



Road to COP21

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Introduction

In September 2014 United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon convened a Climate Summit with the aim of changing the dynamic of climate change negotiations. Under the overall theme of *Catalysing Action*, the Summit involved a broad variety of stakeholders, all of them invited to come to New York with commitments to undertake transformative action. The hope was that a bottom-up push to the negotiations would inspire countries to meet their goal of reaching an ambitious global agreement by 2015. The Summit provided a visible, public platform for leaders at the highest level—all UN Member States, as well as finance, business, civil society and local leaders from public and private sectors—to mobilise political will and catalyse action that would reduce emissions and strengthen climate resilience, limiting the world to a less than two-degree Celsius rise in global temperature.

An important outcome of the Summit was the so-called Action Agenda. Eight areas were covered: agriculture, cities, energy, financing, forests, industry, resilience, and transportation. The Energy Action Area had two components, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The Action Agenda consisted of cooperative initiatives from governmental and non-governmental actors such as international organizations, businesses, NGOs, and indigenous peoples, and individual commitments by local and regional governments and businesses. The intention in creating the Action Agenda was to raise the ambition of all countries by offering them elements of a low-carbon development strategy and visible proof that change was not only possible but had many benefits. The Agenda aimed to send a signal that a broad coalition of state and non-state actors was working on a common goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resilience to climate change. By highlighting the economic opportunities of climate change mitigation in all countries—regardless of their level of development—the Action Agenda aimed to inspire and motivate others to take action.

Within the energy Action Area three renewable energy initiatives were announced at the Summit, the Africa Clean Energy Corridor, the Global Geothermal Alliance, and the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative.

The Africa Clean Energy Corridor (ACEC) aims to promote the accelerated deployment of renewable energy in the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa power pools. Its partners consist of governments, regional bodies, United Nations agencies, international financial institutions, private sector entities, and the International Renewable Energy Agency. The ACEC aims to achieve an optimal development of renewable energy resources and cross-border trade of renewable power along a stretch of land extending from Egypt to South Africa. The goal is to have half of all electricity produced from clean, indigenous, cost-effective renewable power options by 2030.

The Global Geothermal Alliance offers a platform for a more effective communication and customised support to identify opportunities and support the scale-up of geothermal capacity in developing countries. The Alliance brings together all stakeholders in geothermal development including

governments, international financing institutions, private sector investors and other practitioners to cooperate in the areas of geothermal development, such as: resource assessment, enabling frameworks for investment, supportive policies to attract private investors, benchmarking of financing schemes, innovative financing and risk mitigation mechanisms, and capacity building.

The SIDS Lighthouses Initiative provides a framework for action aimed at the deployment of renewables in island states, enabling their energy system transformation in a holistic approach that considers elements ranging from policy and market frameworks, through technology options to capacity building.

The Lima-Paris Action Agenda

Commitments made in the Climate Summit's various Action Areas became a motivating and inspiring way of building momentum for a strong climate agreement. Hence the approach was reinforced and expanded during COP20 in Lima.

The Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA) is a joint undertaking of the Peruvian and French COP presidencies, the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the UNFCCC Secretariat. Like its predecessor, it too aims to strengthen climate action by mobilising robust global action towards building low carbon and resilient societies and providing support to existing initiatives, such as those launched during the Climate Summit. In this sense it is a direct descendent of the Climate Summit. The LPAA is mobilising new partners and providing visibility for their actions, commitments and results in the run up to COP21.

Initiatives in the “Agenda of Solutions” as the LPAA is also known should:

- Take a multi-stakeholder approach and involve various partners from all countries around a shared vision and targets
- Seek profound change, in accordance with the issues facing their sector or area of action, and be based on a scientific approach to the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets
- Seek and foster co-benefits of climate action, in terms of poverty reduction and sustainable development targets
- Build a tangible, credible action plan, along with clear targets in figures to be reached by 2020, 2030 and 2050
- Establish a governance framework that can sustain the initiative into the long term, and
- Demonstrate transparency and report on their achievements and progress.

The various commitments that constitute the LPAA are captured on a website launched by the Peruvian Presidency at COP20. The site--called NAZCA and maintained by the UNFCCC secretariat--showcases commitments to action made by companies, cities, subnational regions, and investors.

Commitments are categorised into Cooperative Initiatives, and those undertaken by Cities (402 commitments in total to date), Regions (78 commitments), Companies (660 commitments), and Investors (180 commitments), making a total of 2763 commitments to action.

Two cooperative initiatives in the renewable energy area have attracted 49 participants. Members of the first, called *RE100*, have committed to putting in place a strategy to procure 100 percent of their electricity from renewable sources. Its 18 members include investors such as Commerzbank AG and

Swiss RE, and companies such as Ikea, BT Group, and Unilever. The second cooperative initiative has attracted 30 cities, one investor, and 85 individual organizations. Members of the *Divest-Invest Global Movement* are committed to moving assets into clean energy investments, ensuring that a minimum of 5 percent of their investment portfolios are made up of renewable and clean technology.

As of 1 June 2015 there are 591 individual actions in the renewable energy area. A few examples show the range of renewable energy-related commitments. The city of Malmö, Sweden has set a target for 100% renewable energy in government operations by 2020 and 100% renewable energy at the community level by 2030.¹

Tata Consultancy Services, India has committed to reduce the emissions intensity of its operations by 50% per employee by 2020 through onsite renewable energy generation and energy efficiency projects. Tokyo, Japan has committed to meet 20% of city-wide energy demand through renewable energy sources by 2020.

During COP21, the four custodians of the LPAA will convene a High Level Meeting on Climate Action—the “Action Day”—that will share the objectives and achievements of initiatives and inspire additional commitments by business and political leaders. Action Day aims to “capture the magnitude of the mobilization, the credibility of corresponding commitments” and help with implementation of the new climate agreement beyond 2015.

The LPAA captures only those commitments formally registered with one of the initiative’s data partners.² Not listed, for example, is Global 100% RE, a campaign launched two years ago by NGOs, global renewable energy associations, and scientific organisations, which suggests that new investment should from now on only be based on renewable energy thus ensuring that the switch to 100% renewable energy can be achieved within the next investment cycle. Whether part of the LPAA or outside its structure, giving prominence and visibility to commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have proved to be a powerful way to motivate all segments of society, ranging from governments to business to a variety of civil society organisations. Renewable energy commitments have featured prominently in the Climate Summit’s Action Areas and the Lima-Paris Action Agenda. Undoubtedly this reflects the growing enthusiasm for renewable energy and the expanding experience base in its deployment. In some ways, success breeds success, and real world evidence of the multiple benefits of renewable energy is proving to be a powerful motivating factor.

¹ carbonn Climate Registry (cCR):

http://carbonn.org/data/report/commitments/?tx_datareport_pi1%5Buid%5D=308

² These are: the Carbon Disclosure Project, the Carbonn Climate Registry, the Climate Group, and Investors on Climate Change.

Challenge Questions

1. Some commenters have voiced fears that renewable energy commitments by non-state actors reduce the pressure on governments to take action. Is this fear realistic or are commitments inducing governments to move more aggressively by demonstrating what is possible?
2. What can be done to reduce the risks that many disconnected actions to promote renewable energy—the “let a thousand flowers bloom” approach—result in inefficiencies or confusion? What role can REN21 play?
3. Although the renewable solutions agenda contains many commitments these are only a fraction of the renewable energy activities taking place around the world. Is there a place for (and value of) capturing these in the solutions agenda, and if so what is the best way to bring them in? How can actions or decisions taken at SAIREC help do this in a consistent, transparent manner?
4. Double counting of emissions reductions that are claimed by more than one initiative is a distinct possibility. This would give false assurances regarding the degree to which the world is on a stabilisation path. What can be done to avoid this problem?
5. Renewable energy and energy efficiency commitments have so far been put in separate solutions agenda categories; yet there are clear synergies to using renewable energy more efficiently. How might this division be bridged? What can SAIREC do to help bring about a faster and more systematic transition to a low carbon and clean energy system?

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