

# UN climate change conference in Bonn – questions and answers

## **1. Why another climate change conference?**

Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC [\[1\]](#)) and the Kyoto Protocol [\[2\]](#) meet once a year at high level to discuss how to take international climate action forward and adopt decisions to implement commitments made. This year, Parties will discuss important elements of the historic Paris Agreement and putting its plans into action by 2020.

This year's conference will take place from 6 to 17 November in Bonn, Germany, and will be presided over by the Government of Fiji. It will be the UNFCCC's 23<sup>rd</sup> 'Conference of the Parties' (COP 23), the Kyoto Protocol's 13<sup>th</sup> 'Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties' (CMP 13) and also the second part of the first session of the 'Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement' (CMA 1.2).

In December 2015, 195 countries adopted the Paris Agreement on climate change, the world's first universal, legally-binding climate deal. It sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C.

The Paris Agreement entered into force just over a year ago, on 4 November 2016 – 30 days after ratification by the EU, passing the legal threshold for it to take effect. 195 UNFCCC Parties have signed the Agreement and 169 have now ratified it.

## **2. What are the expectations for COP23?**

At COP23, substantial progress is expected on the elaboration of the technical rules and guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement (the so-called 'Paris work programme'). Solid progress in Bonn will be essential for the adoption, as foreseen, of the Paris work programme at next year's conference (COP24) in Katowice, Poland.

The EU expects COP23 to move us forward from the conceptual stage and bring concrete progress in the form of a draft decision text or other textual elements in all of the mandated items. This includes tangible steps forward on access to finance for developing countries and strengthening the skills and processes needed in developing countries to implement their climate plans. Progress is also needed on the ambition mechanism for progressively updating Parties' nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and the common transparency and accountability system that will allow Parties to track progress against the long-term objectives.

In addition, COP23 should bring clarity on the design of and preparations for

the so-called 'facilitative dialogue' that will take place in 2018. This is a clear deliverable expected from the outgoing Moroccan and incoming Fijian COP presidencies at this year's conference. The facilitative dialogue will be the first opportunity for Parties to assess their collective progress towards the Paris Agreement objectives in light of the most recent climate science and to inform the preparation and updating of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) before 2020. As such, it represents the next key political moment in the climate negotiations, particularly in terms of "where we are", "where do we need to be" and "how do we get there".

Alongside the formal COP23 negotiations, the conference in Bonn will have a strong focus on keeping up the political momentum for continued climate action by a wide range of stakeholders before 2020. It will provide a space for all relevant stakeholders for showcasing, sharing information, fostering new cooperation and, very importantly, raising awareness a climate change and solutions available to tackle it. A high-level event on accelerating climate action – the culmination of a series of thematic action events, aiming to demonstrate the progress achieved in implementation since the Paris Agreement was adopted in December 2015 – will be held on 13-15 November.

The EU has a rich [programme of side events](#) at the Bonn conference – it will host more than 100 events over the two weeks, at the EU Pavilion.

### **3. Will the Paris Agreement ensure temperature increase stays within the well below 2 degree objective, keeping the 1.5 aim in mind?**

In order to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, Parties will regularly set or update their emissions reductions targets. Ahead of the Paris conference in 2015, almost all Parties had presented their 'intended nationally determined contributions' – INDCs – covering 5-year or 10-year periods starting in 2020.

These climate action plans, communicated by 193 participating countries to date, would significantly lower the risk of dangerous changes in the global environment caused by climate change – but as they stand they are insufficient for the level of ambition required to stay well below 2°C.

Anticipating this, the Paris Agreement includes an "ambition cycle" – a set of goals, timeframes, commitments and stocktakes designed to ensure that Parties regularly strengthen their commitments.

Starting in 2023, governments will come together every five years for a 'global stocktake', based on the latest science and progress in implementation. The stocktake will set the context for the raising of ambition by all Parties, by looking at what has been collectively achieved and what more needs to be done to achieve the below 2°C target – and aim for a maximum increase of 1.5°C.

The facilitative dialogue to be held in 2018 will take stock of the collective efforts and inform the preparation of more ambitious contributions. This is particularly important for Parties that have 2025 targets, as they are expected to communicate their 2030 targets by 2020.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will publish a special report in 2018 on the implications of a global temperature increase of 1.5°C compared to 2°C. This will be a key moment to reflect on the benefits, in terms of avoided impacts and reduced risks, as well as the action required for achieving a maximum 1.5°C rise, informed by robust scientific data.

#### **4. What does the Paris Agreement mean for the EU's contribution to climate finance for developing countries before 2020?**

At the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in 2009, developed countries collectively committed to contribute USD 100 billion of climate finance per year by 2020, from various sources, in the context of meaningful mitigation action and transparency of implementation. In Paris in 2015, the EU and other developed countries committed to continue to provide financial resources to help developing countries tackle climate change.

Together, the EU and its Member States are the biggest donors of climate finance to developing countries – providing climate funding totalling EUR 14.5 billion in 2014, EUR 17.6 billion in 2015 and EUR 20.2 billion in 2016. This demonstrates the EU's determination to deliver its fair share of the USD 100 billion commitment.

The Paris Agreement called for a "concrete roadmap" to achieve the USD 100 billion goal and a Climate Finance Roadmap [3] prepared by the donor community in 2016 indicates that they are on track to meet the ambitious goal.

#### **5. How does the Paris Agreement ensure countries deliver on their commitments?**

In Paris, countries agreed to set up an enhanced transparency framework for action and support to build mutual trust and confidence and to promote effective implementation of commitments under the Agreement. The key task is to make this framework a reality by adopting a good set of detailed rules.

The enhanced transparency framework will help not only the understanding of progress made individually by Parties in the implementation of their nationally determined contributions, but is also critical for providing robust data to support the global stocktakes and for the assessment of progress towards the long-term goals.

Solid multilateral transparency and accountability guidelines would help countries to design good policies at home. They should provide an incentive to build and maintain domestic institutions and data collection and tracking systems that policy-makers need to make the right decisions.

The transparency, accountability and compliance system under the Paris Agreement is not punitive, but is meant to identify when Parties are off track and help them to get back on track if they are not delivering. Underpinning this system are new and comprehensive requirements and procedures applicable to all Parties to track and facilitate Parties' performance. These include technical expert reviews, a multilateral peer

review process, and a standing committee on implementation and compliance. Together these will maintain a focus on both technical and political aspects of performance.

## **6. What is the EU doing to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions?**

When it comes to putting the Paris Agreement into practice on the ground, Europe is ahead of the curve. The Commission has already made the key legislative proposals for implementing the EU's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030, which are currently being discussed by the European Parliament and Council.

In 2015, the Commission presented a proposal to reform the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) post-2020, to ensure the energy sector and energy intensive industries deliver the emissions reductions needed. Last year, the Commission put forward proposals for accelerating the low-carbon transition in other key sectors of the European economy, together with a proposal on integrating land use and forestry into EU's climate and energy framework.

In 2016, the Commission also presented a strategy on low-emission mobility, setting the course for the development of EU-wide measures on low- and zero-emission vehicles and alternative low-emission fuels. The Commission also last year issued proposals to adapt the EU's regulatory framework in order to put energy efficiency first and to foster the EU's role as a world leader in the field of renewable energy.

These proposals, together with supporting measures, will drive Europe's transition to a low-carbon economy, while also helping to create new jobs and growth opportunities.

## **7. What is the role for business and other organisations and how can the Global Climate Action Agenda be strengthened?**

The Paris Agreement recognises the critical role of businesses, local governments, cities and other organisations in the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient world. The private sector will ultimately need to bring about the economic transformation, turning challenges into business opportunities. The sharing of experience from the private sector side, on the conditions to achieve sustainability in practice, is therefore extremely valuable.

Actions showcased through the Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA) – also referred to as the Marrakesh Partnership on Global Climate Action [\[4\]](#) – are helping to build on the growing momentum. The GCAA has the potential to deliver transformative impact on the ground, enhance ambition in the pre-2020 period and contribute to the implementation of national climate action plans as well as the long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement.

While measuring the impact and identifying what is additional to national climate pledges remains difficult, data indicates that the aggregated impact of the initiatives is in the order of a few gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e) in 2030 beyond the current intended nationally determined

contributions – a potentially significant contribution to closing the gap (UNEP Gap Report 2016).

The EU and its Member States have been proactive in promoting and sponsoring specific GCAA initiatives. Flagship initiatives include the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and Mission Innovation.

The high-level events on global climate action and the thematic action days at COP23 in Bonn will be excellent venues for reflecting on progress made under existing initiatives, as well as for announcements on new transformative initiatives.

#### **8. How does the Paris Agreement address adaptation and loss and damage associated with the impacts of climate change?**

The Paris Agreement puts adaptation on an equal footing with mitigation. It presents a vision for adaptation which will help countries increase the effectiveness of their adaptation action, as well as promote mutual learning and better direct support.

Adaptation is an integral element of the EU's policy and planning. National, regional and local adaptation strategies are gaining ground in Europe since the adoption of the EU Adaptation Strategy in 2013. To date, 25 Member States and 900 cities already have a strategy or a plan.

To seize the opportunities created by the Paris Agreement, the Commission is now assessing progress in implementing the 2013 EU strategy.

The Paris Agreement recognises the importance of averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage associated with climate change, including extreme weather events (such as floods, landslides, storms, forest fires) and slow onset events such as the loss of fresh water aquifers and glaciers.

These concerns were addressed in Paris by giving the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage a role under the Paris Agreement to promote cooperation on these issues. This will include further work on emergency response and insurance issues and a task force to develop recommendations on approaches to address displacement due to climate change. The Warsaw International Mechanism has agreed on its 5-year rolling work plan, which will be put to Parties for their approval at COP23 in Bonn.

For more information, please see the [COP23 page on the EU Climate Action website](#).