

## Politics, Policy & Climate Change ~ Durban COP17 Negotiations

We are looking forward to the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP17) meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This meeting will be held in Durban, South Africa, and will seek to further develop the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol. Among the negotiations, (we) participants will seek to codify the goals and proposals outlined at COP15 and COP16. Each of you will represent a key country in the negotiations, situated in a voting bloc. The objective of this activity is to successfully agree to commitments that most closely align with your nation's interests, as situated in your specified voting blocs (below).

You will play the role of that country's high-level climate envoy and negotiator as you work to strategically and diligently achieve the 'best deal' for your country and its constituents. By studying and arguing for your adopted country's perspective and stances in climate negotiations, you will find 'success' in the international negotiations.

Negotiations will take place along two of the many dimensions of the 'Durban Protocol':

- (1) Mitigation – emissions reductions commitments along a negotiated timeline to begin at the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012
- (2) Adaptation – agreements on how to disperse US\$30 billion over the calendar year 2012, as agreed by the 'Climate Green Fund' at COP16; who gets what, when and how?

For the purposes of the role play, I am Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Christiana Figueres. In this role, I will move between in-class caucuses to mediate negotiations and offer short and neutral comments as solicited by you as climate envoys.

On **February 15** each voting bloc will present their 3-minute arguments. First, arguments will open on mitigation. Second, arguments will be heard regarding the 'Climate Green Fund' for adaptation.

On **February 22**, final arguments and negotiations will take place. In these final discussions, two envoys deemed 'lead discussants' will have the opportunity to ask one question or make one statement directed to each voting bloc in the main forum, traversing both elements of the negotiations. These will be limited to 5 minutes total. All members of the voting blocs must help these discussants prepare optimally effective strategies. After these questions/statements, final agreements must be reached on both issues by the parties by the end of class.

A few additional comments from the Executive Secretary:

- while these voting blocs may represent similar mitigation and adaptation interests, it is a mistake to expect that everyone in your voting bloc is your ally; ultimately you have been charged with the remit of getting the 'best deal' for your own country: so trust can be fleeting, ephemeral
- frame your arguments in the strongest terms politically and diplomatically palatable/appropriate
- ordering of arguments will be announced by me on the day of each set of negotiation sessions, **February 15** and **February 22**
- parties to the negotiations may not walk away from negotiations or from an agreement; all envoys must recognize that an agreement must be reached in some form by the inevitable conclusion of negotiations on **February 22**
- "may the goddess of Ixchel inspire you"

## ***THE PATH TO THE 'DURBAN PROTOCOL'***

- (1) In class on **January 18**, each of you will draw the name of a participating country out of the hat; you will briefly caucus with your voting blocs to begin to better understand common interests that may be present within the groupings.
- (2) Between **January 18** and **January 27** you will study up on the positions that your country has taken relative to these aspects of mitigation and adaptation in the UN Conference of Parties negotiations – this will involve looking into how your country representatives have moved through previous negotiations, and what are priorities that they have articulated for the successor climate treaty; you will also develop a one-page fact sheet/position paper for January 27 (I will provide the template of prompts for this on January 20)
- (3) You will bring to class on **January 27** a one-page position paper along these two dimensions, with copies for each member of your voting bloc (also with a copy for me); in class, your group will then take turns briefly sharing the main points and positions that you've identified from each of your countries, also noting intersections between countries in your voting bloc
- (4) Between **January 27** and **February 8**, you will communicate with other members of your voting bloc (before/after class, by email) to start preparing a group strategy for upcoming negotiations;
- (5) In class on **February 8**, you will appoint two lead negotiators to present a 3-minute argumentation on your position on mitigation; you will appoint two other lead negotiators to present a 3-minute argumentation on your position on adaptation
- (6) Between **February 8** and **February 15** you will communicate with other members of your voting bloc to prepare these arguments
- (7) In class on **February 15**, each voting bloc will present their two sets of arguments in 3 minutes each, working to convince the other voting blocs of their position while identifying 'common interests' between groups
- (8) Between **February 15** and **February 22**, voting blocs will be able to negotiate with each other (before class/after class, by email) in order to improve possibilities for one's 'best deal' in the final negotiations
- (9) In class on **February 22**, final negotiations on these two aspects of mitigation and adaptation will take place; two 'lead discussants' (different from the negotiators if possible) will ask one question or make one statement directed to each voting bloc in the main forum; final negotiations will take place and proposals will be brought to a final vote by the end of class
- (10) I will hand out 'confidential peer assessments' that you will each individually (and confidentially) complete and turn in when you take your midterm exam on **February 24**

## ***COUNTRY VOTING BLOCS***

### **European Union**

Denmark  
Netherlands  
Portugal  
Germany  
France  
United Kingdom  
(Spain)

### **African Group**

Kenya  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
Ghana  
(Angola)  
Egypt

### **+ Five**

(South Africa)  
Mexico  
Brazil  
People's Republic of China  
India

### **ALBA** (*Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*)

Venezuela  
Bolivia  
Nicaragua  
Ecuador  
Cuba

### **AOSIS**

Dominican Republic  
Tuvalu  
Malta  
Fiji

### **Group of Eight** (minus EU members)

Canada  
Russia  
Japan  
United States of America

### **Asia/Oceania**

Australia  
South Korea  
Indonesia  
Bangladesh  
(Pakistan)

### **OPEC** (*Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries*)

Saudi Arabia  
Algeria  
Iran  
Nigeria  
(Libya)