



PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK ON THE WORLD BANK
Parliamentarians & Development Series

Looking Ahead to COP 16

What happened at COP15?

The 15th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place from 7-18 December in Copenhagen. The occasion marked the end of two years of negotiations under the auspices of the UNFCCC and the Bali Road Map, which consists of a number of decisions necessary to create a secure climate future. In addition to providing a post-Kyoto international accord on climate change, the Copenhagen Accord should have gone one step further by including developing countries. The US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa were the main authors of the final accord. It was backed by the EU later on. The final agreement fell short of the original ambitions and it did not fulfil the UN's requirements of consensus among the 194 members to the Conference of Parties (COP).

What was the role of Parliamentarians at COP 15?

During the COP 15 negotiations, parliamentarians were largely left out of the discussions. They were able to participate as observers but there was no channel which allowed them to contribute directly to the talks. This is why the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) organized a meeting on the occasion of the UN Climate Change Conference targeted at parliamentarians and their role in international agreements, specifically in relation to climate change. The key themes of that event referred to:

- 1) Parliament's role in global-level, binding agreements: how to involve parliamentarians as participants during the COP15 negotiations without forgetting their key role of ratifying any emerging international agreement.
- 2) The two sides of climate change: high consumption and carbon footprint in the developed world and the destruction of habitat and natural resources in the developing world.
- 3) Non-negotiability of climate change: the need for increased research and development to improve technology and help mitigate the financial cost of combating climate change.
- 4) Climate change and global trade: the risks of global trade to climate change, and vice-versa, and the need for a global agreement to address these issues.
- 5) The increasing need for good global governance: the challenge for legislators to look at the broader long-term picture and the need for civil society participation.

From the IPU meeting emerged several recommendations on parliamentarians' involvement in the climate change debate. For instance, participants proposed that a portion of the funds that developed countries give towards addressing climate change should go to increasing parliamentary capacity in the developing world to write climate-change mitigation legislation and to monitor its effective implementation. Participants also proposed that governments should report to them annually on their country's performance the basis of globally standardized climate indicators. Delegates suggested that parliamentarians should sensitize their constituencies to climate change issues. All participants favoured a global legally binding agreement with set targets as well as a defined role for parliamentarians in climate-change negotiations, possibly through the IPU as an umbrella organisation.

What must be achieved at COP 16?

At COP16, participants will have to reach a global, legally binding agreement with set targets, addressing what was not accomplished at COP15 and possibly more.

During preparatory COP 16 conferences, issues were divided into three categories:

- Issues that were close to completion in Copenhagen and can be finalized at the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancún at the end of the year;
- Issues on which there are still considerable differences, but on which the Copenhagen Accord can provide important political guidance; and
- Issues on which governments are still far from agreement.

Working groups have been discussing greenhouse gas reductions, adapting to the inevitable effects of climate change, how to transfer clean technology, reducing emissions from deforestation and finance and institutional arrangements. Furthermore, negotiations include emissions reduction commitments for the 37 industrialised countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

An already-tabled draft COP 16 proposal includes a possible set of decisions for Cancún, including impacts of agriculture on emissions, carbon markets and mechanisms, greenhouse gases, and the effects on different countries of moving to a low-emissions future.

How can Parliamentarians be involved in the COP16 negotiations?

Parliamentarians should get involved as early as possible in the COP16 process. Climate change and environmental parliamentary committees can act as advisors to their Ministries and demand that they be kept in the loop on the negotiations process. Very importantly, parliamentarians can ensure that funding is allocated for environmental issues in the national budget. In addition, they can participate in various events organised by parliamentary groups in order to get their message across. For instance, the IPU and the Mexican Congress, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is organising a parliamentary meeting on 6 December 2010, in conjunction with the Climate Change Conference in Cancún. The meeting will offer parliamentarians an opportunity to obtain information on the main issues of climate-change negotiations; to interact with government negotiators directly involved in the UNFCCC decision-making process; to gain better knowledge of the recommendations adopted by the IPU with regard to parliamentary action on climate change; and to exchange views on parliamentary follow-up to the Cancún session.

What role will the World Bank play in addressing climate change?

At the international level, organisations such as the World Bank are looking to play an important role in funding climate change mitigation. In June 2010, World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick announced the appointment of Andrew Steer as Special Envoy for Climate Change, a new position created to represent the World Bank in the international discussions around climate change. In 2010, the World Bank undertook two climate change related consultations, one on [energy](#) and one on [environment](#). You can learn more about the World Bank's approach to environment on the Bank's Environment [webpage](#).

Parliamentarians need to ensure that relevant World Bank projects do indeed consider environmental aspects. PNoWB can assist Parliamentarians by encouraging information exchange and cooperation with the World Bank, as well as by reporting regularly on World Bank climate-change initiatives.

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