

The United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change and the
Least Developed Countries Group
An Introduction

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Brianna Craft
and
Achala C. Abeyesinghe

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About the authors:

Brianna Craft is a consultant to the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)'s Climate Change Group, which works to strengthen the position of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in international climate negotiations.

Achala C. Abeyasinghe is a senior researcher in IIED's Climate Change Group and serves as a legal adviser to the current LDC Chair in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations.

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Table of Contents

I. CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS: INTRODUCTION	1
The Convention, its Ultimate Objective and Key Provisions	1
The Kyoto Protocol	3
II. THE UNFCCC NEGOTIATIONS: CURRENT ISSUES	4
Mitigation	4
Adaptation	4
Finance	4
Technology Development and Transfer	4
Capacity-Building	4
Loss and Damage	5
III. Key UNFCCC Decisions	5
Bali Roadmap	5
Copenhagen Accord	5
Cancun Agreements	5
Durban Platform	6
Doha Climate Gateway	6
IV. COP 19/CMP 9 IN WARSAW	6
V. THE BODIES OF THE UNFCCC	7
Conference of the Parties (COP)	7
Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP)	7
Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)	8
Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI)	8
Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP)	8
Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA)	8
Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP)	8
Bureau of the COP and the CMP:	8
Technology Executive Committee (TEC)	8
Adaptation Committee	9
Standing Committee	9
Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)	9
Secretariat	9
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	9
Green Climate Fund (GCF)	9
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	9
VI. LDCS IN THE UNFCCC	10
SOURCES	12

I. CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS: INTRODUCTION

The international political response to climate change began in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Over twenty years ago, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development concluded with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Gupta 2010). The UNFCCC, or simply ‘the Convention’, entered into force in March 1994. Currently 195 States are party to its statutes.

Since the Convention’s entry into force, its supreme decision-making body has met annually, beginning in 1995. These meetings were given the title: the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 1), the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 2), etc. At the end of 2005, in addition to COP 11, the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 1) took place in Montreal (IISD 2012). Thus, from 2005 to the present, the annual meetings have adopted the title ‘COP 11/CMP 1’, ‘COP 12/CMP 2’, etc. The Convention’s upcoming conference in Warsaw will serve as the nineteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP 19/CMP 9).

Over the course of the UNFCCC, its Parties have established several bodies for long-term action and adopted decisions that continue to shape the international effort to combat climate change. The remainder of Section I introduces the Convention’s ultimate objective and key principles, as well as its primary protocols and accords. The current issues negotiated under the Convention are explored in Section II, and key UNFCCC decisions are outlined in Section III. Section IV outlines the issues to be faced at COP 19/CMP 9 in Warsaw, while Section V lists definitions of the various bodies of the UNFCCC. The paper concludes by offering a brief look at the Convention’s interaction with the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The Convention, its Ultimate Objective and Key Provisions

The ultimate objective of the Convention is to achieve stabilization of the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The Convention goes on to state that this level should be achieved within a timeframe that would allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, ensure food production is not threatened, and enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner (United Nations 1992).

Guiding principles: Article 3 of the Convention provides the guiding principles for achieving its ultimate objective. Some of the key principles introduced by Article 3 are given below.

- 1. Equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC):** According to the Convention, these principles indicate that developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.
- 2. Intergenerational Equity:** The Parties to the Convention should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind.
- 3. Specific needs and special circumstances of developing country Parties:** The Convention recognizes the specific needs and special circumstances of developing country Parties, and that these Parties should be given full consideration.
- 4. Precautionary Principle:** Parties should take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures.

5. **Sustainable Development:** The Parties to the Convention have a right to, and should, promote sustainable development. Policies and measures to protect the climate system against human-induced change should be appropriate for the specific conditions of each Party and should be integrated with national development programmes, taking into account the fact that economic development is essential for the adoption of measures to address climate change.
6. **Principle of Cooperation:** The Parties should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all Parties, particularly developing country Parties, thus enabling them better to address the problems of climate change.

These principles lay the foundation for the work of the UNFCCC, and establish the basis upon which rest the obligations of countries that are party to its statutes.

Central obligations by Parties: The Convention's Article 4 lays out ten commitments that all Parties – given their CBDR-RC and specific national and regional development priorities, objectives, and circumstances – agreed to undertake (United Nations 1992). A brief synopsis of these commitments is given below:

1. The Parties shall develop, periodically update, publish, and make available to the COP national inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources, and removals by sinks, of all greenhouse gases. They shall promote and cooperate in the development, application, diffusion, and transfer of technologies, practices, and processes that control, reduce, or prevent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases. Parties shall also cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and promote research and systematic observation to further the understanding of climate change.
2. Developed country Parties commit themselves to adopting national policies and corresponding climate change mitigation measures that limit anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases and protect and enhance greenhouse gas sinks and reservoirs.
3. Developed country Parties shall provide new and additional financial resources to meet the agreed full costs incurred by developing country Parties in complying with their obligations to communicate the measures of implementation to the COP. Developed country Parties shall also provide such financial resources (including for the transfer of technology) as are needed by the developing country Parties to meet the agreed full incremental costs of implementing measures covered by the first commitment of Article 4. The implementation of the developed country funding commitments shall take into account the need for adequacy and predictability in the flow of funds and the importance of appropriate burden-sharing among the developed country Parties.
4. Developed country Parties shall also assist developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of adaptation to those adverse effects.
5. Developed country Parties shall take all practicable steps to promote, facilitate, and finance, as appropriate, the transfer of, or access to, environmentally sound technologies and know-how to other Parties, particularly developing country Parties, to enable them to implement the provisions of the Convention.
6. In the implementation of the second commitment of Article 4, a certain degree of flexibility shall be allowed by the Conference of the Parties to developed country Parties undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, in order to enhance the ability of these Parties to address climate change.

7. The extent to which developing country Parties will effectively implement their commitments under the Convention will depend on the effective implementation by developed country Parties of their commitments under the Convention related to financial resources and transfer of technology. Developing country Parties' implementation of their commitments will also take into account the fact that economic and social development and poverty eradication are their first and overriding priorities.
8. The Parties shall give full consideration to what actions are necessary under the Convention to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing country Parties arising from the adverse effects of climate change and/or the impact of the implementation of response measures. This consideration shall include actions related to funding, insurance, and the transfer of technology, especially for countries consisting of: small islands; low-lying coastal areas; arid and semi-arid areas; forested areas and areas liable to forest decay; areas prone to natural disasters; areas liable to drought and desertification; areas of high urban atmospheric pollution; areas with fragile ecosystems, including mountainous ecosystems; economies highly dependent on income generated from the production, processing, and export of fossil fuels; and those landlocked and in transition to a market economy.
9. The Parties shall take full account of the specific needs and special situations of the least developed countries in their actions with regard to funding and transfer of technology.
10. The Parties shall, in the implementation of the commitments of the Convention, take into consideration the situation of developing country Parties whose economies are vulnerable to the adverse effects of measures intended to alleviate climate change. This notably applies to Parties with economies that are highly dependent on income generated from the production, processing, and export of fossil fuels (United Nations 1992).

These ten commitments form the principal obligations of the Parties to the UNFCCC. Their influence is apparent in the Kyoto protocol and decisions laid down by its Parties over the course of the Convention's twenty-year history.

The Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 2005. The Kyoto Protocol operationalizes the Convention by committing industrialized countries to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions based on the principles of the Convention. Under the Kyoto Protocol, industrialized countries and countries in transition to a market economy, known as Annex B Parties under the Kyoto Protocol, agreed to reduce their overall emissions of six greenhouse gases by an average of 5 per cent below 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012 (the first commitment period), with specific targets varying from country to country. The Kyoto Protocol entered into force in February 2005 and now has 192 Parties.

At COP 11/CMP 1, negotiators decided to establish the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) under Protocol Article 3.9, which mandates consideration of Annex I Parties' further commitments at least seven years before the end of the first commitment period (IISD 2012).

In 2013, Parties agreed to a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, which is further discussed under the Doha Climate Gateway.

II. THE UNFCCC NEGOTIATIONS: CURRENT ISSUES

Mitigation

Mitigation refers to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Under the Convention, developed country Parties address mitigation efforts primarily through their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol and the nationally appropriate mitigation commitments agreed under the Bali Action Plan. Developing country Parties agreed to Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) in the context of sustainable development, supported by technology and enabled by finance and capacity-building in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner – also in Bali. The agreed language requiring both developed and developing countries to undertake mitigation efforts is seen as one of the legacies of the Bali Action Plan, which is further discussed in Section III (Abeysinghe 2013).

Adaptation

Adaptation is the process by which countries, communities, and individuals find and implement ways of adjusting to the consequences of climate change. While Parties address adaptation efforts through several activities, those with a primary mandate for adaptation include: National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Whereas NAPAs provide a process for LDCs to identify and prioritize activities that will assist their urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change, NAPs identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs. In accordance with the Convention's Article 4.9, developed country Parties have agreed to finance the preparation and implementation of NAPAs and the preparation of NAPs (UNFCCC 2013g, UNFCCC 2013h).

Finance

As discussed in the Central Obligations Section regarding Article 4 (Section I), developed country Parties commit to providing financial resources to developing countries, particularly the LDCs, so that they are able to implement the provisions of the Convention. Four main funds exist under the Convention: the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF); the Adaptation Fund (AF); the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF); and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). While the LDCF and the AF fund projects which relate to their names (LDCs and adaptation respectively), the mandates of the SCCF and GCF are more diverse. Parties established the SCCF to finance projects relating to: adaptation; technology transfer and capacity-building; energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry, and waste management; and economic diversification (UNFCCC 2013i). The GCF, however, is intended to be the main fund for global climate change finance in the context of mobilizing US\$100 billion by 2020 as agreed by Parties in Copenhagen in 2009 (UNFCCC 2013).

Technology Development and Transfer

Under Article 4, developed countries Parties committed to taking all practicable steps to promote, facilitate, and finance the transfer of, or access to, environmentally sound technologies and know-how to other Parties (particularly developing country Parties), to enable them to implement the provisions of the Convention. As of COP 16, technology development and transfer is addressed under the Technology Mechanism and its Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN).

Capacity-Building

Under the UNFCCC, capacity refers to the knowledge, tools, public support, scientific expertise, and political know-how necessary to adequately address climate change. Therefore, capacity-building is concerned with enhancing the capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions so that they can

identify, plan, and implement ways of mitigating and adapting to climate change (UNFCCC 2013d). At COP 17, the Parties enacted the Durban Forum on Capacity-Building.

Loss and Damage

Loss and damage refers to the addressing of losses and damages due to unavoidable impacts of climate change beyond adaptation. The COP first established a work programme to consider approaches to address loss and damage as part of the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010 (UNFCCC 2013c).

III. Key UNFCCC Decisions

Bali Roadmap

In 2007, Bali's COP 13/CMP 3 resulted in agreement on the Bali Roadmap on long-term issues. COP 13 adopted the Bali Action Plan (which is included in the Bali Roadmap) and established the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) with a mandate to focus on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, and a shared vision for long-term cooperative action (IISD 2012). Negotiations on Annex I Parties' further commitments on mitigation continued under the AWG-KP. The COP set the COP 15/CMP 5 (scheduled for Copenhagen in 2009) as the deadline for concluding the two-track negotiations. In preparation, both the AWG-KP and the AWG-LCA held several negotiating sessions in 2008 and 2009.

Copenhagen Accord

The UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark (COP 15/CMP 5) took place in December 2009. While Parties agreed on the Copenhagen Accord at COP 15, rather than adopting the document, Parties simply 'took note' of it. In 2010, over 140 countries indicated support for the Accord, while more than 80 countries also provided information on their national mitigation targets or actions (IISD 2012). Parties also agreed to extend the mandates of the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP until COP 16/CMP 6.

Cancun Agreements

The Cancun Agreements are a set of decisions adopted at COP 16/CMP 6. Decision 1/CP.16 recognized the need for deep cuts in global emissions in order to limit the global average temperature rise to 2°C. Parties also agreed to keep the global long-term goal under regular review and to consider strengthening it during a review (by 2015) which would include consideration of a proposed 1.5°C target. Decision 1/CP.16 also addressed other aspects of mitigation, such as measuring, reporting, and verification (MRV); reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+).

The Cancun Agreements also established several new institutions and processes, such as the Cancun Adaptation Framework and the Adaptation Committee (AC), as well as the Technology Mechanism, which includes the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN). The Agreements also created the Green Climate Fund (GCF), designated as a new operating entity of the Convention's Financial Mechanism and governed by a Board of 24 members. Parties also agreed to set up a Transitional Committee tasked with the Fund's detailed design, and established a Standing Committee (SC) to assist the COP with respect to the Financial Mechanism. They also recognized the commitment by developed countries to provide US\$30 billion of fast-start finance in 2010–12, and to jointly mobilize US\$100 billion per year by 2020 (IISD 2012).

Durban Platform

Parties agreed to the Durban Platform at COP 17/CMP 7, which took place from 28 November to 11 December 2011 in Durban, South Africa. At this meeting, Parties agreed to launch the new Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP). The ADP has a mandate ‘to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties’ (UNFCCC 2012:2). The new negotiating process, which began in May 2012, is scheduled to end by 2015. The outcome is mandated for adoption at COP 21 and to come into effect and be implemented from 2020 onwards. Thus, the agreement negotiated under the ADP will form the next international climate regime. Also in Durban, the COP launched a workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition, to identify and to explore options for a range of actions that can close the ambition gap, with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties. At the conclusion of COP 17/CMP 7, Parties also agreed to extend the mandates of the AWG-LCA and AWG-KP until COP 18/CMP 8 (IISD 2012).

Doha Climate Gateway

The UN Climate Change Conference in Doha, Qatar (COP 18/CMP 8) took place from 26 November to 8 December 2012. Negotiations in Doha focused on ensuring the implementation of agreements reached at previous conferences. The ‘Doha Climate Gateway’ package included amendments to the Kyoto Protocol to establish its second commitment period. According to the adopted decisions, Parties agreed to reduce their overall emissions of greenhouse gases by an average of 18 per cent below 1990 levels between 2013 and 2020 (the second commitment period).

In Doha, Parties also agreed to terminate the AWG-KP, the AWG-LCA, and negotiations under the Bali Action Plan. Key elements of the Doha outcomes also included agreement to consider loss and damage, ‘such as’ an institutional mechanism to address loss and damage in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (IISD 2012).

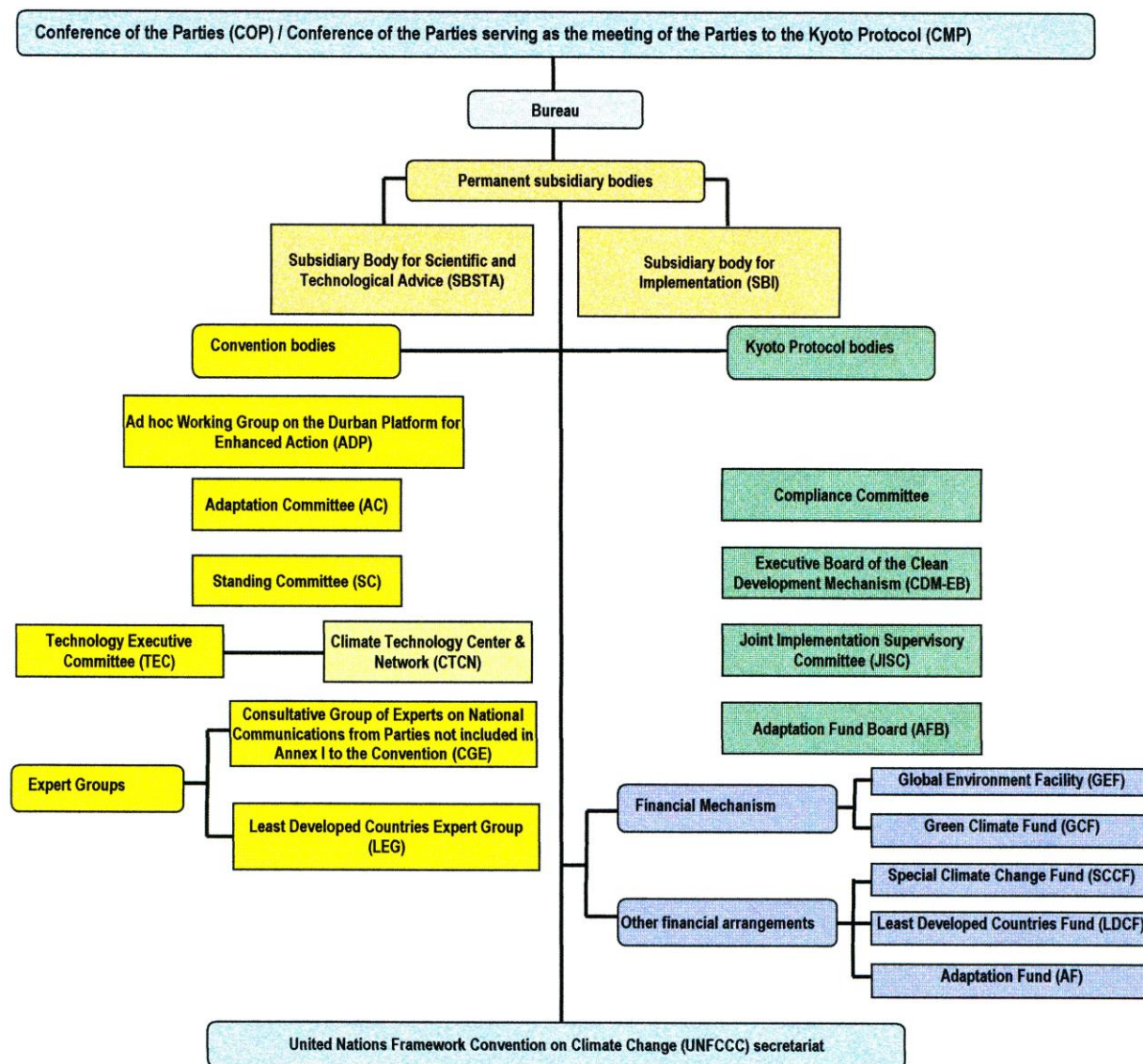
IV. COP 19/CMP 9 IN WARSAW

The next COP (COP 19/CMP 9) will take place in Warsaw, Poland from 11 to 22 November 2013. Over the course of these two weeks, the five bodies of the Convention – the COP, the CMP, SBSTA (Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice), SBI (Subsidiary Body for Implementation), and ADP – will meet. Parties will negotiate, among other things, NAMAs, NAPs, the AF, the TEC, Capacity-Building, issues related to agriculture, and the 2013–15 Review. For developing countries, the most crucial areas of negotiations include loss and damage and financial commitments to both mitigation and adaptation.

Under the ADP, discussions will continue under two workstreams. Workstream 1 will address matters related to paragraphs 2–6 of decision 1/CP.17, which concerns the 2015 agreement, while workstream 2 will address matters related to paragraphs 7 and 8 of decision 1/CP.17, which concerns pre-2020 mitigation ambition.

V. THE BODIES OF THE UNFCCC

Figure I: Bodies of the UNFCCC



Source: UNFCCC 2013

Conference of the Parties (COP): The COP is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention wherein all States that are Party to the Convention are represented. At the COP, Parties review the implementation of the Convention, and any other legal instruments that the COP adopts, and take decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention, including institutional and administrative arrangements (UNFCCC 2013). Since the COP's first meeting in 1995 (COP 1), the body has met annually in locations around the world.

Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP): In 2005 at COP 11, the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 1) took place in Montreal (IISD 2012). Since this meeting, the

COP has also served as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP). Thus the annual COPs – such the aforementioned meeting in 2005 – are known as COP 11/CMP 1, COP 12/CMP 2, etc. All states that are party to the Kyoto Protocol are represented at the CMP, while states that are not party to it participate as observers. The CMP’s purpose is to review the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and it takes decisions to promote its effective implementation (UNFCCC 2013).

Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA): The SBSTA is one of two permanent subsidiary bodies to the Convention, established by the COP and the CMP. The SBSTA supports the work of the COP and the CMP through the provision of timely information and advice on scientific and technological matters as they relate to the Convention or its Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC 2013).

Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI): The SBI is the other permanent subsidiary body to the Convention established by the COP and the CMP. The SBI supports the work of the COP and the CMP through the assessment and review of the effective implementation of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC 2013). The SBI and SBSTA have traditionally met in parallel, at least twice a year. When they are not meeting in conjunction with the COP, the subsidiary bodies usually convene at the home of the UNFCCC Secretariat, in Bonn, Germany (UNFCCC 2013a).

Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP): At COP 11/CMP 1, negotiators established the AWG-KP under Protocol Article 3.9, which mandates consideration of Annex I Parties’ further commitments at least seven years before the end of the first commitment period (IISD 2012). By adopting the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol the CMP, at its eighth session, decided that the AWG-KP had fulfilled the mandate set out in decision 1/CMP.1 (UNFCCC 2013). This decision concluded the work of the AWG-KP.

Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA): The AWG-LCA was established as a subsidiary body under the Convention by decision 1/CP.13 of the Bali Action Plan. The AWG-LCA’s primary purpose was to conduct a comprehensive process to enable the full, effective, and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome to be presented to the COP for adoption. The COP, at its eighteenth session, adopted the agreed outcome pursuant to the Bali Action Plan and noted that this decision, together with decisions adopted at COP 16 and COP 17, constituted the agreed outcome pursuant to decision 1/CP.13 (UNFCCC 2013). Taken together, these decisions concluded the work of the AWG-LCA.

Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP): Established by decision 1/CP.17 in December 2011, the ADP is a subsidiary body whose mandate is to develop a protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties. The protocol, legal instrument, or agreed outcome is to be completed no later than 2015 in order for it to be adopted at COP 21 and to come into effect and be implemented from 2020. By the same decision, the COP launched a workplan on enhancing mitigation ambitions, to identify and explore options for a range of actions that can close the ambition gap with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation efforts by all Parties (UNFCCC 2013).

Bureau of the COP and the CMP: The Bureau is elected from representatives of Parties nominated by each of the five United Nations regional groups and small island developing States. The Bureau supports the COP and the CMP by providing advice and guidance regarding the ongoing work under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, the organization of their sessions, and the operation of the Secretariat, especially at times when the COP and the CMP are not in session (UNFCCC 2013).

Technology Executive Committee (TEC): Established at COP 16 in decision 1/CP.16, the TEC, together with the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), and consistent with their respective

functions, is mandated to facilitate the effective implementation of the Technology Mechanism under the guidance of the COP (UNFCCC 2013).

Adaptation Committee: The Adaptation Committee was established at COP 16 as part of the Cancun Agreements through decision 1/CP.16. The Adaptation Committee promotes the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention, inter alia, through various functions. Its work was launched at COP 17 (UNFCCC 2013).

Standing Committee: The Standing Committee's mandate is to assist the COP in exercising its functions with respect to the Financial Mechanism of the Convention. The Standing Committee works to improve coherence and coordination in the delivery of climate change financing; rationalize the financial mechanism; mobilize financial resources; and measure, report and verify support provided to developing country Parties. Established at COP 16 by decision 1/CP.16, its roles and functions were further defined and its composition and working modalities elaborated at COP 17 (UNFCCC 2013).

Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG): Established by the COP in 2001, the LEG meets twice a year to support the LDCs through a variety of modalities. These include: training workshops; the development of guides, tools, technical papers, publications, and databases; and reviewing draft National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) upon request (UNFCCC 2013b). The LEG is requested by the COP to provide technical support and advice to the LDCs concerning the NAPAs and the LDC work programme. The LEG is also meant to provide technical guidance and support to the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process (UNFCCC 2013).

Secretariat: The UNFCCC Secretariat provides organizational support and technical expertise to the UNFCCC negotiations and institutions. The Secretariat also facilitates the flow of authoritative information on the implementation of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, including the development and effective implementation of innovative approaches to mitigate climate change and drive sustainable development (UNFCCC 2013).

Global Environment Facility (GEF): The GEF is an operational entity of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention that provides financial support to the activities and projects of developing country Parties. The COP regularly provides guidance to the GEF (UNFCCC 2013).

Green Climate Fund (GCF): The GCF is an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention that is accountable to, and functions under, the guidance of the COP. The GCF was established at COP 16 by decision 1/CP.16, designed throughout 2011 by a Transitional Committee, and launched at COP 17 through decision 3/CP.17. A Board comprising 24 members, with equal numbers from developed and developing country Parties, will govern the GCF. The GCF is intended to be the main fund for global climate change finance in the context of mobilizing US\$100 billion by 2020 (UNFCCC 2013).

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): The IPCC is a scientific body. It reviews and assesses, at regular intervals, the most recent scientific, technical, and socioeconomic information produced worldwide, relevant to the understanding of climate change. It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate-related data or parameters. The COP receives the outputs of the IPCC and uses IPCC data and information as a baseline on the state of climate change knowledge when making science-based decisions. For example, the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC, which is due in 2014, will provide input into the COP review of the long-term temperature goal and the work of the ADP (UNFCCC 2013).

VI. LDCS IN THE UNFCCC

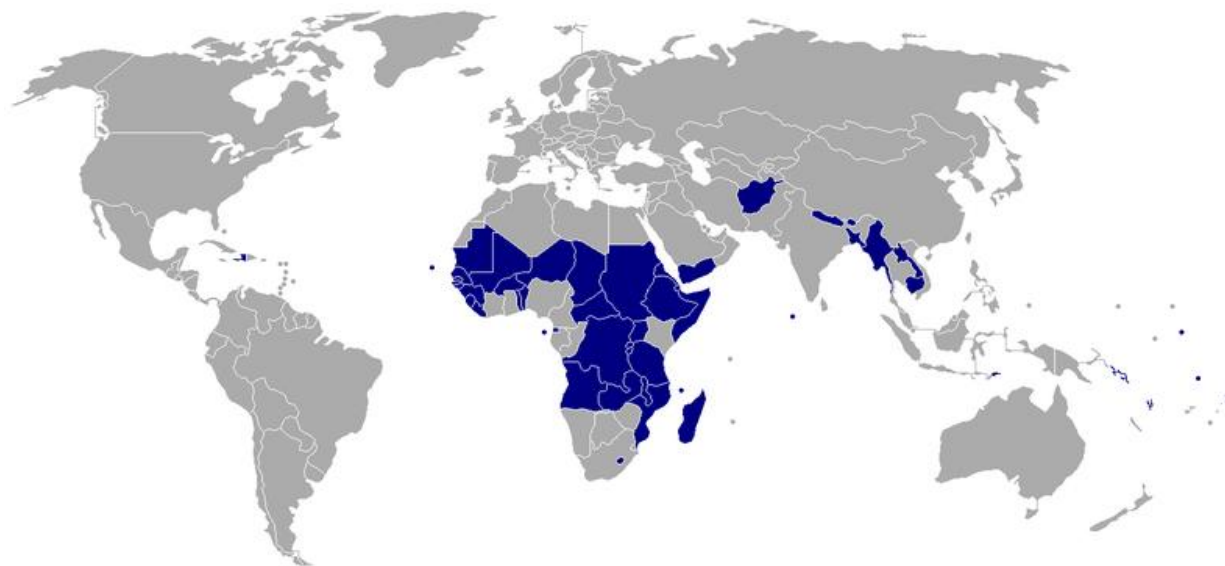
In the context of the UNFCCC, a nation must meet three criteria to be recognized as an LDC. First, the country must have a low income consisting of a three-year average per capita gross national income of under US\$750. Second, the UNFCCC indicates that LDCs possess weak human assets – meaning that their combined Human Assets Index (which is based on indicators of: nutrition, health, education, and adult literacy) is low. Finally, a country must have high economic vulnerability – quantified with reference to a combined Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI). The EVI is based on: the instability of agricultural production, the instability of exports of goods and services, the economic importance of non-traditional activities, the concentration of merchandise exports, the handicap of small economic size, and the percentage of population displaced by natural disasters (UNFCCC 2013f).

Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Kiribati, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Timor Leste, Togo, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen, and Zambia.

Box 1: The 49 nation bloc of LDCs in the UNFCCC

Under the UNFCCC, the LDCs function as a negotiating bloc; this currently represents 49 nations (see Box 1) and its chairmanship rotates on a two-year cycle by region. Thirty-four countries in the bloc are African nations, nine are Asian, Haiti is the sole LDC in the Caribbean, and five are islands of the South Pacific. A map showing the LDCs’ geographic location is given below in Figure 2 (LDCs are shaded in the darker colour).

Figure 2: Map of the LCDs



Source: Wikimedia Commons 2013

The text of the UNFCCC clearly acknowledges the specific needs of the LDCs. In addition to the Convention's principle which recognizes the needs of developing country Parties, its Article 4.9 states that Parties shall take full account of the specific needs and special situations of the LDCs in their actions with regard to funding and transfer of technology (United Nations 1992). Throughout the history of the UNFCCC, its Parties have initiated a number of programmes intended to address the needs of the LDCs. In 2001, Parties established the LDC Work Programme (Decision 5/CP.7); among other objectives, its aims were:

- Strengthening existing and, where needed, establishing, national climate change secretariats and/or focal points to enable the effective implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, in the LDC Parties;
- Providing training, on an ongoing basis, in negotiating skills and language, where needed, to develop the capacity of negotiators from the LDCs to participate effectively in the climate change process;
- Supporting the preparation of NAPAs;
- Promoting public awareness programmes to ensure the dissemination of information on climate change issues;
- The development and transfer of technologies, particularly adaptation technology (in accordance with decision 4/CP.7);
- Strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services to collect, analyse, interpret, and disseminate weather and climate information to support implementation of NAPAs;

In addition, in 2001, Parties adopted four other major decisions of significance to LDCs:

- Decision 2/CP.7: Capacity building in developing countries (non-Annex I Parties);
- Decision 27/CP.7: Guidance to an entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanism of the Convention, for the operation of the Least Developed Countries fund;
- Decision 28/CP.7: Guidelines for the preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of action;
- Decision 29/CP.7: Establishment of a Least Developed Countries Expert Group.

Since then, Parties have adopted a number of key decisions to support the LDCs:

- Decision 8/CP.8: Guidance for the operation of the LDCF;
- Decision 3/CP.11: Further guidance for the operation of the LDCF;
- Decision 5/CP.14: Further guidance for the operation of the LDCF;
- Decision 6/CP.16: Extension of the mandate of the LEG;
- Decision 5/CP.16: Further guidance for the operation of the LDCF;
- Decision 9/CP.17: The Financial mechanism of the Convention: the LDCF. Support for the implementation of elements of the LDC work programme other than NAPA;
- Decision 12/CP.18: Further guidance for the operation of the LDCF.

The LDCF, NAPAs, and NAPs continue to represent issues of importance to the LDCs in the current UNFCCC negotiations. The LDCF continues to support activities – which include the formulation and implementation of NAPAs and the preparation of NAPs – intended to aid the LDCs. Whereas NAPAs provide a process for LDCs to identify and prioritize activities that will assist their urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change, NAPs identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs. In accordance with the Convention's Article 4.9, developed country Parties have agreed to finance the preparation and implementation of NAPAs and the preparation of NAPs through the LDCF (UNFCCC 2013g, UNFCCC 2013h). As such, LDC delegates continue to demand that developed country Parties make financial contributions to the fund, and that the GEF uses the existing funds in the LDCF to meet the full cost of

implementing NAPAs (Abeysinghe 2013). It was also decided that some of the funds in the LDCF be used in the preparation of LDC NAPAs.

The LDC Group operates through its coordinators and core team members, under the leadership of Nepal (2013–2014). The Group will meet for its preparatory meetings in Warsaw, prior to COP 19/CMP 9.

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