IISDCOMMENTARY

International Institute for Sustainable Development
Institut international du développement durable

December 2012

A Mirage in the Deserts of Doha? Assessing the outcomes of COP 18

A Climate Insights Product

Jessica Boyle

Summary

The recently concluded two-week conference in Doha, Qatar, marked the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties (**COP 18**) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**). Three key negotiating tracks framed the negotiations:

1. The Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (**AWG-KP**) sought agreement to a second commitment period (CP2). The CP2 will happen, but it will be a different beast from the first commitment period (CP1).
2. The Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC (**AWG-LCA**) sought closure of the AWG-LCA track. Closure was obtained, but at a risk of losing historical gains.
3. The Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (**ADP**) sought clarity on key elements and milestones; however, movement was slow, with division, diverging opinions and uncertainty hindering progress.

The sheer size of the Qatar National Convention Centre seemed to have completely diluted any sense of urgency that may have been present in the lead-up to the talks. The lack of excitement was palpable; whether a result of the low-key Qatari Presidency, domestic fiscal constraints in many countries, low attendance rates relative to recent years, and/or the "procedural" nature of this COP, the conference ended with an equally unexciting set of outcomes.

Insofar as the process did achieve the key procedural goals of securing a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, seeing the AWG-LCA track draw to a close, and continuing to shape discussions under the Durban Platform, Doha can be measured a "success." But insofar as concrete or substantial progress was made on key issues including the architecture of a post-2020 agreement, mitigation and financing commitments, the outcomes were woefully inadequate.

If not us, then who? If not now, then when? If not here, then where?
—Naderev Saño, Lead Negotiator, the Philippines

1.0 Making Sense of the Moving Pieces

A package of decisions known as the "Doha Climate Gateway" was adopted in the final hours of the negotiations. However, seasoned observers and negotiators left Doha worried that the Gateway may prove to be a mirage in the desert come 2013. In many respects, the process sits on shaky foundations and Doha did little to further progress on critical sticking issues such as mitigation and financing commitments or to build trust for a strong, inclusive post-2020 agreement.

Three key summary observations are worth noting with respect to the three negotiation tracks:

- **AWG-KP. The second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (CP2) will be a different beast from CP1.** The CP2 is to run from 2013 to 2020 and will look much different than CP1, covering only about 15 per cent of global emissions. As expected, Canada, Russia and Japan will not take part, nor will New Zealand. Despite this, reaching agreement on the CP2 was a critical element of ensuring a legal framework remains in place to 2020 and allows discussions to continue on a broader framework to be put in place after the end of Kyoto.
- **AWG-LCA. The Long-Term Cooperative Action track closes, but what's next?** The majority of the building blocks for a future agreement now have homes in other subsidiary bodies such as the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) or in other lines of negotiation such as the ADP.
- **ADP. Key elements and milestones moved forward, but division, divergent views and unsettled questions hindered progress.** The primary goal of the ADP is reaching an agreement covering all major emitters by 2015 for implementation in 2020. Although discussions still remain unsettlingly broad in scope, Doha helped to further set parameters of the discussions moving forward. This includes an agreement that negotiating text is to be considered in 2014, the same year as Ban Ki-moon will host a summit of world leaders in an attempt to shore up political will ahead of the 2015 milestone.

Other issues are worth noting:

- **More substantive progress was stymied by the lack of new financing and/or mitigation commitments from key players.** Doha was not expected to end with any major breakthroughs on these two perennial issues, but some countries had hoped to see additional commitments play a role in kick-starting the talks. Despite the fact that the lack of mid-term financing (2013–2020) has been an elephant in the room for the past year, only a handful of European countries committed any additional financing for the time being.
- **For its part, Canada had a lower profile at the negotiations than in previous years.** As Canada is no longer a Party to Kyoto, Canadian negotiators are now fully focused on negotiating a post-2020 agreement to include all major emitters. Canada has been cautious not to commit to any significant interim action until this agreement is reached, and as a result did garner some negative press in Doha for its silence on mid-term financing commitments.

Each of these issues and some other important climate insights are discussed in more detail below.

2.0 The Kyoto Protocol's Second Commitment Period: A Different Beast

The CP2 was agreed to in Durban, but it was up to the Doha talks to sort out the details. In the end, Doha delivered, but the devil is in these details, solidifying beliefs that CP2 will look very different than CP1:

- Length of Commitment Period – The CP2 will begin January 1, 2013, and run to December 31, 2020. Ideally, a new agreement covering all major emitters under the ADP will pick up in 2020, ensuring no legal vacuum between the two. Whether or not this will be feasible in reality remains to be seen, but the eight-year commitment period was strongly supported by the European Union, whereas many least developed countries wanted a five-year commitment period in order to re-evaluate ambition following the release of the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report in 2014. In the end, a compromise review function was included so that countries that have ascribed targets to CP2 will be able to increase ambition through the next eight years, should they so choose.
- Level of Ambition and Country Targets – When the dust settled, the notable absence of Japan, Canada, New Zealand and Russia, coupled with the fact that major developing countries do not have binding targets under the KP architecture, means that CP2 only covers about 15 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Joining the European Union in taking on mitigation commitments during CP2 are Australia, Belarus, Croatia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, Switzerland and Ukraine. New Zealand has announced that it will ascribe its commitment for 2013 to 2020 under the Convention, not the Protocol. For most CP2 Parties, there is consistency between Copenhagen Accord targets and what has been ascribed under CP2.

  Many countries not taking on commitments under CP2 remain committed to their Copenhagen targets but are not legally bound to them, given the Accord is a voluntary agreement under the Convention. The legally binding nature of the Protocol is the reason it still has support from many least developed countries and the European Union—as a "least worst" option at present. Nonetheless, it is also well recognized that the average -18 per cent emission reduction by Annex I parties from 1990 levels in 2013–2020 is not nearly enough to put the world on track to avoid the dangerous threshold of a 2 C average global temperature increase.
- Carryover and Use of Assigned Amount Units (AAUs) from CP1 to CP2 – A major sticking point in Doha was the usage of extra AAUs from CP1 in CP2. Parties with excess AAUs (most notably Russia) wanted to be able to apply these to their target under CP2 or to sell to other countries. Some developing countries pushed back, hoping that a limit on AAU carryover would force higher levels of ambition in CP2 and avoid "hot air" units that do not represent real mitigation efforts but are due to the economic decline seen during the transition to a market economy by a number of Eastern European countries. In the end, it was agreed that only a limited amount of surplus AAUs can be used and that only parties taking on a second commitment period can use or sell them, leaving Russia extremely unhappy with the outcome. Despite not participating in CP2, it appears Russia was hoping to be able to sell their surplus AAUs.
- Access to Flexibility Mechanisms – Another sticking point was whether countries not ascribing targets under CP2 (i.e., Russia, Japan, New Zealand) could still have access to crediting mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol, including the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI). In the end, it was decided that access to Kyoto mechanisms would be limited to those Parties agreeing to take on a CP2 target. This decision will be a considerable disappointment to regional trading schemes in New Zealand and Japan (and potentially others) that currently have access to CDM markets but will not under CP2. It is, of course, a non-issue for Canada, given they are no longer a Party to Kyoto and historically did not access flexibility mechanisms.

Despite the limited scope and ambition of CP2, its agreement was seen by many as critical to ensuring a legal vacuum is avoided ahead of a potential 2020 agreement and to side-step a breakdown in the other two negotiating streams (LCA, ADP), where the elements of that 2020 agreement are being discussed.

3.0 Long-Term Cooperative Action Track Closes, but What's Next?

Agreement was also reached to officially end the AWG-LCA, but to say that outstanding issues were resolved in doing so would be a major overstatement. The closure of the LCA was intended to bring about a consolidation of key issues (mitigation, finance, technology, etc.) under the ADP. Its anti-climactic end has instead led to the reshuffling of discussions to different tracks (including the COP, SBSTA and SBI) and does little to streamline the process:

- **There is significant concern that shifting discussions to other bodies runs the risk of various elements being re-opened for negotiation, potentially losing some of the significant progress gained in recent years**. There are also the risks of other elements being forgotten or of reaching complete inertia in subsidiary bodies. For example, soft language from the Doha decisions under mitigation for developed countries "urges" them to increase the ambition of their emission reduction targets to levels recommended by science and establishes a work program to continue clarifying these pledges. It does not refer to the establishment of common accounting rules, methodologies and common base years for developed countries, all elements that had previously been discussed. Issues like these have many concerned that the closure of the LCA provides new opportunities for countries to reshape the debate or rethink ambition—and not in a good way.
- **On the other hand, several of the new institutions agreed to under the LCA (such as the Green Climate Fund, the Climate Technology Centre and Network, and the Adaptation Committee) are firmly placed in the broader negotiations and will continue to exist, even with the closure of the LCA**. The transfer of some critical discussions on mechanisms (including financing, REDD+ and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, or NAMAs) to SBSTA and SBI may also strengthen technical debates and bring about more progress moving forward.

4.0 Advancing the Durban Platform, Slowly and One Process Step at a Time

Last year, COP 17 ended with the establishment of the Durban Platform negotiating track, to establish "a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all parties." The ADP aims to complete its work by 2015, in order to implement a new agreement—the form yet unclear—by 2020. Key issues that emerged include:

- **If all major emitters are ever to be under the same mitigation tent, the ADP is seen by most as the place where this will happen. But as outlined in a previous IISD commentary, the scenarios for moving forward remain complex, and divisive positions remain**. The European Union and several least developed countries have been pushing for clear milestones and timelines to be established to help guide progress. In a process that "has a bad habit of missing deadlines," according to one negotiator, many other developed countries (including the United States and Canada) have adopted a wait-and-see approach, so as not to prematurely impose elements onto what they see as an "organic process."

- **There are also considerably divergent views on what the ADP is actually trying to achieve—in particular, what mitigation commitments from all major emitters would actually look like.** The result in Doha was vacillating discussions that only marginally increased clarity concerning the path forward. The two-page ADP decision document notes that ADP discussions will now take place under two streams: the first addressing the elements and modalities of a post-2020 agreement, and the second relating to pre-2020 ambition.
- **While there are placeholders in the discussions for the key elements of mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity building, and transparency of action and support, there is still an unsettling number of questions around how (and, in some cases, if) ongoing discussions elsewhere will find a home in the ADP**. 2013 is intended to be a year of more "focused work," according to the Doha decision, so it remains to be seen just how focused the discussions become on recognizing progress that has been made under the LCA in recent years.

The milestones set out in the ADP outcome are helpful in one respect, but disconcerting in another. The agreement to only begin considering draft negotiating text at COP 20 (2014) almost definitively rules out agreement actually being reached by COP 21 (2015), given the glacial rate of negotiations. The closer negotiations get to the intended 2020 start date for a new agreement, the more likely they will be to miss that deadline altogether.

In perhaps the only high-level political element of these talks, Ban Ki-moon agreed to convene world leaders in 2014 in an attempt to shore up political will (and financing) ahead of the 2015 milestone, while France has asked to host COP 21 to shepherd the process through that critical year. In the meantime, discussions under the ADP slowly roll on.

5.0 Other Issues...

While the broader picture may remain bleak, to the extent that any progress was made in Doha, it can be measured in incremental steps forward on a number of key negotiating areas, as outlined below.

5.1 No Breakthroughs on Financing

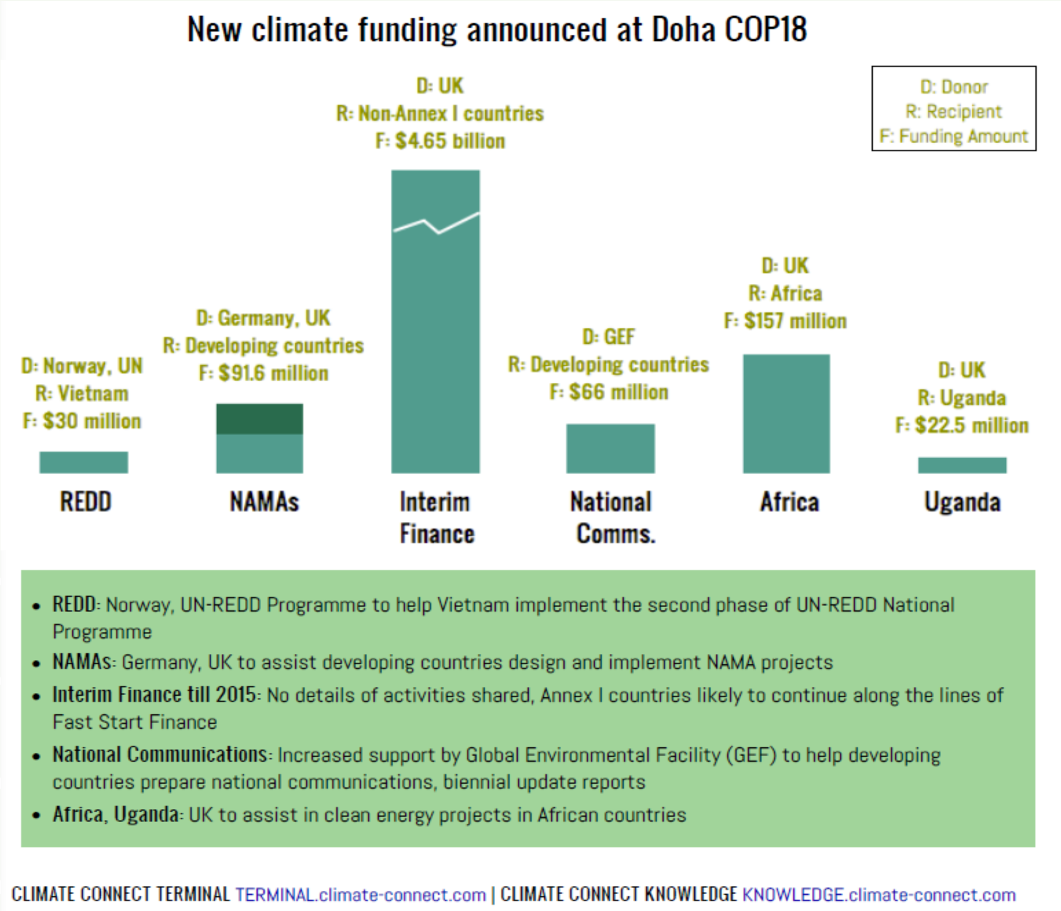
Not surprisingly, financing remains at the heart of the negotiations. Discussions of who pays, and how much, ran through virtually every stream of the talks, but broadly played out in Doha within the context of the mid-term and long-term financing and operationalizing the Green Climate Fund, and within various mechanisms like REDD+, NAMAs and Adaptation. However, on most fronts, the talks certainly gave credence to Minister Kent's pre-Doha assertion that "this is not a pledging conference"—given the overall lack of new commitments.

- **Vague promises on mid-term and long-term finance** – The Copenhagen Accord committed a number of developed countries to the provision of fast-start financing from 2010–2012 and set the aspirational goal of mobilizing US$100 billion annually by 2020.[1] The Accord was silent on the mid-term period of 2013–2020, a point that has not been lost on negotiators over the past year. Some had hoped that Doha would include significant financing announcements from key developing countries. Given domestic political and economic woes in the European Union and the United States (among many others), it is perhaps unsurprising that few came to COP 18 with cash in hand.

[1] The US$100 billion is to be "mobilized" from both public and private sources, for both mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Discussions will continue, but without significant commitments from developed countries coupled with a more pragmatic approach from many developing (and, in particular, rapidly developing) countries as to where the responsibility lies, it seems unlikely that financing discussions will see any major breakthroughs in the short term. **The danger here is the impact that unproductive financing discussions can have on the broader negotiations, given their critical role as a bargaining chip and show of political commitment to the process.** Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Sweden and the European Commission did commit in Doha to maintaining fast-start levels of financing to 2015, but no further details were provided. The chart below highlights the total funding announced at COP.

A final Doha decision "encouraged" developed countries to provide at least $10 billion per year between 2013 and 2015 (roughly the same levels as during the fast-start period), but there are no checks and balances to ensure commitments. As noted, the European Union is the only group to have vocally committed to maintaining fast-start levels of financing through 2015. Others, including the United States, have signalled intentions to announce further funding, although no additional commitments have been made.



Source: Doha Simplified- COP 18 Summary and Analysis, Climate Connect Ltd.

- **Operationalizing the Green Climate Fund proving easier said than done** – The Cancun Agreements of COP 16 set in motion the establishment of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as a key mechanism for achieving and dispersing climate finance to 2020 and beyond. The GCF, however, remains little more than an "empty shell." While negotiations on the procedures, modalities and governance of the Fund continued in Doha, concrete action under the GCF is potentially years away.

  Doha saw Songdo, Korea, approved as the official host of the GCF. It was also agreed that going forward, the GCF will be accountable to, and function under, the guidance of the COP. While this is a key demand of many developing countries (in an attempt to maintain transparency and accountability), from a functional perspective many developed countries (most vocally, the United States) and private sector actors have voiced concerns over the potential efficiency losses the GCF could have if it remains mired in UNFCCC politics and processes once operational.

- **Other key outstanding governance questions saw little clarity gained in Doha, including the role of observer organizations and private sector stakeholders. The GCF Board is made up entirely of government representatives, so while the private sector is expected to provide the lion's share of climate finance in the future, its role in the governance of the GCF is still being defined**. Many insiders are encouraged by the discussions and progress that has been made at GCF Board meetings over the past year, and at Doha it was decided the Board would meet upwards of four times in 2013. However, the Board has yet to agree on procedures for reporting out from the meetings, making it extremely difficult for those not internally engaged to have a clear picture of what is happening.
- **Other parallel financing discussions continue** – In addition to the GCF, financing discussions continued in Doha under the Standing Committee on Finance (another Cancun Agreement outcome), which endorsed a work plan to continue discussions from 2013 to 2015, including consideration of a "financial mechanism." However, many—including the negotiators themselves—seemed unclear as to what role the Standing Committee is to play, how it interacts with the GCF, and other existing financing mechanisms and ongoing discussions. This speaks to a key concern, that efforts are being duplicated in the various fora discussing climate finance.[2] Continued lack of clarity around how all of the various moving pieces fit together could be detrimental to progress in the longer term.

5.2 To Market, to Market

The use of market mechanisms remains a key element of an international agreement, both under the Kyoto Protocol and in a post-2020 framework. However, in the absence of a robust compliance regime in at least the mid term (if not the long term), carbon markets are undergoing something of an identity crisis in the negotiations. But while there are significant short-term concerns around the viability of the CDM market, an envisioned "framework for various approaches" (FVA) and new market mechanism (NMM) open up a constructive space for existing and planned regional or domestic trading systems to be considered in a post-2020 framework. For example:

[2] There are ongoing finance discussions under the GCF, the Standing Committee for Finance, within individual "mechanism" discussions including REDD+, NAMAs, adaptation (including the Adaptation Committee and loss and damage), technology, and capacity building, amongst others.

- **FVA discussions in Doha highlight the need for strengthened and more robust market structures in a future agreement. The capturing of existing and emerging trading systems will be critical to ensure early action and nationally and regionally appropriate approaches are supported**. But the nature of discussions also highlights the associated incredible complexities, as outlined by a recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on the markets landscape. In Doha, many Parties expressed legitimate concerns around hot air, the potential double counting of credits, and the establishment of crediting standards, baselines and commonalities of measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) and modalities for linking. Nonetheless, this relatively new area of the negotiations has been constructive and highlights a willingness of many countries, both developed and developing, to participate constructively in carbon market discussions moving forward.
- **Another constructive element of market discussions in Doha was the agreement that units generated by market mechanisms under the Convention may be used by Annex 1 Parties to help achieve their CP2 compliance**. In other words, credits generated by a new market mechanism, a REDD+ or NAMAs mechanism[3] and so forth could be applied to a Kyoto target. This of course assumes that any of these other mechanisms could become functional before 2020, which seems unlikely. Nonetheless, it is an important development, as it marks the first time a concrete connection has been made between KP market mechanisms and those under the broader Convention.

The FVA/NMM work plan agreed to in Doha means discussions will continue, with the aim to adopt a final decision at COP 19. Progress will likely be dependent on broader progress under the ADP and other streams, to ensure that the FVA/NMM actually has a "home" in a future agreement.

5.3 Mitigation…When, Who and How Much?

Similar to finance discussions, no major breakthroughs were made on the mitigation front in Doha. With the establishment of the Durban Platform, much of the negotiations now revolve around differing interpretations of a future agreement being "applicable to all." Closely related are understandings of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) as a key Convention principle, along with notions of historical responsibility. Of course, most major developed country emitters (including, vocally, the United States and Canada) hoped the establishment of the Durban Platform would signal a clear shift away from hard-lined divisions around CBDR, and that major developing economies would be willing to take on mitigation commitments of the same nature as developed economies.

Although this has proven much easier said than done, there have been some interesting dynamics emerging and the "firewall" between developed and developing country mitigation is beginning to erode:

- An informal grouping of progressive developing countries known as the Association of Independent Latin American and Caribbean states (AILAC)[4] began speaking together in early 2012 and has since been quite constructive in bridging the gap between developed and developing countries, fostering constructive discussions about meaningful mitigation actions on both sides.

[3] Doha adopted a work plan to establish a "new market mechanism" under the FVA umbrella. Under both REDD+ and NAMAs negotiations, there is ongoing consideration of if and when such mechanisms could become crediting. It remains to be seen if this new market mechanism will encompass REDD+ and NAMAs, or be an additional mechanism altogether. In any case, there should be coordination/linkages between them to ensure consistency and comparability. The European Union has proposed New Reduction Units (NRUs) as the vehicle for these actions.

[4] Comprised of Colombia, Peru, Costa Rica, Chile, Guatemala and Panama.

- On the other side, the "like-minded group" of countries that includes members of the Arab Group, some Latin American countries (including Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador), and India and China has been particularly vocal in the ADP track, reinforcing beliefs that any future mitigation agreement must be firmly rooted in the principle of CBDR and reflect developed countries' disproportionate historical responsibility for emissions.

All Parties agree that there will need to be differentiation in action under a future agreement, particularly with respect to least developed countries and small island states. The key question remains how to design a regime that brings the major emitters from both the developed and developing worlds together under the same rules-based system. It is this discussion that will be important to watch as the ADP takes shape, particularly as balances of power shift. By 2025, the combined GDP of China and India is set to be bigger than that of France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada put together.

5.4 REDD+ and Agriculture Left on the Sidelines

With the preoccupation in Doha around the future of the KP, LCA and ADP, little progress was made on any of the substantive elements of a future agreement. Discussions on **REDD+**[5] saw little movement, with governance, MRV and financing concerns underscoring the challenge in moving forward without broader clarity around where REDD+ might find a home in a post-2020 agreement. Points of contention include:

- Many developing countries (and potential private sector investors) argue that without further guidance, pilot activities cannot get underway in earnest.
- Inversely, many negotiators feel they have developed sufficiently broad rules of the game and that it is up to domestic governments to develop policies and undertake pilot projects, and that further direction from the negotiations is unlikely in the near term.
- The next year or two could mark a tipping point for REDD+. While most agree that the mechanism should play an important role in a post-2020 agreement, it does not yet have a clear placeholder in the ADP track, and the absence of a strong compliance market limits demand. Unless national level planning is scaled up toward full implementation, support for REDD+ may wane in the near term.

Similarly, **agriculture** discussions made little to no progress in Doha:

- For the past year, negotiators have gone in circles trying to determine if agriculture should or could be addressed from an adaptation perspective, a mitigation perspective, or both.
- Circular discussions continued in Doha and no decisions were reached; negotiations will continue into 2013.

One constructive element that seems to have gained traction in Doha is the concept of a landscape approach to forestry, agriculture and land-use activities under a future agreement. With the broadening of the mitigation tent is coming a realization that mechanisms otherwise built on Annex I/non-Annex I foundations will not necessarily be suitable for a future agreement. There is a growing understanding that it may be most beneficial to address land use,

[5] Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

land-use change and forestry (LULUCF), REDD+, agriculture and so forth in a comprehensive landscape approach. The challenges associated with establishing MRV of such a system are also becoming increasingly clear, but will likely be an interesting element to watch under the ADP.

5.5 Loss and Damage Take Centre Stage in Adaptation Discussions

The concept of loss and damage, whereby developed countries would be responsible for providing compensation to particularly vulnerable developing countries suffering the effects of climate change, has long been an undercurrent in adaptation discussions. Doha marked the first time that the concept was formally recognized in the negotiations. A decision was reached that a new mechanism would be designed over the next year, requesting that developed countries provide developing countries with finance, technology and capacity-building support to address loss and damage.

While the decision was touted as a major game-changer by supporters, it is a far cry from a financing mechanism that would require developed countries to provide remuneration to developing countries. Many developed countries (most vocally the United States) have strongly opposed strong language on loss and damage, fearing it could signify an admission of liability and open the doors to lawsuits from developing countries demanding compensation. There are also serious questions around how one defines "loss and damage," and while many least developed countries and small island states have very legitimate cases for support, it is difficult to define (or quantify) what economic, social or environmental damages should be accounted for under the new mechanism, or what the mechanism would even look like and how it would interact with various broader financing discussions.

6.0 A Note on Canada

Canada certainly made fewer waves at this year's conference than last year, when rumors of the Kyoto Protocol withdrawal overshadowed the talks. While Canada was not overtly obstructionist in any way, it did not play a particularly constructive role either, instead very much adopting a "wait and see" approach under the ADP.

Minister Kent's assertion that there would be no new commitments from Canada with respect to mid-term financing caught the attention of many negotiators and civil society groups. While there are certainly challenges for developed countries in maintaining scaled-up finance commitments, no others made clear their intentions not to provide support in the near term, as noted in the financing section of this commentary. More broadly, Canada has questioned the provision of support for developing country mitigation actions in the absence of a new agreement covering all major emitters.

Canada did announce a next (and likely final) tranche of its previously committed fast-start financing on the margins of COP. Highlights from the third wave of financing include:

- $75 million to support the Catalyst Fund, managed by the International Finance Corporation
- $76 million to the Asian Development Bank to establish a Canadian Climate Fund for the private sector in Asia
- $16.5 million to the United Nations Development Programme for adaptation projects in least developed countries

Given that the money is to be allocated by the end of fiscal 2012, it is unsurprising that the remainder of the fast-start financing is going to many of the same Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) that received contributions in 2010 and 2011. However, the decisions come as a disappointment to those hoping the final tranche would include more bilateral or flagship programming or would engage private sector actors to ensure investment opportunities for Canadian firms could be leveraged—an important theme in the climate finance discussions more broadly.

7.0 Looking Forward...

As negotiations dragged on in Doha, a powerful and deadly typhoon ravaged much of the Philippines. Despite increasingly clear warnings, the urgency to act seems at a troubling low, while global carbon emissions have reached an all-time high.

With Poland assuming the COP Presidency in 2013 (COP 19 will held in Warsaw), few are hopeful the momentum under the UNFCCC will pick up in the near future. COP 20 (2014) will be hosted by a yet-to-be-named Latin American country. If a member of the previously mentioned AILAC group is selected host, it could certainly help galvanize action amongst other constructive developing countries. Others think that the UN world leaders' summit in 2014 could spur some much needed political will ahead of the 2015 Durban Platform agreement target, for implementation in 2020. With France offering to host COP 21 (2015), the political capital invested in the ADP process by the European Union will result in something of a "Copenhagen 2.0" in 2015. If constructive discussions take shape in the next two years, they could set the stage for a breakthrough in 2015 and lead to an inclusive agreement using the various building blocks already a part of the negotiations.

Whatever the process, it is clear that the outcome will look much more like the Copenhagen Accord than the Kyoto Protocol. In order to achieve agreement amongst all major emitters, it is necessarily going to be much more of a patchwork and guiding framework than a legally binding, top-down, compliance-based treaty. Nonetheless, it is also continually reassuring to learn of the significant "bottom-up" action being taken, along with the increasing space for nationally and regionally appropriate approaches that is being made within the international negotiations.

Through all of this, whether or not the UNFCCC process can deliver on the level of ambition needed to avoid catastrophic climate change remains to be seen. The past two weeks in Doha certainly were not particularly comforting in that respect.

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

International Institute for Sustainable Development
Head Office
161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 0Y4
Tel: +1 (204) 958-7700 | Fax: +1 (204) 958-7710 | Website: www.iisd.org

About IISD

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) contributes to sustainable development by advancing policy recommendations on international trade and investment, economic policy, climate change and energy, and management of natural and social capital, as well as the enabling role of communication technologies in these areas. We report on international negotiations and disseminate knowledge gained through collaborative projects, resulting in more rigorous research, capacity building in developing countries, better networks spanning the North and the South, and better global connections among researchers, practitioners, citizens and policy-makers.

IISD's vision is better living for all—sustainably; its mission is to champion innovation, enabling societies to live sustainably. IISD is registered as a charitable organization in Canada and has 501(c)(3) status in the United States. IISD receives core operating support from the Government of Canada, provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and from the Province of Manitoba. The Institute receives project funding from numerous governments inside and outside Canada, United Nations agencies, foundations and the private sector.

IISD Climate Insights

IISD's *Climate Insights* is an expert advice program provided by the IISD Climate Change and Energy Team. Delivered on a subscription basis, the program caters to public and private sector clients looking for on-demand advice related to regulatory analysis, mitigation and adaptation action, and policy development. *Climate Insights* offers insider access to developing analytics from IISD as well as monthly updates on emerging issues in climate change and energy. Subscribers also help to fund innovation, as subscription fees are re-invested directly into IISD research and publications.

IISD Climate Change and Energy is a leading and trusted authority on climate issues with a reputation for honesty and unbiased policy solutions. IISD's capacity is drawn from its global network of staff and associates from government, industry and academia, ensuring our knowledge base matches the needs of our clients.