

A Review of the COP23 Bonn Conference

Hayley Cassedy

Abstract: The 23rd Conference of the Parties, COP23, held on November 6, 2017, created a roadmap for the years leading up to 2020 in order to fulfill the parameters set by the Paris Agreement. Countries, cities, and businesses agreed on twelve specific actions on the financing of climate change prevention methods. Sources of transportation, agriculture, and energy were reassessed to help diminish their adverse effects. In addition to investments, funding, and plans made to combat climate change, companies also pledged to make a positive impact on the environment. Overall, COP23 was a success, as it advanced the Talanoa Dialogue to the next stage of decreasing global temperatures.

The UNFCCC

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC, met in Bonn, Germany for the 23rd Conference of the Parties, COP23. The UNFCCC was established in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit (“About COP”). It was created to control the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere (“About COP”). 195 nations are members of the UNFCCC (“About COP”). The UNFCCC has three categorical Parties: Annex I, Annex II, and Non-Annex I (“Parties”).

Annex I consists of countries that have economies in training (EIT) and countries that were industrialized and members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1992 (“Parties”). Annex II includes the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (“Parties”). They have to financially assist developing countries to alter emissions quantities and adjust to climate change (“Parties”). Annex II Parties are responsible for discovering and implementing “environmentally friendly technologies” in developing countries and EIT members (“Parties”). The Non-Annex I group comprises of developing countries that are geographically or economically

impacted by climate change (“Parties”). UNFCCC focuses on finding solutions to combat major effects on Non-Annex I Parties (“Parties”). In addition to these primary groups, the 49 Parties deemed least developing countries receive unique deliberation because of their economic and technological disadvantages (“Parties”).

Significance of COP

A Conference of the Parties is held annually, with the first in 1995 in Berlin, Germany (“About COP”). The Kyoto Protocol was formulated at the 1997 COP, thus compelling developed nations to emit less greenhouse gases (“About COP”). The Kyoto Protocol emphasized that developed countries were largely responsible for exhausting the most greenhouse gases (“The Kyoto”). The commitment period that concluded in 2012 requested the level of emissions be reduced by 5 percent compared to 1990 levels (“The Kyoto”). With the advent of the Kyoto Protocol, the COP gained the second appellation of CMP, which is the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (“About COP”). The CMP originated in 2005, so COP23 is synonymous with CMP13 (“About COP”). Another piece of international law negotiated by the UNFCCC was the legally binding Paris Agreement during COP21 (“About COP”). The Paris Agreement is intended to unite nations to fight against global temperatures rising more than two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels (“The Paris”). It also focuses on creating solutions for developing countries to be able to mitigate the effects of climate change (“The Paris”). This would require sharing financial and technological developments across the globe (“The Paris”). Countries will be responsible for reporting their progress and improvements that contribute to accomplishing the agreement’s goals every five years (“The Paris”). Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are the highlights of the Paris Agreement (“Nationally”). Every country plans for its “post-2020 climate actions,” and these long-term goals are NDCs (“Nationally”). COP23 addressed how to accomplish NDCs.

COP23’s Intentions

The Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimaram, was the COP23 President. Going into the conference, the Prime Minister planned on reviewing the scientific evidence and facts regarding climate change to gain an understanding of the current situation (“Meet”). Once the present circumstances were established, the Parties would discuss the proper measures to address the rising temperatures (“Meet”). Bainimaram believed the Paris Agreement needed to be revisited and require harsher restrictions put on greenhouse gas emissions (“Meet”). Rather

than aiming for no more than a rise of two degrees Celsius, he urged for a restriction of 1.5 degrees Celsius and “net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2050 at the latest” (“Meet”). He also wished to focus on developing countries that lack resources to combat the effects of global change, especially small islands in the Pacific (“Meet”). Overall, he called for the Parties to act as a community to preserve the planet (“Meet”). Similarly, Patricia Espinosa, the Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, emphasized the importance of countries’ uniting to articulate guidelines in order to implement the Paris Agreement properly (“Meet”). She explained the Paris Agreement requires a unique formula based on a country’s economic, political, and geographical status, and COP23 would be used to continue these discussions (“Meet”).

COP23 Achievements

COP23 resulted in numerous decisions that will determine how nations, cities, and states treat the effects of climate change. The Paris Climate Change Agreement was the primary focus of the conference. The Parties agreed that time is limited and changes need to be implemented immediately to slow rising temperatures (“Concrete”). Means of financing, investing in, and coordinating climate action were cemented by COP23 (“Concrete”).

Financing Climate Action

Twelve specific proclamations were made regarding the financing of climate change prevention methods.

The InsuResilience Initiative will have Germany provide another 125 million US dollars to insure an additional 400 million poor people by 2020 (“Concrete”).	Germany and Britain pledged to spend 153 million US dollars to protect the Amazon Rainforest from the effects of climate change and deforestation (“Concrete”).	World Resources Institute will give 2.1 billion US dollars of private investment to recover lands in the Caribbean and Latin America (“Concrete”).	Thirteen countries and the International Energy Agency (IEA) contributed to introducing clean energy technologies globally through the “IEA Clean Energy Transitions Programme” (“Concrete”).
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The Adaptation Fund currently sits at 93.3 million US dollars with Germany and Italy's offerings, exceeding the 2017 goal by more than 13 million US dollars ("Concrete").	The European Investment promised to contribute 75 million US dollars to a new investment program that will distribute and clean wastewater after Cyclone Winston in Fiji ("Concrete").	Together, the UN Development Programme, Germany, Spain, and the EU initiated the 42 million euro NDC Support Programme, which helps countries meet the targets set by the Paris Agreement ("Concrete").	Ecuador plans to emit 15 million tons less of Carbon Dioxide in its forest sector ("Concrete").
Norway and Unilever settled a fund for public and private investment in "high productivity agriculture, smallholder inclusion, and forest protection" ("Concrete").	As a conglomerate, the Green Climate Fund and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development agreed to help finance the Saiss Water Conservation Project, which will improve Morocco's agriculture ("Concrete").	The NDC Partnership created a new regional core in the Pacific to meet the area's NDCs ("Concrete").	Gabon's National Park Service aims to reduce 20 million tons of Carbon Dioxide by stopping illegal logging ("Concrete").

Investing in Climate Change

The same day that COP23 commenced, HSBC pledged to contribute 100 billion US dollars to "green investments" ("HSBC"). The money will go towards the implementation of a low carbon economy ("HSBC"). Low carbon technologies will effectively decrease the temperatures to meet the Paris Agreement ("HSBC"). HSBC is collaborating with clean energy producers to transition to using renewable materials to source 24 percent of its electricity ("HSBC"). By 2030, the bank aims to be fully sourced by renewable energy ("HSBC"). In the past, HSBC has largely invested in green infrastructure projects across the world ("HSBC"). The second instance of investing in climate action is the African Sub national Climate Fund (SnCF) being funded by R20, BlueOrchard, and the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation ("Sub"). BlueOrchard is a Swiss Impact Investment Fund Manager ("Sub"). SnCF is supposed to provide the necessary funding for infrastructure projects immune to climate change that are otherwise underfunded

(“Sub”). Governments, foundations, development banks, and finance institutions will contribute to the infrastructure ventures (“Sub”).

Coordinating Climate Change

Ten specific initiatives were discussed during COP23 to successfully involve all Parties to guarantee the funding and projects have positive impacts on the climate (“Concrete”).

The SIDS Health Initiative was introduced by the World Health Organization. SIDS stands for Small Island Developing States, and they are typically greatly affected by climate change (“Special”). The SIDS Health Initiative focuses on establishing health systems that are prepared to combat health issues caused by climate change (“Concrete”).	The Powering Past Coal Alliance includes more than 20 countries to phase out of coal and help those connected to the coal industry (“Concrete”). 25 nations, states, and organizations, including Mexico, Portugal, and Luxembourg, have joined the alliance (“More”). The goal is to remove coal from the power industries (“More”).	The Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction agreed to speed up collaborations for their “zero-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction sector” (“GABC”).	EcoMobility Alliance pledged to push for green transportation methods (“EcoMobility”). Public transportation, cycling, and walking are emphasized by EcoMobility, as well as making goods and services available in sustainable ways (“EcoMobility”).	The Ocean Pathway Partnership was launched (“Concrete”). The alliance aims to make guidelines to appropriately treat and protect the ocean by 2020 (“Launching”).
America’s Pledge holds the United States accountable for being a leader in the Paris Agreement’s requirements	C40 is the commitment of over 90 city mayors to focus on changing urban areas to reduce greenhouse gas	Below50 vouches to develop and implement sustainable fuels, specifically “replacing 10% of global	The Transforming Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI) aims to focus on creating “sustainable urban mobility” in developing	The UN Development Programme launched the Global Platform for the New York Declaration on Forests (NYDF)

("Concrete").	emissions ("About"). C40 is headed by the mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo ("About")	transportation fossil fuel use with low-carbon transport fuels by 2030 and 27% by 2050" ("Below50").	countries ("What"). TUMI deals with the funding and technological developments to properly help less developed countries advance economically while also implementing environmentally friendly urban areas ("What").	("Concrete"). NYDF plans to cut deforestation in half by 2020 and have it completely stopped by 2030 ("New York").
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Additional Advancements

In addition to the investments, funding, and plans made to combat climate change, companies also pledged to make a positive impact on the environment. Mars, Inc. promised to cut its carbon footprint by 27 percent by 2025 and 67 percent by 2050 ("Concrete"). Similarly, Microsoft plans to reduce its carbon emissions by 75 percent by 2030 ("Concrete"). Walmart pledged to work with "commodities that do not increase deforestation" ("Concrete"). Several companies joined EV100, which is a group of businesses dedicated to normalizing electric vehicles by 2030 ("EV100"). EV100 cites vehicle emissions as one of the leading causes of climate change ("EV100"). Air pollution, noise pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by using electrical vehicles ("EV100").

Along with companies committing to fight climate change, several governments ratified existing agreements ("Concrete"). With Syria joining the Paris Agreement, in total, 170 countries have ratified the Paris Agreement ("Concrete"). The Doha Amendment of the Kyoto Protocol was introduced at COP18 in 2012 once the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ended ("Doha"). At COP23, the Parties were urged to accept the amendment ("Doha"). The Amendment sets new emissions targets for the new commitment period through 2020 ("Doha Amendment to"). Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Slovakia, Spain, and Finland agreed to the Doha Amendment, making the total number of countries that have ratified the Amendment 90 ("Concrete"). Eight more countries ratified the Kigali Amendment of the Montreal Protocol, resulting in a total of 19 countries ("Concrete"). The Montreal Protocol focuses on controlling the substances in the atmosphere that deplete the ozone layer ("The Kigali"). It

was implemented in 1989, and the Kigali Amendment was introduced in 2016 (“The Kigali”). The Amendment aims to reduce the amount of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are man-made chemicals that are stronger greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide when affecting climate change (“The Kigali”). It is planned for HFCs to be replaced with more environmentally friendly substances (“The Kigali”). The United States and the European Union are responsible for decreasing the amount of production and usage of HFCs (“The Kigali”). China, Brazil, and all of Africa are expected to stop using HFCs by 2024 (“The Kigali”). The countries with hotter climates do not have to freeze HFCs until 2028 (“The Kigali”). During COP23, Comoros, Germany, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Finland, Maldives, Luxembourg, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom signed on to the Kigali Amendment (“Concrete”).

The Talanoa Dialogue

Identifying practices for countries to successfully fulfill the Paris Agreement’s goals was a central theme of COP23. Specifically, the Talanoa Dialogue emphasizes pre-2020 action and includes all countries in meeting the target global temperature (“Key”). The Paris Agreement requires participants to report their progress, and in 2023, new commitments, or NDCs, will be reconsidered by 2025 (“Talanoa”). The Talanoa Dialogue was initiated at COP23 so countries could collaborate before these new commitments would have to be established (“Talanoa”). It also focuses on uniting Parties to meet the Paris Agreement’s goals and hold all Parties accountable (“Talanoa”). At COP23, Parties discussed their current situations and how they think they can lower the global temperature (“Talanoa”). This conference prepared Parties and served as a brainstorming opportunity for the upcoming political phase of the Talanoa Dialogue, which will take place at COP24 (“Talanoa”). The Grand Coalition pushed by the Fijian Presidency will help create a cohesive force to combat rising temperatures (“Talanoa”).

Looking to the Future

COP23 established several key partnerships and collaborations working towards fulfilling the Paris Agreement. Overall, the conference was deemed to be a success. Forming a united front against climate change allows for countries to step up and reduce emissions in their own nations while also contributing to less developed countries. Climate change affects everyone on this planet, and the Grand Coalition idea reemphasizes the importance of all Parties having to contribute. However, President Donald Trump formally withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement in June 2017. With the American government

cutting its environmental programs' budgets, long-term goals and cooperation will be stunted (Zhang). Losing the United States' monetary and physical influence on climate change will force local governments and organizations to take charge of the exploration for technologies to decrease global temperatures (Zhang). COP23 highlighted the unification of localized leadership to effectively protect against and reduce the harmful substances released into the atmosphere.

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