

## LIMA COP 20: ANOTHER SMALL STEP ON THE LONG ROAD TO PARIS

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The recent report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2014) affirms that carbon concentration in the atmosphere has reached unprecedented levels in the history of humankind and that the sea level is 19 cm higher than in 1900. It warns that climate change will represent an enormous barrier to sustainable development and calls for action to limit the future increase in global average temperature to 2°C (above which the climate change impacts are qualified as disastrous).

It also specifies the measures that must be taken to succeed: a reduction in global emissions of 70% with respect to 2010 by 2050, and zero emissions by 2100. Also mentioned in this context is the report "Better Growth, Better Climate", in which the prestigious British economist Nicholas Stern participated. The report concludes that economic growth and action on climate change can now be achieved together in any country with any level of income (The New Climate Economy 2014).

The Lima Summit kicked off with these pieces of news and ended, after two intense weeks, on Saturday 13 December, with the approval of a document barely covering 4 pages and an annex of 40 pages dubbed the "Lima call for Climate Action". Furthermore, approval was given to another 32 technical documents lending support to different questions. The negotiation process was not without its difficulties. For example, in the final stages of negotiations of the group known as the ADP (Ad Hoc working group on the Durban Platform for enhanced action) the draft under negotiation was leaked, forcing the G77 to suspend the process for some hours.

In this frame of obstacles, the result of the summit can be considered acceptable and enormously important as regards meeting the objective of ensuring that the global average temperature does not increase by more than 2°C. Although the "Lima Call" failed to meet the expectations of numerous interest groups by not achieving a widespread ambitious agreement to combat climate change, this was not the main aim of the summit. The Lima summit took shape in the frame of a long process to achieve a binding global agreement to define climate policy from 2020 onwards. In this process, the Lima summit was not expected to achieve widespread agreements on objectives or deadlines for reducing emissions, but rather:

- (1) To define the instructions for preparing a legal document with a view to the COP 21 in Paris.
- (2) To reach an agreement on conditions for defining the so-called Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), establishing common metrics, deadlines and all other details for this purpose.

### Key points

- 1) *The Lima summit was not expected to achieve specific agreements on the reduction of emissions, but to establish the bases of a legal document to be agreed on at the next meeting in Paris (December 2015) and of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC). And that is precisely what happened.*
- 2) *In the coming months, each country will define its mitigation commitments as of 2020. The United Nations will then calculate the gap between voluntary pledges and the reductions that are required to keep global temperature increase below 2°C. Thus, the Parties will have a solid, common basis on which to negotiate in Paris how to address the said gap.*
- 3) *This is the first time ever that all countries are willing to assume very important greenhouse gas reductions. It is the end, after two decades of climate negotiations, of the differentiation between countries due to their level of industrialisation based on the Annexes of the Kyoto Protocol.*
- 4) *In Lima an announcement was made of new contributions to the Green Climate Fund, which already stands at US\$10.2m. Progress is therefore being made with the previously assumed (and reiterated in the new text) commitment by developed countries to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries with US\$100b by 2020.*
- 5) *The first steps were also taken towards greater integration of national policy with other decision-making levels, and towards greater consideration of the gender dimension in climate policies.*

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And it is true that the COP 20 achieved agreements on these two issues, minimal it has to be said, but agreements nonetheless.

It was established, on the one hand, that the agreement to be approved in Paris, in December 2015, will be legally binding, that it will be articulated by means of a protocol, legal instrument or any other result holding legal status, and that it will be applicable to all countries. And, on the other, that the INDC must be presented in clear, transparent and understandable fashion by October 2015 at the latest (UNFCCC 2014a).

This deadline generated a certain amount of unease among some collectives of the opinion that it leaves little space for real negotiation in Paris. However, it looks unlikely that the negotiating process would be modified to any great extent if this deadline was brought forward by a few months. Negotiations in the frame of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ought to be very intense throughout 2015, independently of the deadline established.

In the coming months every country will have to work on estimating mitigation commitments for implementation from 2020, based on which the United Nations will estimate the extent to which they meet the objective of limiting temperature increase to 2°C. Thus, in Paris, the Parties will have a solid and common basis on which to negotiate how to address the gap (in the event that such a gap exists) between voluntary pledges and necessary effort.

A legally binding, ambitious agreement in which all countries on the planet participate is still possible, and that is a tangible result of the Lima summit. And it is not negligible. It is the first time in the history of climate policy that countries such as the USA, China or



Australia are willing, together with the rest of the planet, to assume enormously important greenhouse gas emission reductions. This is the end, after two decades of climate negotiations, of the differentiation between countries due to their level of industrialisation based on the Annexes of the Kyoto Protocol (which reflected the reality of the countries at that time, 1992). In this question, the agreement published between China and the USA in November 2014 was determinant. In the said agreement, the USA commits to reducing its emissions by 26-28% below its 2005 level in 2025, and China to achieving the peaking of emissions in 2030 and to increasing its renewable energies to 20%. The EU too has increased its ambition as regards mitigation (a reduction in emissions of 40% below its 1990 level). It remains to see how other top emitters like India, Russia, Indonesia, Brazil and Japan will react. Some observers predict that they will assume commitments in the manner of China, establishing a deadline for emission peaking, which will allow them to complete construction of the necessary infrastructure for their development and raise the standard of living of their populations as a whole. If this was the case, the bottom-up focus of national contributions could succeed in covering as much as 90% of global emissions.

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According to the final agreement, contributions by countries will be considered fair in as much as they reflect the national circumstances (thereby eliminating the reference to historical responsibility). This constitutes a generous concession to countries that have contributed most to the accumulation of GHG in the atmosphere, given that they would be able to emit very little more if the right to emit was distributed equally between countries and account was taken of past emissions. Developed countries too have made concessions, such as that of including in the agreement, with equal importance, other elements apart from mitigation, namely: adaptation, financing, technology development and transfer, capacity building, and transparency of action and support.

Also announced in Lima are new contributions to the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which already stands at US\$10.2m. Almost 70 countries have now contacted the Fund and it is thought that it will start making disbursements from 2016. This means that progress is being made with the previously assumed (and reiterated in the new text) commitment by developed countries to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries with US\$100b by 2020. In the text, a call is made to direct the financing towards adaptation activities which have, until now, been relegated to second place when receiving financing. For the time being, according to the latest report of the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance, the amount available as North-to-South support stands in the region of US\$40-170b, between public and private sources (UNFCCC 2014b).

Other achievements of the meeting were, as regards adaptation, the recognition of National Adaptation Plans (NAP), their connection to the Green Fund, the creation of a global network (NAP Global Network) for the divulgation of experiences, and the decision to replicate a pilot project which has demonstrated that it is possible to capture the adaptation needs of communities (Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative) in less advanced countries and in small island states (UNFCCC 2014c).

Progress was also made in aspects related to deforestation, given that the REDD+ mechanism is now ready for the implementation stage, which will have a section on the Convention website destined to ensuring transparency as regards the safeguards of communities dependent upon forests and the payments generated.



On the other hand, for the first time in Lima, the so-called "Multilateral Evaluations" took place, consisting of developed countries with quantified mitigation targets for their whole economy explaining how the mitigation actions are being implemented. This mechanism of control and transparency has helped to improve trust between the parties, in addition to allowing the divulgation of successful cases and best practices.

Lastly, we must point out that in Lima the first steps were taken towards greater integration of national policies with other decision-making levels, and towards greater consideration of the gender dimension in climate policies. This consists of considering the higher vulnerability of women to the effects of climate change and their economic empowerment by means of mitigation and adaptation. On the one hand, with launch of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda the intention is to convene leaders of different levels and exhibit case studies and examples of collaboration. On the other hand, the Nazca Climate Action Portal will allow increased visibility of the initiatives of cities, regions, companies and private investors. Lastly, the Lima Work Programme on Gender has the objective to generate information on policies incorporating the gender dimension (UNFCCC 2014d).

Other subjects, such as response measures, had to be postponed for future meetings. Although there is consensus in that mitigation measures must not restrict international trade, specification remains to

be made as to how to address the possible adverse effects of national actions on third countries. Nor was progress made with discussions on market and non-market mechanisms, or on the Technology Mechanism. Although the implementation arm of the Convention Technology Mechanism (Climate Technology Center and Network) appears to have started to generate results in the field (with requests for support from increasingly more countries) and a knowledge portal has been launched covering more than 300 technologies, division continues to exist as regards the financing of technology projects and connection with the GCF. Another point still unresolved in Lima is the division on the International Mechanism for Loss and Damage created last year in Warsaw. This mechanism was created to deal with loss and damage caused by climate change and that adaptation cannot avoid. However, for the time being, it has not been exactly decided what it will consist of or how it will function. The potential beneficiaries want it to consist of a vehicle for compensating damage by means of the transfer of financial resources, but the donating countries fear that it will turn into a blank cheque. For the time being, a 2-year work programme has been launched to gain improved understanding of the loss and damage concept, and the potential impact of climate on migratory movements.

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At the end of the day, it doesn't feel as if we left Lima with our hands empty; rather, that a step further has been taken towards the global agreement that should mark a change in direction of the search for prosperity by nations.



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