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# The Targets of the Copenhagen Accord and the Cancun and Durban Agreements

by Ronaldo Seroa da Motta, Jorge Hargrave and Gustavo Luedemann  
Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA)

**Adopted in 1992**, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—or simply the Convention—today has nearly universal membership, with 195 parties. However, it was only after 1997, when the Kyoto Protocol was approved, that its implementation started. Foreseeing the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, in 2005 the Convention agreed on a new negotiation platform, the Bali Action Plan, which should go beyond the first commitment period.

The aim of the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the Convention (COP 15) in Copenhagen was to conclude the agenda for negotiations under the Bali Action Plan: a shared vision for long-term cooperative action, including a long-term global goal for emissions reductions; enhanced action on mitigation of climate change and adaptation to it; enhanced action on technological development and transfer to support action on mitigation and adaptation; and enhanced action on the provision of financial resources and investment to support these actions.

However, the results achieved at COP 15 were far from reaching these targets; there was no agreement on a document capable of binding all parties. Negotiations reached only the establishment of the Copenhagen Accord, signed by many, but not by all parties, which therefore lacked a legally binding status. As a result, the mandate of the negotiation process was extended to COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico, in 2010.

The main achievements in Cancun were related to improvements and the inclusion of principles, objectives and mitigation goals from the Copenhagen Accord into the Convention text, restoring some confidence in the process and promoting a solid base for the following meeting (COP 17) in Durban, South Africa, in 2011.

Even considering the results of COP 15 and 16 as important steps forward, studies show that the quantitative targets of the Copenhagen Accord and the Cancun agreements, even if implemented in their strictest sense, represent an insufficient reduction in emissions to achieve the global goal of 2°C. On the contrary, current targets not only leave a gap in emissions reductions by 2020 of 5.9 GtCO<sub>2</sub>eq per year but also leave great uncertainties about emissions patterns after 2020. As a complicating factor in the negotiations, the existence of various forms of measurement in the targets and actions submitted to the Accords greatly complicate an evaluation of the compatibility and comparability of mitigation efforts among countries (see Table for country-specific commitments).

At COP 17, in Durban, new steps forward were achieved. The main ones were the agreement on a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and the launch of a negotiation process to develop a legal treaty under the Convention that would include all parties. This meant a renewed political commitment from all parties to pursue new steps to tackle climate change, as well as the restoration of confidence in the multilateral

negotiation process. However, it is important to note that nothing concrete in terms of actions or plans of specific actions was reached. Specific numbers on emissions reduction targets for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol are still to be formally incorporated to the Convention text, and the new legally binding agreement necessary to put the world on a 2°C trajectory is still a political plan.

As a result, a variety of national, regional and local actions with different formats endeavour to gain public acceptance—partnerships between the public and private sectors or agreements of local or regional scope. Thus, in spite of possible advances in the next COPs, the world's economic leaders may engage in a market strategy within a new competitive 'green growth paradigm'. This may result in significant indirect effects for all countries because, market failure will persist, and existing regulatory incentives may not be sufficient to avoid an unwanted increase in global temperature.

## Goals of the Copenhagen Accord in Developed and Developing Countries

Countries (Annex I)	Emissions reduction targets for 2020 (%)	Base year
Australia	5–15	2000
Canada	17	2005
European Union	20–30	1990
Japan	25	1990
Norway	30–40	1990
United States	17	2005
Russia	15–25	1990
Countries (non-Annex I)	Deviation from the trend of emissions projected for 2020 (in %)	
South Korea	30	
Mexico	30	
South Africa	34	
Indonesia	26	
Brazil	36.1 to 38.9	
	Reduction of CO <sub>2</sub> intensity of gross domestic product (GDP) projected for 2020	
China	40–45	
India	20–25	

Source: UNFCCC.

### Reference:

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