories of change from CDKN



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Climate and Development Knowledge Network

Helping developing countries to design and deliver climate compatible development

Special Edition on Climate Negotiations

MOST CLIMATE-VULNERABLE COUNTRIES LEAD ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

Developing countries' profile and influence in international climate talks has risen markedly in the last five years. Their negotiating groups – the Alliance of Small Island States, the African Group of Negotiators and the Least Developed Countries Group – have tirelessly advocated for developing country issues. They have become a collective voice in the halls of the United Nations that can no longer be ignored. This collective voice, together with leadership on national climate pledges by individual developing countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and the Gambia – who have submitted ambitious 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' (INDCs) – has helped to secure a climate deal in the Paris Agreement that recognises the demands of developing countries.

CDKN has trained 986 individuals; provided 1,985 cases of legal, technical and climate finance advice; supported 517 negotiators to participate in international climate meetings; and given support for 334 formal written submissions to the international process during the past five years. Our support

to developing countries in the climate negotiations has ranged from providing technical assistance to the Peruvian Presidency of the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to providing climate negotiation training for the Ethiopian delegation.

These efforts helped to ensure that the Paris Agreement acknowledged and responded to the special circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). But the work is by no means done.

These countries need support to ensure they can engage in and shape the Paris Agreement 'rulebook'. This will include hammering out the crucial mechanisms that will define transparency in reporting against the Agreement, compliance with pledges and raising countries' ambition. CDKN aims to continue providing this support at an international level – along with support for implementing what are now called the 'NDCs' or 'Nationally Determined Contributions'. What ultimately counts is action on the ground – it is a pressing time ahead for all of us.

About CDKN's Negotiations Support programme

CDKN's Negotiation Support programme seeks to level the playing field for developing country negotiators in international climate talks. It does so by ensuring developing country negotiators have the resources to participate in the international process and have the tools, skills and information to represent their interests alongside their more developed country counterparts.

Such support has been delivered in a variety of ways including the provision of advanced negotiator training; preparatory technical support to inform negotiation strategies; financial and legal advice during the negotiations, and supporting complementary diplomatic efforts both within and outside the UNFCCC process.





Building crucial negotiation capacity through the Climate Finance Advisory Service (CFAS)

CFAS offers bespoke technical support to negotiators and Climate Finance Board members from Least Developed Countries, Small Island Developing States and African countries in various climate finance fora, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Founded by CDKN in 2012 and now drawing support from multiple sources, CFAS works to strengthen the capacity to participate effectively in highly technical international climate finance negotiations. CFAS also offers information materials that help tackle questions such as how the GCF can promote a paradigm shift, as well as guides to the most important climate finance agenda items at United Nations climate meetings.

Now, technical provisions of the Paris Agreement need to be fleshed out and unprecedented amounts of climate finance programmed. CFAS will continue working to help make these objectives a reality for climate vulnerable countries.

HIGH AMBITION COALITION PLAYS KEY ROLE IN SECURING THE PARIS AGREEMENT

by **Thom Woodroffe**, Independent Diplomat

One of the most extraordinary stories of the Paris Climate Conference was the emergence of the High Ambition Coalition, led by the Marshall Islands – one of the world's smallest and lowest-lying island nations. This group of more than 30 progressive ministers and 100 countries marched arm-in-arm to the final plenary and was instrumental in securing the Agreement.

But what is perhaps not so well known is the story behind the emergence and activities of this remarkable group, which *The New Yorker* went on to label 'an extraordinary diplomatic feat'.

For a number of years, the Marshall Islands – supported by Independent Diplomat and CDKN – strengthened their engagement in the UNFCCC technical negotiations and elevated the fight against climate change to the top of their foreign policy priorities.

As a result, the convening power, moral authority and thought leadership of the Marshall Islands placed it in the perfect position to help corral progressive forces in the lead up to Paris through establishing a diplomatic counterweight to the 'climate laggard' countries.

With this in mind, then-Foreign Minister Tony de Brum began last July to quietly convene a small group of key progressive ministers every few months to discuss common positions, strategy and messaging, and to build a sense of teamwork.

After a seminal dinner during the middle weekend of Paris, these gatherings grew quickly, involving the French COP Presidency, a majority of vulnerable country ministers and, in turn, numerous larger emitters – including the USA and Brazil. Every country wanted to be a part of it. Then, at a key strategic moment, news of the Coalition's existence was deliberately made public.

Ultimately, the Coalition allowed a wide spectrum of developed and developing countries to advocate similar priorities together in the negotiating rooms and publicly in the media. This helped the French Presidency propose a series of draft texts that maintained the ambitious end of the spectrum on a number of important political issues, which were ultimately included in the Agreement. These included a reference to a 1.5°C warming limit as part of the long-term temperature goal, the net zero global emissions pathway and a legally binding five-year cycle for updating mitigation contributions.

Independent Diplomat is now supporting the Marshall Islands to work with others and take forward the High Ambition Coalition.

GUEST COLUMN

Taking the Paris Agreement forward: A vision for LDCs

TOSI MPANU-MPANU, CHAIR OF THE LDC GROUP IN THE UNFCCC

On April 22nd of this year, the Paris Agreement received an unprecedented number of signatures and by September 61 countries had ratified it, including the two largest greenhouse gas emitters, China and the USA, and 13 of the LDCs. This potential for rapid entry into force is sending a powerful political signal that governments from all regions and all levels of development recognise the need to take urgent action against climate change.

Nowhere is this early and ambitious action more vital than for LDCs. LDCs are acutely vulnerable to climate change: our countries and people face its worst impacts and we lack the means to effectively adapt or cope with its short and long-term effects. Nonetheless, we are committed to doing our fair share to address climate change while building climate-resilient and sustainable economies. But without essential, predictable and sustainable support from our developed country partners we have a low chance of achieving these goals or protecting our people from worsening climate-related events. The Paris Agreement takes full account of these and our other specific needs with provisions on financial, technological and capacity-building support.

Although – at the time of writing – the Agreement is on the brink of entering into force, most of the work to make the Agreement effective remains to be done. First and foremost, we need to develop a robust ‘rulebook’ to flesh out and implement the provisions of the Agreement. To meaningfully engage in these crucial rule-making processes, LDCs need continued financial and capacity-building support to be able to contribute to important decisions on transparency, accountability and the ‘ambition mechanism’ of the Agreement as a whole. LDCs need this essential support to continue being champions of ambitious climate action and to maintain our strong, moral voice in the negotiations.

LDCs also recognise that the upcoming body of work not only relates to rule-making at the global level but also to a shift towards

domestic implementation of the Agreement. This new phase of implementation presents its own set of challenges and opportunities for LDCs. The opportunities are clear: ambitious action on climate in our countries is essential to our development and poverty eradication priorities as well as to the achievement of many SDGs. However, our success on each of these efforts hinges on receiving essential support and capacity-building to create climate-resilient infrastructure, develop responsive climate policies and strategies and implement effective legal and regulatory frameworks in our countries. For example, LDCs should receive priority support for establishing renewable energy infrastructure and energy efficiency technologies, to minimise emissions while improving the quality of life for millions. For LDCs, this support must not only be made available, but accessible, through channels that recognise and accommodate our special situations.

In Paris, the governments of the world showed that we share the common vision of leaving behind a safe, habitable planet for future generations. To make this a reality we need to follow through on the consensus we reached in Paris, and we need to start now.



Transitioning from negotiations to implementation – AGN leads continental response to climate change

CDKN has been supporting the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) to nurture a new generation of negotiators with the skills to influence international discourse and deliver action on the ground. Africa has shown unified leadership towards achieving the Paris Agreement through two key continent-wide initiatives: the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) and the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), both developed by the AGN. However, significant technical and administrative support gaps will need to be addressed to implement these initiatives. The support offered by CDKN to ensure capabilities are instilled within the group and sustained is part of an important continent-wide story of change.

LEGAL BOOST FOR CLIMATE VULNERABLE COUNTRIES HELPS LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

While the Paris Climate Conference may have been a turning point, it will be 'business as usual' for negotiators for the foreseeable future. Significant work remains to be done at the international level to develop the processes, rules and mechanisms of the Paris Agreement.

For those from climate-vulnerable countries, the lack of access to legal assistance in this complex and multi-faceted process remains an ongoing issue that often hampers their ability to negotiate effectively. For some delegates, language can be an additional significant challenge.

Thanks to its multilingual network of pro bono lawyers, the CDKN-funded Legal Response Initiative (LRI, which is based at Simmons & Simmons of London) helps to meet this challenge for francophone delegates by having one or two French speaking lawyers on hand at meetings to discuss legal issues. Last year, LRI helped interpret and translate the latest version of the draft climate agreement into French, and helped to host a workshop of Congo Basin-region countries. This assisted delegates in their preparation for the next

negotiation session, which Mr Gervais Itsoua (Congo) described as 'extremely useful ... We used the LRI translations to coordinate our internal discussions and to prepare our submissions before the meetings. It helped us clarify positions and engage meaningfully in discussions of the LDC and Africa Groups.'

Ultimately, Paris will be judged on the capacity of countries to translate international climate ambition into action at national levels. Therefore, LRI is also focusing on assisting with domestic implementation, in parallel with its UNFCCC work. This has already been successfully tested: in 2015, LRI reviewed the Kenyan Climate Change Bill and advised on what changes might be needed to ensure that Kenya meets its commitments under the Paris Agreement. LRI also now collaborates with UNEP to support poor and climate-vulnerable countries to develop and review climate change related legislation.

In addition to the vital work LRI has been doing with developing countries, it is also an exemplar of how the public and private sectors can deliver much-needed support by working together in the kinds of partnerships we are going to need to see at scale, if we are to deliver the ambitions of the Paris Agreement.

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) aims to help decision-makers in developing countries design and deliver climate-compatible development. We do this by providing demand-led research and technical assistance, and channelling the best available knowledge on climate change and development to support policy processes at the country and international levels. CDKN is managed by an alliance of five organisations that brings together a wide range of expertise and experience (see below).

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