

DESIGN AND PREPARATION OF THE GLASGOW COP: LESSONS FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF PREVIOUS PRESIDENCIES

Hosting a Conference of the Parties with 20,000-30,000 participants is a major undertaking that requires logistical and diplomatic expertise. There is large scope for lesson drawing from previous presidencies, especially the Danish Presidency 2009, the French Presidency 2015 and the Fiji/German Presidency 2017.

COP15 in Copenhagen was considered a failure for several reasons, including the following:

- 1. Overly high expectations.** The goal of the COP was to conclude an agreement with legally binding emission reductions for developing countries. This high 'benchmark' for success made any other outcome appear to fall short, although the Copenhagen Accords had significant achievements: they were the first step towards the bottom-up 'pledge and review' process of the Paris Agreement and allowed developing (non-Annex 1) countries to voluntarily develop climate mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- 2. Closed-door negotiations of less than 30 states.** There was a perceived lack of legitimacy and transparency among the delegates, especially of the developing countries outside the small circle of Heads of States from predominantly G20 members that negotiated the Copenhagen Accords behind closed doors. This led to distrust in the process and the subsequent outcome.
- 3. Logistical challenge.** COP15 was considered a logistical nightmare that left thousands of delegates, regardless of seniority or status, to wait for hours outside the conference centre in the cold as they tried to register for the conference. This system failure was caused by an unprecedented high interest in the negotiations, including by civil society, and in particular the leniency of the UNFCCC secretariat in allowing large delegations and for late replacements of delegates. For following COPs, the UNFCCC developed a system that on average grants civil society delegations 50% of the requested badges so that all members of the delegation can attend one week of the two-week conference.

THE ROAD TO PARIS OR PERHAPS "THE STRENGTH OF PARIS PREPARATIONS"

Many of these problems associated with COP15 were addressed in the run-up to Paris. The aftermath of COP15 saw a period of reflection and new leadership with UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres. Charismatic and strong, Figueres succeeded in fostering common purpose and thinking-outside-the-box negotiation approaches. The time between 2010 and 2015 saw a stronger inclusion of non-national actors through new forms of engagement including workshops and expert presentations.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the UNFCCC draft Rules of Procedure as granting every one of the over 190 countries a de-facto veto right was increasingly interpreted more loosely. A clear example of this was demonstrated by the Mexican COP President in Cancun (now the UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa) when she didn't recognize Bolivia when it appeared to be formally objecting to the final agreement. There are similar examples by the Qatari Presidency in Doha 2012.

Include all countries in solutions: The logic of Kyoto exempted developing countries from action. There were **emerging “multilevel reinforcing governance dynamics”**, i.e. linkages between the global ambitions for a post-Kyoto agreement and increasing domestic legislation on climate change also by developing countries that were exempt from climate action under the logic of the Kyoto Protocol and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (Rietig, 2014; Rietig 2019). This increased the willingness among countries to agree to more ambitious climate action on the global level, ultimately in the form of the Paris Agreement. **There is now a changed mindset and expectation that developing countries do contribute to the global effort** through their voluntary Nationally Determined Contributions, some of which are more ambitious than those by developed countries. The **Lima-Paris Action Agenda** was the key link that paved the way for a successful outcome in Paris. Under the strong leadership of the Peruvian Presidency it allowed an inclusive approach towards developing countries. It achieved a mind-shift towards the benefits of domestic climate action with the increasingly central inclusion of non-national actors such as cities, regional governments, businesses and civil society organisations central to support the implementation of any voluntary Nationally Determined Contributions towards emission reductions.

Focus on constructive proposals and results: A key success factor for the Paris Agreement was the move towards consensus-based decision-making that is **focused on constructive proposals and results** (e.g. Indabas at COP17 in Durban/South Africa and in Paris) and a common landing zone to maximise both effectiveness and transparency. The focus shifted away from the entrenched formal negotiation positions with insufficient overlaps in negotiation margins and a 'win-lose' mindset (established since the 1990s of economic prosperity versus climate action) towards a more positive framing of 'win-win' perspectives combining climate action with green growth and economic prosperity (Rietig, 2014). **The Indabas were focused on constructive, positive contributions and finding solutions that would advance the negotiations and facilitate finding an agreement.**

POST PARIS: FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION AND NON-NATIONAL ACTOR INCLUSION

Post-Paris, the leadership team within the UNFCCC secretariat changed with a new Executive Secretary. The focus shifted towards ratification and making the Paris Agreement operational in terms of implementation into international law, additional negotiations on specific topics, measurement, reporting and verification mechanisms and stepping up ambition in the run-up to the 5-yearly review cycles. The Paris Agreement's focus on a 'Pledge and Review' approach asked countries to present and step up their Nationally Determined Contributions.

Especially COP22 in Marrakesh and COP23 in Bonn saw an increased inclusion of non-national actors and a shift from a focus on the 'formal negotiations' towards non-negotiation settings in the 'Green' or 'Bonn' Zone, a conference space hosting presentations, panel discussions and roundtables led by or with the participation of non-national actors.

The stronger involvement of non-national actors was an important formal recognition that these are crucial for implementation due to their capacity in terms of e.g. know-how/technical capabilities, financial resources from private sector and low carbon policies by cities etc. However, they have still no actual role in formal negotiations as the UNFCCC negotiations remain a party-driven process.

THE KEY LESSONS FROM PARIS AND SUBSEQUENT HOSTS ARE:

- Manage the expectations to a realistic level. The key lesson from Copenhagen is to avoid unrealistically high ambition for the negotiation outcome. Instead, focus on countries' visions and the resources required to achieve them, continuing with the spirit of 'positive group pressure' (Rietig, 2014) by highlighting leadership and achievements by countries and celebrating success.
- Ensure a high level of Chair training in a broad range of facilitation and mediation techniques in the formal negotiations (and pairing/mentoring through experienced Chairs) and a process that is solution-oriented and outcome-focused (e.g. Indabas), as well as ensure that senior representatives of the presidency have the support they need to run meetings effectively.
- Continue with highly transparent and inclusive process that is open to civil society/non-national actors, experts and negotiators alike. Resist closed door processes of a small number of nations "solving" things on their own which did not work in Copenhagen.
- Offer a non-negotiation space that is as closely integrated with the conference centre where the formal UNFCCC negotiations are hosted and allow for intermingling/interaction between negotiators and non-state actors. If this is not the case, two separate 'worlds' emerge where the energy, solutions and enthusiasm of tackling the climate crisis sides with the civil society space.

REFERENCES

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