

Essential Outcomes for a Universal Climate Agreement – Think Ahead

World leaders are meeting in Paris, France, in December 2015, to negotiate and reach a new universal agreement on climate change, applicable to all countries, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C. Christian Aid is calling on them to signal a turning point in the global approach to climate action and to outline clearly the next steps for strengthening the climate regime.

Between 30 November and 11 December 2015, in Paris, world leaders must develop and reach a legally binding universal climate agreement under the UN Climate Convention that enables the world to follow a low-carbon, climate-resilient pathway. This must be capable of keeping the global average temperature rise to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, the level agreed by all countries, and far more preferably to 1.5°C, as called for by more than 100 vulnerable countries, and supported by Christian Aid.

We believe Paris 2015 will be a crucial moment in the development and delivery of a universal climate agreement. However, it is only the next step, not the end of the road. It is clear that the collective commitment of countries in Paris will not, in itself, put the world on the road to a 2°C warming level, let alone 1.5°C.

The intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) to the Paris agreement,¹ made by the cooperating countries, indicate their national commitment to joining the low-carbon revolution, to making the big shift to a cleaner, brighter future, to phasing out fossil fuels and building climate resilience. But the UN Environment Programme and other independent research organisations warn that the collective ambition is too low, and we risk global warming of more than 3°C by 2100.²

To close this gap between the emissions the world is on course to produce, based on current projections, and those that could put us on the path to just and global climate stabilisation, Paris 2015 must agree a

dynamic and iterative ‘ambition acceleration mechanism’. The elements of such an agreement are clear – we will list the crucial points below – but the key issue is that, to have a decent chance of success, we are going to need a very high and sustained level of global cooperation.

The mechanism should increase the ambition of the INDCs that have been tabled, as well as lead to increased ambition every five years, as the world’s understanding of climate change improves, and reality bites. It must respond to projected temperature scenarios, based on collective mitigation actions, and deliver the required support to climate-vulnerable countries, to manage risk and secure lives and livelihoods, while developing in a clean, sustainable manner.

What this means is that success in Paris, and beyond, will require a process that reviews and scales up national contributions now and into the future. The review must be based on science- and equity-assessments, avoiding the risk of locking in dangerously inadequate contributions. A visionary approach is needed to build the trust and momentum that will drive the transformation towards a low-carbon and resilient future.

Durable and effective agreement

The Paris agreement will be effective only if it includes a clear, practical and compelling long-term goal that works towards achieving the internationally agreed objective of limiting warming to well below 2°C. It must set the benchmark for countries’ future commitments, coupled with a long-term adaptation goal that

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Fair shares: a civil society equity review of INDCs³

A wide range of civil society groups have made a joint assessment of the INDCs going into Paris 2015. This review has shown:

Together the commitments captured in the INDCs will not keep temperatures at less than 2°C, much less 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels. Even if all countries meet their INDC commitments, the world is likely to warm by a devastating 3°C or more, with a significant likelihood of tipping the global climate system into catastrophic runaway warming.

The ambition of all major developed countries falls well short of their fair share, which includes not only domestic action but also international finance. Those with the starkest gap between their climate ambition and their fair shares include:

- Japan – INDC represents about one tenth of its fair share
- US – INDC represents about a fifth of its fair share
- EU – INDC represents just over a fifth of its fair share
- Russia – INDC represents zero contribution towards its fair share

The majority of developing countries have made mitigation pledges that exceed their fair share, including Kenya, the Marshall Islands, China and Indonesia. India's INDC is broadly in line with its fair share. Brazil's INDC is around two-thirds of its fair share.

These findings demonstrate the vital importance of the ratchet up mechanism and the means of implementation in the Paris agreement to deliver a safe outcome.

'Paris must deliver a strong adaptation package to help poor people and countries, which have done the least to contribute to the climate problem, and are suffering from its effects, adapt to the projected climate risks'

brings parity between mitigation (actions to cut carbon pollution) and adaptation (environmental adjustment to environmental conditions) linking the level of mitigation with the level of adaptation.

Towards climate justice in 2015

We believe there are core elements that any agreement in Paris must deliver:

1. **Universal participation.** The Paris agreement must be universal and applicable to all countries, reflecting equity and the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.
2. **A clear, collective long-term mitigation commitment** that builds on the globally agreed goal to limit global average warming to below 2°C, giving a shared direction of travel towards low-carbon living by the middle of this century.
3. **Adaptation.** Paris must deliver a strong adaptation package to help poor people and countries (which have done the least to contribute to the climate problem and are already suffering from its effects) adapt to and plan for a safe and resilient future, informed by the current and projected climate risks.

Therefore, a fair and effective climate agreement in Paris must:

- a. **balance mitigation and adaptation.** The agreement must achieve parity between adaptation to climate change and mitigation, and ensure clear links between adaptation planning, the projected mitigation trajectory, and the associated means of implementation support required by poor countries to enhance their climate resilience
- b. strengthen the shared commitment to enhancing resilience to climate change, including agreeing a long-term goal on adaptation and building resilience, linked to the projected level of warming. **Paris should demonstrate the importance of mainstreaming climate change into all countries' sustainable development strategies**
- c. include substantial and efficiently delivered public climate finance that helps poor people and countries respond to the climate risks with national adaptation efforts, post 2020
- d. establish five-year adaptation cycles to scale up adaptation efforts dynamically, in line with the projected temperature trajectories implied by the mitigation actions pledged/undertaken.

4. **A mechanism on loss and damage.**

At the 2013 UN climate conference in Poland, the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) was established.⁴ Paris will hopefully deliver a durable post-2020 climate agreement. A universal climate agreement is much more likely to be reached, and will be much more effective, if it includes loss and damage to deal with the unavoidable adverse climate impacts on poor communities and countries.

Christian Aid is calling for the anchoring of the WIM in the Paris Agreement.

The mechanism mandate should also be expanded to include, among other things, commitments to establishing financial and technical advisory panels and arrangements regarding displacement coordination and risk transfer.

5. **A means of implementation (MOI) commitment –**

Paris 2015 must:

- a. mobilise adequate resources for implementation – finance, technology and capacity building – to enable greater ambition by poor developing countries. Developed countries must – as an absolute minimum – come up with **a clear plan on the delivery of their Copenhagen commitment to mobilise \$100 billion per year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries**
- b. ensure rich countries double their current contributions to the Green Climate Fund to \$20 billion in the short-term and treble them to \$30 billion in 2020
- c. agree a collective goal, for mobilisation of **public climate finance for the post-2020 period**, of new, additional, adequate and predictable financial support to developing countries. In addition, ‘all the countries in a position to do so’, based on their greater historical responsibility and existing capabilities, must report biennially to the governing body of the Paris 2015 agreement on the climate finance they have provided, and on their future commitments for supporting

developing countries’ actions

- d. help align wider investments with ambitious global climate action, and thus to mainstream climate change into all countries’ development efforts
 - e. agree that 50% of global public climate finance will be allocated for climate adaptation through the Green Climate Fund
 - f. review, match and strengthen efforts, through financial, technological and capacity-building measures, in order to unlock the conditional offers made by developing countries, particularly those beyond their fair share requirement.
6. **An ambition acceleration mechanism.** Success in Paris and beyond will require an ambition acceleration mechanism that scales up contributions now and into the future, based on the agreed science- and equity-assessments, while building trust and momentum and avoiding the danger of locking in dangerously inadequate contributions.

Christian Aid believes we cannot succeed in keeping global warming to below 2°C, let alone 1.5°C, without a dynamic and iterative mechanism that regularly raises the mitigation and finance contributions of all countries. We propose a cycle of five-year reviews that provides a focus for assessment and recommitment, a cycle that synchronises national efforts to increase climate change ambition and encourages new and significant contributions.

The national contributions that countries have already put forward have brought us closer to agreement in Paris, but they will be insufficient to keep us on the 2°C trajectory. The same is true of the pledged means of implementation for developing countries; the finance, clean technology and capacity-building measures.

In terms of the scope of the reviews, Christian Aid argues that it should cover the overall required global effort, and in particular that it must include the financial, technological and capacity-building support provided to developing countries by developed countries.

‘Success in Paris and beyond will require an ambition acceleration mechanism that scales up contributions over time based on science and equity’

‘The Paris 2015 agreement is the next step in the long journey to addressing climate change, but judging from the pledges that countries’ have put forward, it will not, in itself, be sufficient. Therefore, leaders must agree the next steps in strengthening it’

7. **Gender mainstreaming.** While the UN is committed to gender mainstreaming in its policies, gender has yet to be fully considered in climate change processes. Yet an effective agreement hinges on acknowledgement of gender-differentiated impacts of climate change and development of gender-sensitive responses. Women and men may be affected by climate change differently – and have different roles to play in responding to climate change – as a result of different needs, resources, power and capacity to cope with risk of natural disasters and adapt to environmental changes.

Therefore, for the Paris agreement to be effectively implemented, equal, active and meaningful, participation in adaptation and mitigation efforts will be essential to successful programmes. However, success in Paris will require more than gender-sensitive programming. Ensuring equal participation and voice – from the domestic level to the global level – will be central to effective policies.

This requires implementation of existing commitments for gender equality under the UNFCCC, and for gender to be made a key element of every stage of the process, through gender-disaggregated data and indicators, and ensuring policies complement gender commitments in the sustainable development goals and other international agreements.

As Christian Aid argued in *Climate Justice for All* (2015),⁵ inclusion of gender aspects within the agreement will ensure that governments and policies can be held accountable to their commitments in future. As a foundation, the pre-ambles to the agreement should state: ‘All parties to be guided by gender equality and ensure the full and equal participation of women in all climate actions and decision-making processes’.

Conclusion

The Paris 2015 agreement is the next step in the long global journey to addressing climate change. It will deliver a universal agreement with a wide and committed participation. But judging from the pledges that countries’ have put forward, it will not, in itself, be sufficient to get the world on track to a 2°C, let alone 1.5°C future.

Therefore, leaders must agree a credible and durable plan that includes specific next steps in strengthening climate actions via a dynamic, and iterative mechanism that ratchets up ambition every five years until the goal is achieved.

It is time to prepare adequately for a changed climate and to enhance adaptation to the climate impacts that are already occurring, and that cannot now be avoided.

It is time to close the finance gap. Wealthy, industrialised countries, with the most responsibility for climate change and the greatest capacity to respond, must commit to financing poorer countries (which have done the least to cause global warming), so that they can adapt to climate change and develop in a clean and sustainable manner.

Endnotes

- 1 INDCs as submitted by Parties, UNFCCC, www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx
- 2 Climate Action Tracker tracking INDCs (climateactiontracker.org) estimates projected warming on the basis of INDCs to be 2.7°C, and Climate Interactive estimates it to be 3.5°C (climateinteractive.org/tools/scoreboard/scoreboard-science-and-data)
- 3 *Fair Shares: A Civil Society Equity Review of INDCs*, 2015, civilsocietyreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CSO_summary.pdf
- 4 UNFCCC, Decision 2/CP.19, Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage associated with climate change, 2013, unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf
- 5 *Climate Justice for All*, Christian Aid briefing, 2015, christianaid.org.uk/Images/Climate-justice-for-all-May-2015.pdf



Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

We work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice.

We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes.

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