



Still on the last chance saloon

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Still on the last chance saloon-The Katowice climate meet must ensure that today's children don't inherit a planet heading to a catastrophe

- Average global temperatures have crossed a degree Celsius above preindustrial levels and such concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (410 ppm) has never been seen by humans before.
- The 24th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Katowice, Poland (December 3-14) is meant to take forward steps to address this threat of climate change.

Not so straightforward

- The purpose of the meeting is to set guidelines, or agree on a rulebook, to implement pledges that were made by various countries at the Paris Climate Conference in 2015.
- In the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), planned ahead of the Paris COP-21, each country described the actions it would take and the levels to which greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions would be reduced (mitigation).
- At Paris, the global community agreed to try to limit warming to 1.5° C above preindustrial levels since the effects can be dire beyond that.
- The current conference at Katowice comes soon after a special publication by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the 1.5 Degree Report, according to which what we need are far-reaching, speedy transformative changes in our societies in order to stay below 1.5° C.

Stumbling on the rules

- When all nations agree on how to gather, count and report on their emissions and the process is standardized, the implementation of the PA becomes more grounded.

- There has been little, if any, progress on finance, technology transfer and capacity development.
- Article 9 of the PA calls for financial support from developed countries that is significantly derived from public funds, which “should represent a progression beyond previous efforts”.
- This was expected to result in at least \$100 billion per year to address needs and priorities of developing countries for mitigation and adaptation.
- Article 9.5 requires developed countries to communicate their levels of support, including pledges of additional finance.
- The Climate Funds Update of 2018 notes that multilateral funds pledged until 2017 are less than \$30 billion, of which around \$20 billion has been deposited and about \$4 billion disbursed.
- There have also been charges of double counting and counting of development aid levelled against developed countries.
- The inability to have any agreement between developing and rich countries ensures that the fights on finance and technology will intensify in Poland, especially in the second week.
- The ethical foundations of the climate change fights on the global stage are based largely on the occupation of atmospheric carbon space by rich countries, leaving little room for growth by the latecomers, which are poor nations.
- Trying to change what was agreed at Paris, as has been insisted upon by the U.S., for instance, is tantamount to renegotiating the PA, according to emerging economies and poor countries.

Timelines and taking stock

- The implementation of the activities for the PA formally begins in 2020 and concludes in 2030.
- We are currently in the Doha Amendment period, or the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol, which has not been ratified.
- In a couple of years after the start of the PA implementation, we will have a stocktaking — reviewing progress and deciding on more stringent targets for the future.
- This renewed commitment towards the future means that countries have to trust each other, which would mean that fulfilling obligations is a foundation of future ambition and action.