

## **COP25, Chile Madrid, December 2-15, 2019**

### ***From Frustration, Accomplishment and Transitioning to Glasgow***

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty adopted on May 9, 1992 and opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. Now there are 197 parties to UNFCCC. Conference of Parties (COP) refers to all the States that are Parties to UNFCCC. The Secretariat of COP is in Bonn, Germany. The COP usually meets every year. The important task of the COP is to work against the Climate Change and nowadays, mainly towards reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission. The first meeting of COP was held in Berlin, Germany in March, 1995. The most important COPs have been two: COP18 (Kyoto, 1997), in which the *Kyoto Protocol* was signed by which countries pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 5% below 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. The other significant one is that of COP21, held in December 2015 in Paris. The *Paris Agreement (PA)* was prepared in this (<https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2646274/Updated-l09r01.pdf>). The PA says that the signatories have committed to limit the global warming to below 2 °C above the pre-industrial levels, and preferably not to exceed 1.5 °C, and they are required to draw up and implement *Nationally Determined Contributions* (NDCs) to reduce the GHG emission in their countries. They have to submit the performance report to COP. The PA came into effect from November 4, 2016.

#### *Why important not to go beyond 2°C:*

After the 1987 Montreal Protocol the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) were phased out. So now there is reduction in the depletion of ozone layer in the poles. Since then gradually the awareness on problem of increasing of temperature due to the greenhouse gases emissions has been increasing. As we have heard at COP25, the impact of the problem of global warming is not so acute for the Earth as it has passed through major shocks since its birth. Its impacts on human and their concrete way of living are enormous. The melting of the poles, with the consequent increase in sea level, has a direct impact on human populations near the sea and, of course, on the islands. The increase in the temperature of the waters of the oceans, produces changes in phenomena such as: cyclones, cold and heat cycles, droughts, wild fires, sea currents, depletion of fish stocks etc. The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere ends up in the sea, producing an increased acidity causing the death of marine animals. As we can see, all this has a direct impact on the entire terrestrial ecosystem, including human beings, and especially on the most vulnerable populations of humanity. But sadly, there are still some people who refuse to admit the reality of climate change.

#### *The COP25:*

The COP25 was supposed to be organized by Brazil but the then newly elected President Bolsonaro declined to host it. Then the chance went to Chile. Due to emerging civil unrest in Chile, the venue of COP25 was shifted to Madrid, Spain just before one month.

The main objective of COP25 was to finalize the operating rules for the 2015 Paris Agreement which was expected to come into force from January 1, 2020. Most of the rules were agreed at COP24 in Poland in 2018. The key remaining issues to be resolved were the rules governing *carbon markets and international cooperation*, under Article 6 of Paris Agreement.

At COP25, apart from official negotiations, there were possibilities for the NGOs to organize and to attend many parallel events. The themes of these events were related to climate change, the land rights of indigenous peoples, women and resilience to climate change, urban planning, cities and humanizing and resilient settlements, migration and climate change, Children and young people and climate change: the future of the Earth etc. As we can see, everything linked and inside the 2030 Agenda framework.

The Summit was supposed to be over on the December 13<sup>th</sup> but got prolonged till the 15<sup>th</sup>. As per the report by the Claretian representative in COP25, on the last day the G20 countries, especially the US, Brazil, Australia and Saudi Arabia, and major oil, gas and coal companies were undermining the climate ambition and were blocking the progress. For Chile impact of climate change on the oceans was very important. In fact Chile has 4000 miles of sea coast; the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had brought out report on the impacts of climate change on the ocean. Because of such significance of ocean, the COP25 was nick named as *Blue COP*. The draft of COP25 *Time for Action* had two paragraphs on the Oceans. The representative of Brazil, who took the floor from Carolina Schmidt, President of COP25 cum Minister of Environment of Chile, insisted to remove these two paragraphs, just during the last session. But a multitude of European, American and Island countries opposed the removal. Brazil insisted on removing the ocean related paragraphs perhaps because the Brazilian Petroleum Corporation *Petrobras* does oil extractions in the marine continental shelf.

The increase in CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere and the consequent increase in Earth's temperature began with the Industrial Revolution and this revolution began in Europe and the US. These countries of the planet have a special responsibility but most of the time they obstruct the climate action.

#### *Frustration:*

At the close of COP25 there is overall frustration on its achievements. On December 6<sup>th</sup> there was a huge protest by around 200,000 climate activists in Madrid. Some 100 demonstrators staged a protest, on December 11<sup>th</sup>, while the sessions were on, calling on leaders to act on climate change. UN secretary general António Guterres said that he was disappointed with the results of COP25. There is a yawning gap between the current progress made by the countries to check climate change and global goals to limit warming below 2°C. In the COP25:

- No agreement could be reached on the rules governing international carbon markets (Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement Art. 6). It is to be noted that the NGOs are not in favor of carbon trade since it can lead to human right violations like the dislocation of people by hydropower projects; also, the reduction of carbon in one zone, example DRC cannot be solution for the CO<sub>2</sub> emission by USA. The Catholic organizations at COP25 were campaigning that the protection of human rights should go in hand with the climate actions.
- The Koronivia joint work on agriculture that deals on the vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and food security did not receive attention and so it is postponed to COP26.
- The discussions on the finance for Loss and damage could not be concluded. Loss and Damage refer to the inevitable consequences of human-caused climate change on the many of the nations.

#### *Accomplishments:*

Despite the frustrations there had been many progress in COP25:

- The rich countries had promised to provide to Climate finance \$100bn by 2020.
- It is recommended that the climate change has to be brought into the mainstream decision-making about economic and financial policies.
- Decision was made to have second periodic review in 2020-2022 on the long-term goals of limiting the warming to well-below 2°C.
- A five-year Gender Action Plan (GAP), intended to support the implementation of gender-related decisions was reached (Chile Madrid Time for Action 17).
- Decision was reached to the creation of decent work and quality jobs and the protection of indigenous people while working on the transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy projects (Chile Madrid Time for Action 16).
- It was resolved to convene a dialogue by June 2020 on the ocean and climate change (Chile Madrid Time for Action 31).

- The [European Green Deal](#) was approved which aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with resource-efficient and competitive economy where there is no net GHG emission by 2050.
- The [Latin American Energy Organization \(OLADE\)](#) announced to reach at least 70% renewable energy in electricity in by 2030.
- The finance ministers of 51 countries, created [Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action](#) committing themselves to introduce environmental policies in the Budgets and also to fix the price of CO2 emissions.
- 73 Parties to the UNFCCC, 14 regions, 398 cities, 786 businesses and 16 investors created [Alliance for Climate Action](#) with the commitment to achieve net-zero CO2 emissions by 2050.

*The transition to Glasgow:*

COP25 is not over, but continues. COP26 is expected to take place from November 9-19, 2020, in Glasgow, UK, where we need to achieve the objectives not achieved in Chile/ Madrid:

- The GHG emissions has to be cut at least 7% every year; financing facilities for climate need to be established.
- Rules for carbon market with human right and ethical components have to be framed.
- We need to [follow the updates of COP26](#).
- Personally, we need to reduce the carbon foot print while waiting for the policy makers to decide.
- If there would be national elections, then we need to vote for parties that promise to address climate change.
- We can write to our governments to address climate problems.
- We need to bear in mind and plan the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its slogan of *Transform the world, leaving no one behind*.

*It is Better Not Fast Alone, but Far Together.*

Note: This article is prepared based on the report by Fr. Miguel Ángel Velasco, CMF ([mavelascol@gmail.com](mailto:mavelascol@gmail.com)), member of UN CMF Team).

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