

GLOSSARY OF CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

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Table of Contents

TERMINOLOGY	5
ABATEMENT	5
ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED JOINTLY (AIJ)	5
ADAPTATION	5
ADAPTATION FUND	5
ADDITIONALITY	5
ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE	5
AFFORESTATION	6
AMENDMENT	6
ANNEX I PARTIES	6
ANNEX II PARTIES	6
ASSIGNED AMOUNT UNITS	6
AWG-LCA	6
AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON FURTHER COMMITMENTS FOR ANNEX I PARTIES UNDER THE KYOTO PROTOCOL (AWG-KP)	7
BERLIN MANDATE	7
BIOMASS FUELS OR BIOFUELS	7
BILATERAL	7
BUNKER FUELS	7
CAPACITY BUILDING	7
CARBON MARKET	8
CARBON SEQUESTRATION	8
CBD	8
CERTIFIED EMISSION REDUCTIONS (CER)	8
CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM (CDM)	8
EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM	8
CGE (CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF EXPERTS)	9
CHAPEAU	9
CLIMATE CHANGE	9
CLIMATE SYSTEM	9
COALITION	9
COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE	9
COMMON REPORTING FORMAT (CRF)	9
COMPLIANCE	9
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES	10
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES (CMP)	10
CONFERENCE ROOM PAPERS (CRPs)	10
CONTACT GROUP	10
COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION (EIT)	10
DELEGATION	10
DECISION	10
DECLARATION	11
DEFORESTATION	11
DESIGNATED NATIONAL AUTHORITY (DNA)	11
DRAFTING GROUP	11
ECONOMIC GROWTH	11

EMISSIONS	11
EMISSION REDUCTION UNIT (ERU)	11
EMISSIONS TRADING	11
ENTRY INTO FORCE	11
(EGTT) EXPERT GROUP ON TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER	12
EXPOSURE	12
FINANCIAL MECHANISM	12
FRIENDS OF THE CHAIR	12
GATT	12
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF)	12
GLOBAL WARMING POTENTIAL (GWP)	13
GREENHOUSE GASES	13
GOVERNANCE	13
HARD LAW	13
HAZARD	13
HUMAN RIGHTS	13
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW	14
IMPLEMENTATION	14
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)	14
JOINT IMPLEMENTATION (JI)	14
KYOTO PROTOCOL	14
KYOTO PROTOCOL (I) OLD	14
KYOTO PROTOCOL II NEW/POST	15
KYOTO MECHANISMS	15
LAND USE, LAND-USE CHANGE, AND FORESTRY (LULUCF)	15
LEG (LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY EXPERT GROUP	15
LEAKAGE	15
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY FUND (LDCF)	16
MARRAKESH ACCORDS	16
MEETING	16
MITIGATION	16
MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS (MISC. DOCS)	16
MITIGATION	16
MONTREAL PROTOCOL	16
MULTILATERAL	16
NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES OF ACTION (NAPAs)	16
NATIONAL COMMUNICATION	17
NATIONAL DELEGATION	17
NON-ANNEX I PARTIES	17
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)	17
NON-PAPER	17
OBSERVERS	17
PARTY	18
PLENARY	18
PROTOCOL	18
QUANTIFIED EMISSIONS LIMITATION AND REDUCTION COMMITMENTS (QELROS)	18
RADIATIVE FORCING	18
RATIFICATION	18
RECOMMENDATION	18
REFORESTATION	18
REGIONAL GROUPS	19

RESERVOIR	19
RESILIENCE	19
RESOLUTION	19
REVIEW OF COMMITMENTS	19
RIO CONVENTIONS	19
SAFEGUARD	19
SECRETARIAT	20
SINK	20
SOFT LAW	20
SOVEREIGNTY	20
SOURCE	20
SPECIAL CLIMATE CHANGE FUND (SCCF)	20
"SPILL-OVER EFFECTS"	20
SUBSIDIARY BODY	20
SQUARE BRACKETS	21
STAKEHOLDER	21
STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS	21
SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION	21
SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE	21
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	21
TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER	22
THIRD ASSESSMENT REPORT (TAR)	22
TREATY	22
UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCED)	22
UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE	22
VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS	23
VULNERABILITY	23
WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (WSSD)	23
COALITIONS	23
GROUP OF 77	23
THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS)	23
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	24
THE EUROPEAN UNION	24
THE UMBRELLA GROUP	24
THE ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY GROUP	25
OPEC	25
ACRONYMS	26
REFERENCES	27

Terminology

“If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant. If what is said is not what is meant, then what ought to be done remains undone. If this remains undone, then morals and acts deteriorate and justice goes astray. Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said. This matters above everything”

‘Confucius’ in Saunier and Meganck p 14

Abatement

Refers to reducing the degree or intensity of greenhouse-gas emissions (UNFCCC)

Accession

An act whereby a State becomes a Party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other States; has the same legal effect as ratification. (UNFCCC)

Activities implemented jointly (AIJ)

Activities carried out under the Convention to mitigate climate change through partnerships between an investor from a developed country and a counterpart in a host country under a pilot phase that ended in the year 2000. The purpose was to involve private-sector money in the transfer of technology and know-how. See also Joint Implementation (UNFCCC)

Adaptation

Increasing resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change of vulnerable countries, sectors and communities. {{26 The Global Environment Facility; }}

Climate Resilient Development (GEF Adaptation Booklet)

Policies and actions that minimize adverse impacts of climate change (UNFCCC)

Adaptation Fund

The Adaptation Fund was established to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The Fund is to be financed with a share of proceeds from clean development mechanism (CDM) project activities and receive funds from other sources. For more information see: http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/items/3659.php (UNFCCC)

Additionality

An intervention that adds to, rather than replaces, other financial inputs. (DFID)

Adverse effects of climate change

Changes in the physical environment or biota resulting from climate change which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience

or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio-economic systems or on human health and welfare. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Afforestation

Planting of new forests on lands that historically have not contained forests. (UNFCCC)

Allocation

Allocation refers to the distribution of allowances under a cap-and-trade program to specific sources, sectors, and/or non-regulated parties. A law may specify that a certain amount of allowances be given directly to companies in sectors that are covered by the emissions cap, such as electric utilities or oil refineries. Non-regulated parties, such as states, farmers, low-income households, or even research programs, may also receive allowances (commonly referred to as set-asides), with which they can generate revenue by then selling the allowances to regulated sources. (WRI)

Amendment

A modification by the COP to the text of the Convention. If consensus cannot be reached, an amendment must win three-quarters of the votes of all Parties present and casting ballots.

Annex I Parties

The industrialized countries listed in this annex to the Convention which were committed return their greenhouse-gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 as per Article 4.2 (a) and (b). They have also accepted emissions targets for the period 2008-12 as per Article 3 and Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol. They include the 24 original OECD members, the European Union, and 14 countries with economies in transition. (Croatia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and Slovenia joined Annex 1 at COP-3, and the Czech Republic and Slovakia replaced Czechoslovakia.)

Annex II Parties

The countries listed in Annex II to the Convention which have a special obligation to provide financial resources and facilitate technology transfer to developing countries. Annex II Parties include the 24 original OECD members plus the European Union.

Assigned Amount Units

Carbon credits which can be traded, sold or bought at the discretion of the holder. Parties with commitments under the KP (annex B Parties) have accepted targets for limiting or reducing emissions. These targets are expressed as levels of allowed emissions, over the 2008-2012 commitment period.

A Kyoto Protocol unit equal to 1 metric tonne of CO₂ equivalent. Each Annex I Party issues AAUs up to the level of its assigned amount, established pursuant to Article 3, paragraphs 7 and 8, of the Kyoto Protocol. Assigned amount units may be exchanged through emissions trading. (UNFCCC)

Auction

An auction is another means of distributing allowances under a cap-and-trade program. With this approach, a regulatory authority conducts periodic auctions and allowances are granted to the highest bidders. Some policy

approaches propose to distribute allowances through a combination of specific allocations and periodic auctions. Depending on the amount of allowances auctioned, this process can generate significant revenues that could go to specific funds or programs, such as those established to mitigate economic impacts to lower-income consumers or help communities adapt to climate changes. (WRI)

AWG-LCA

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC, established under Decision 1/CP.13 as the Bali Action Plan.

The AWG-LCA was established in Bali in 2007 to conduct negotiations on a strengthened international deal on climate change, set to be concluded in Copenhagen in 2009. (UNFCCC)

AWG-KP: Ad hoc Working Group on further commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol

The AWG-KP was established by Parties to the Protocol in Montreal in 2005 to consider further commitments of industrialized countries under the Kyoto Protocol for the period beyond 2012, and is set to complete its work in Copenhagen in 2009. (UNFCCC)

Berlin Mandate

Adopted at COP-1, the mandate that launched negotiations leading to the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol.

Biomass fuels or biofuels

A fuel produced from dry organic matter or combustible oils produced by plants. These fuels are considered renewable as long as the vegetation producing them is maintained or replanted, such as firewood, alcohol fermented from sugar, and combustible oils extracted from soy beans. Their use in place of fossil fuels cuts greenhouse gas emissions because the plants that are the fuel sources capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Bilateral

Describes instruments or processes that reciprocally affect two nations or civil society parties. (MW)

Bunker fuels

A term used to refer to fuels consumed for international marine and air transport.

Cap-and-Trade

A cap-and-trade program is another approach for creating a price for GHG emissions. With this approach, a maximum limit (or cap) is placed on GHG emissions and those sources covered by the law have the opportunity to buy and sell allowances (see below), which represent the right to emit GHGs (the limit on the total amount of available allowances creates a market price for the right to emit GHGs). Under a cap-and-trade program, companies that can cheaply or easily reduce emissions can sell allowances to other companies for which such reductions are more difficult or expensive. With this approach, the effect on total emissions is certain (based on the level of the emissions cap), but the resulting market price is not known in advance. (WRI)

Capacity building

In the context of climate change, the process of developing the technical skills and institutional capability in developing countries and economies in transition to enable them to address effectively the causes and results of climate change.

Carbon market

A popular but misleading term for a trading system through which countries may buy or sell units of greenhouse-gas emissions in an effort to meet their national limits on emissions, either under the Kyoto Protocol or under other agreements, such as that among member states of the European Union. The term comes from the fact that carbon dioxide is the predominant greenhouse gas and other gases are measured in units called "carbon-dioxide equivalents."

Carbon price

Many climate policy proposals focus on market-based options that place a cost on GHG emissions, commonly referred to as a carbon price. The goal is to discourage emissions by placing a cost on releasing GHGs into the atmosphere and making it expensive to emit large amounts of GHGs. (WRI)

Carbon tax

One approach for creating a carbon price is to implement a carbon tax, which would impose a direct fee for GHG emissions (for example, a tax of \$25 per tonne of CO₂e). With this approach the carbon price is certain, but the overall effect on total GHG emissions is not known in advance. (WRI)

Carbon sequestration

The process of removing carbon from the atmosphere and depositing it in a reservoir.

CBD

Convention on Biological Diversity.

Certified emission reductions (CER)

A Kyoto Protocol unit equal to 1 metric tonne of CO₂ equivalent. CERs are issued for emission reductions from CDM project activities. Two special types of CERs called temporary certified emission reduction (tCERs) and long-term certified emission reductions (lCERs) are issued for emission removals from afforestation and reforestation CDM projects.

Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

A mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol through which developed countries may finance greenhouse-gas emission reduction or removal projects in developing countries, and receive credits for doing so which they may apply towards meeting mandatory limits on their own emissions.

Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism

A 10-member panel elected at COP-7 which supervises the CDM and has begun operation in advance of the Protocol's entry into force.

CGE (Consultative Group of Experts)

A Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) on National Communications from "non-Annex 1 Parties" helps developing countries prepare national reports on climate change issues. The activities of the CGE include the examination of national communications of non-Annex I Parties; conducting regional hands-on training workshops on greenhouse gas inventories, vulnerability and adaptation (V and A) assessments and mitigation assessments in the context of the preparation of national communications; and preparation of technical reports to the SBI such as ways to improve access to financial and technical support for the preparation of national communications. (UNFCCC)

Chapeau

An opening paragraph to a statement or declaration used to outline or introduce the topic at hand rather than to directly enter into the discussion.

Climate Change

A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Climate system

The totality of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and geosphere and their interactions. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Coalition

A temporary alliance of distinct Parties, persons or states that is generally established to further joint action on a specific matter. (MW)

Complementary Policy

Complementary policies are regulations or standards that encourage or reinforce GHG emission reductions in certain key sectors. For example, a renewable electricity standard (or RES), which requires electric generators to produce a specified percentage of their electricity from clean, renewable power sources, is a complementary policy that encourages GHG emission reductions in the power sector (or reinforces GHG reductions in this sector if it is covered under a broader GHG reduction policy, such as a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade program). (WRI)

Compliance Committee

A committee that helps facilitate, promote and enforce on compliance with the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol. It has 20 members with representation spread among various regions, small-island developing states, Annex I and non-Annex I parties, and functions through a plenary, a bureau, a facilitative branch and an enforcement branch.

Common Reporting Format (CRF)

Standardized format for reporting estimates of greenhouse-gas emissions and removals and other relevant information by Annex I Parties.

Compliance

Fulfilment by countries/businesses/individuals of emission and reporting commitments under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.

Conference of the Parties

The supreme body of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Its role is to keep under regular review the implementation of the Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt (e.g. the Kyoto protocol), and shall make, within its mandate, the decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention. [See Article 7, UNFCCC] {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties (CMP)

The Convention's supreme body is the COP, which serves as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The sessions of the COP and the CMP are held during the same period to reduce costs and improve coordination between the Convention and the Protocol.

Conference room papers (CRPs)

A category of in-session documents containing new proposals or outcomes of in-session work. CRPs are for use only during the session concerned.

Contact group

An open-ended meeting that may be established by the COP, a subsidiary body or a Committee of the Whole wherein Parties may negotiate before forwarding agreed text to a plenary for formal adoption. Observers generally may attend contact group sessions.

Cost containment mechanism

Cost containment mechanisms are rules, restrictions, or other provisions that limit or otherwise temper the market price of GHG emission allowances to reduce volatility in the market and thus impacts on the economy. Approaches can vary from mechanisms that create an oversight group responsible for evaluating market conditions and adapting the supply of allowances in order to avoid economic distress, to mechanisms that impose a specific price ceiling (also commonly referred to as a safety valve) to ensure that prices for emission allowances do not exceed a certain level. Other options provide additional flexibility that can help lower the carbon price, such as allowing sources to "bank" unused allowances for compliance in future years or allowing some amount of offsets to be used for compliance. (WRI)

Countries with Economies in Transition (EIT)

Those Central and East European countries and former republics of the Soviet Union in transition from state-controlled to market economies.

Delegation

A group representing others, which may include high-level representatives of relevant ministries including foreign affairs, technical experts and, increasingly, NGO representatives; the grant of authority to a person to act on behalf of one or more others for agreed purposes. (UNCED)

Decision

A formal agreement that (unlike a resolution) leads to binding actions. It becomes part of the agreed body of decisions that direct the work of the COP.

Declaration

A non-binding political statement made by ministers attending a major meeting (e.g. the Geneva Ministerial Declaration of COP-2).

Deforestation

Conversion of forest to non-forest.

Designated National Authority (DNA)

An office, ministry, or other official entity appointed by a Party to the Kyoto Protocol to review and give national approval to projects proposed under the Clean Development Mechanism.

Drafting group

A smaller group established by the President or a Chair of a Convention body to meet separately and in private to prepare draft text -- text which must still be formally approved later in a plenary session. Observers generally may not attend drafting group meetings.

Early Action

Early action refers to emission reductions that occur before such reductions are required by law. Some policy approaches provide incentives to encourage early action, such as additional allocation of emission allowances to sources that can demonstrate they reduced emissions before the law came into force. (WRI)

Economic Growth

An increase in a country's total output. It may be measured by the annual rate of increase in a country's gross national product (GNP) or gross domestic product (GDP) as adjusted for price changes. (DFID)

Emissions

The release of greenhouse gases and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Emissions Allowance

An emissions allowance entitles the holder to emit a certain amount of GHGs under a cap-and-trade program. To comply with their obligations under a cap-and-trade program, regulated sources must show that they hold allowances equal to their GHG emissions over a set period of time. (WRI)

Emission reduction unit (ERU)

A Kyoto Protocol unit equal to 1 metric tonne of CO₂ equivalent. ERUs are generated for emission reductions or emission removals from joint implementation project.

Emissions trading

One of the three Kyoto mechanisms, by which an Annex I Party may transfer Kyoto Protocol units to or acquire units from another Annex I Party. An Annex I Party must meet specific eligibility requirements to participate in emissions trading.

Entry into force

Multilateral treaties provide for a fixed number of states to express their consent and/or ratify an agreement, convention or treaty for entry into force.

Other conditions area fixed amount of time elapsed or a given percentage of states falling within a defined category. When these conditions are met a treaty enters into force for those states that gave the required consent. (VC)

(EGTT) Expert Group on Technology Transfer

An Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) seeks to spur the sharing of technology with less-advanced nations. The expert group on technology transfer shall have the objectives of enhancing the implementation of Article 4, paragraph 5, of the Convention and advancing the technology transfer activities under the Convention. The expert group on technology transfer shall analyse and identify ways to facilitate and advance technology transfer activities, including those identified in the annex to the decision 4/CP.7 (Development and transfer of technologies), and make recommendations to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA).

Exposure

People and economic assets become concentrated in areas exposed to severe hazards through processes such as population growth, migration, urbanization and economic development. This process operates over time and risk in these areas therefore becomes more intensive, as more people and assets are exposed. Many hazard prone areas, such as coastlines, attract economic and urban development or offer significant economic benefits. The rich alluvial soils in the regularly flooded river deltas of South Asia support intensive agriculture and the livelihoods of millions of rural households.{{31 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UNISDR) 2009}}

Financial Mechanism

Developed country Parties (Annex II Parties) are required to provide financial resources to assist developing country Parties implement the Convention. To facilitate this, the Convention established a financial mechanism to provide funds to developing country Parties. The Parties to the Convention assigned operation of the financial mechanism to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on an on-going basis, subject to review every four years. The financial mechanism is accountable to the COP.

Friends of the chair

Delegates called upon by the Chair (who takes into account the need for political balance among various interests) to assist in carrying out specific tasks.

GATT

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

The GEF is an independent financial organization that provides grants to developing countries for projects that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities. The Parties to the Convention assigned operation of the financial mechanism to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on an on-going basis, subject to review every four years. The financial mechanism is accountable to the COP. For more information see: <http://www.thegef.org/>.

Global warming potential (GWP)

An index representing the combined effect of the differing times greenhouse gases remain in the atmosphere and their relative effectiveness in absorbing outgoing infrared radiation.

Greenhouse gases

The gaseous constituents of the atmosphere (water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride) both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Governance

Concept describing the way power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources through application of responsibility, participation, information availability, transparency and the rule of law. Governance is not equal to government, which is the art of administration at a given level of power. Rather it is the art of coordinating administration actions between different territorial levels – one of which may be global. 'Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs.'(CGG 1995)

Hard Law

The body of binding enforceable laws (precise, legally binding obligations and appropriate third part delegation). (UNT; BDL)

Hazard

Patterns of geological hazard are mainly determined by the location of seismic fault lines, the presence of active volcanoes or tsunami-exposed coastlines and are relatively static. However, environmental change and urbanization are changing the magnitude, spatial distribution and frequency of floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, landslides and other weather-related hazards. The decline in the regulating services provided by many ecosystems has been observed in the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 7 as a factor that increases flood and drought hazard. In urban areas flooding is often caused by a combination of more intense run-off during heavy rainfall events due to an increase in the built area; inadequate drainage; the disappearance of wetlands that traditionally absorbed and moderated peak flooding; and the encroachment of housing on floodplains. On a global scale, the IPCC has confirmed that climate change is now altering the predictability, intensity and geographical distribution of many weather-related hazards through increased intensity of the water cycle and other effects such as glacial melt and sea level rise.{{31 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UNISDR) 2009}}

Human Rights

The minimum social, economic and political standards that are generally considered acceptable. The advancement of human rights is often thought of as a requirement for human development and/or sustainable development. In that regard, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls for the prohibition of slavery, torture, other cruel and degrading treatment, arbitrary arrest, detention and exile, stating that everyone has a right to life, liberty and security of person. It calls for an end to all forms of discrimination, for fair trials and reasonable punishment, the right of persecuted people to asylum in

other countries, and for freedom of thought, conscience, opinion, expression, association and religion

International Environmental Law

The body of law that concerns the protection of the global environment. There are many legally binding international agreements concerning the protection of the environment, but in this area of international law, 'soft law' is more common. Some basic principles of international environmental law are: the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle, the principle of sustainable development and environmental procedural rights. (WP)

Implementation

Actions (legislation or regulations, judicial decrees, or other actions) that governments take to translate international accords into domestic law and policy.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Programme, the IPCC surveys world-wide scientific and technical literature and publishes assessment reports that are widely recognized as the most credible existing sources of information on climate change. The IPCC also works on methodologies and responds to specific requests from the Convention's subsidiary bodies. The IPCC is independent of the Convention.

Joint implementation (JI)

A mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol through which a developed country can receive "emissions reduction units" when it helps to finance projects that reduce net greenhouse-gas emissions in another developed country (in practice, the recipient state is likely to be a country with an "economy in transition"). An Annex I Party must meet specific eligibility requirements to participate in joint implementation.

Kyoto Protocol

An international agreement linked to the UNFCCC, adopted in Kyoto Japan, 1997, entered into force in 2005. Detailed rules for its implementation were adopted at COP7 in Marrakesh in 2001 (the Marrakesh Accords).

Major feature: sets binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the EC for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (these amount to an average of 5 % against 1990 levels over the five year period 2008-2012).

The main difference between the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, is that the UNFCCC *encourages* industrialized countries to stabilize GHG emissions, whilst the protocol *commits* them to do so. {{25 UNFCCC; }}

The main principle of the Kyoto Protocol is "common but differentiated responsibilities".

In 1997 at COP-3 in Kyoto, Japan, the parties adopted a protocol to the UNFCCC that entered into force in February 2005. The Kyoto Protocol calls for a reduction in GHG emissions by the industrialized nations and the nations with economies in transition (Annex I countries) of at least 5 percent below 1990 levels (and in some cases 1995 levels) in the period 2008-2012.

Kyoto Protocol (I) old

A term first used in mid-2007 at the preparatory meetings for the G8 summit, and, referring to the original 1997 Kyoto Protocol. It was considered to

be 'old', outdated or unworkable because of: (i) the impossibility of some countries accepting the concept of or meeting binding caps/targets or a related timetable; (ii) the fact that several important countries would never ratify the original agreement; and (iii) the exclusion of several large developing country polluters such as China, India and Indonesia, from having to comply with the terms of the protocol. (UNW, UNFCCC)

Kyoto Protocol II new/post

There are two variations of the meaning of this term that emerged in 2007. One refers to the preparatory meetings for the June 2007 G8 Summit and to German chancellor Angela Merkel's call for replacing the original Kyoto Protocol in 2009, prior to its normal expiration date in 2012, with a global agreement that would include major developing countries such as China and India as well as one that would gain the support for the USA. The second interpretation is one that acknowledges that the original Protocol will have to be followed by a new agreement in 2012, but makes no mention of a specific date. Both scenarios support the concept that any new agreement be developed within the institutional context of the UNFCCC and therefore eventually implying some sort of binding caps/targets or verifiable goals. (UNW, Dempsy 2007)

Kyoto mechanisms

Three procedures established under the Kyoto Protocol to increase the flexibility and reduce the costs of making greenhouse-gas emissions cuts; they are the Clean Development Mechanism, Emissions Trading and Joint Implementation.

Land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF)

A greenhouse gas inventory sector that covers emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use, land-use change and forestry activities.

LEG (Least Developed Country Expert Group)

A Least Developed Country Expert Group (LEG) advises such nations on establishing programmes for adapting to climate change. The objective of the least developed country expert group (LEG), established as part of the Marrakesh Accords, is to provide advice to LDCs on the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action. It is composed of 12 experts, including five from African LDC Parties, two from Asian LDC Parties, two from small island LDC Parties, and three from Annex II Parties. In order to ensure linkages between the LDC expert group and the CGE on adaptation issues, at least one member of the LDC expert group from an LDC and one from an Annex II Party are also members of the CGE. The LDC expert group meets twice a year

Leakage

That portion of cuts in greenhouse-gas emissions by developed countries -- countries trying to meet mandatory limits under the Kyoto Protocol -- that may reappear in other countries not bound by such limits. For example, multinational corporations may shift factories from developed countries to developing countries to escape restrictions on emissions.

Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF)

The LDCF is a fund established to support a work programme to assist Least Developed Country Parties to carry out, inter alia, the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). The Global Environment Facility, as the entity that operates the financial mechanism of the Convention, has been entrusted to operate this fund. For more information see: http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/least_developed_country_fund/items/3660.php

Marrakesh Accords

Agreements reached at COP-7 which set various rules for "operating" the more complex provisions of the Kyoto Protocol. Among other things, the accords include details for establishing a greenhouse-gas emissions trading system; implementing and monitoring the Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism; and setting up and operating three funds to support efforts to adapt to climate change.

Meeting

A formal gathering that occurs during a "session." Each session of the COP, for example, is divided into a number of meetings. A meeting is generally scheduled from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. or from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Mitigation

Actions taken during the planning, design, construction and operation of works and undertakings to alleviate the potential adverse effects of those activities on other interests (USEPA)

Miscellaneous documents (misc. docs)

Documents issued on plain paper with no UN masthead. They generally contain views or comments published as received from a delegation without formal editing.

Mitigation

In the context of climate change, a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases. Examples include using fossil fuels more efficiently for industrial processes or electricity generation, switching to solar energy or wind power, improving the insulation of buildings, and expanding forests and other "sinks" to remove greater amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and international agreement adopted in Montreal in 1987.

Multilateral

Negotiations, agreements or treaties that effect or are between three or more parties, countries or other civil society organizations. (MW)

National adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs)

Documents prepared by least developed countries (LDCs) identifying urgent and immediate needs for adapting to climate change. The NAPAs are then presented to the international donor community for support.

National communication

A document submitted in accordance with the Convention (and the Protocol) by which a Party informs other Parties of activities undertaken to address climate change. Most developed countries have now submitted their fourth national communications; most developing countries have completed their first national communication and are in the process of preparing their second.

National delegation

One or more officials empowered to represent and negotiate on behalf of a government.

Non-Annex I Parties

Refers to countries that have ratified or acceded to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that are not included in Annex I of the Convention.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Organizations that are not part of a governmental structure. They include environmental groups, research institutions, business groups, and associations of urban and local governments. Many NGOs attend climate talks as observers. To be accredited to attend meetings under the Convention, NGOs must be non-profit.

Non-paper

An in-session document issued informally to facilitate negotiations. A non-paper does not have an official document symbol. It may have an identifying number or carry the name of its author.

Observers

Agencies, non-governmental organizations, and Governments not Parties to the Convention which are permitted to attend, but not vote, at meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies. Observers may include the United Nations and its specialized agencies; other intergovernmental organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency; and accredited non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Offset

An offset is a reduction in GHG emissions—resulting from a specific activity or set of activities—that compensates for, or “offsets,” GHG emissions occurring elsewhere. Emission reductions that are real, additional, measurable, permanent, and verified can generate offset credits, tradable certificates that can be purchased to help meet voluntary emission reduction goals or, under certain climate policy approaches, to meet mandatory emission reduction requirements. For example, a company seeking to reduce its GHG emissions may wish to purchase offset credits from a project that is capturing methane emissions from a landfill. Similarly, if a company is covered under a mandatory cap-and-trade program, it may choose to purchase offset credits created by a project that reduces GHG emissions at a chemical plant (if the plant is not covered under the cap). Mandatory GHG reduction policies often specify which types of offsets are eligible as well as what portion of required emission reductions can be met by purchasing offsets. (WRI)

Party

A state (or regional economic integration organization such as the European Union) that agrees to be bound by a treaty and for which the treaty has entered into force.

Plenary

A formal meeting of the entire COP or one of its subsidiary bodies. Formal decisions or conclusions may only be taken during plenary sessions.

Point of Regulation

Point of regulation refers to the sectors or sources that must comply with regulations set in place to reduce GHG emissions. Some policy approaches focus on regulating upstream, such as oil refiners or natural gas processors, based on the emissions that are eventually released when the upstream sources' products (e.g., fossil fuels) are used. Other approaches establish the point of regulation downstream, at sources that emit large amounts of GHGs, such as coal-fired power plants or large industrial facilities. Hybrid approaches refer to those policies that regulate some GHG emissions upstream and others downstream, depending on the sector or activity. (WRI)

Protocol

An international agreement linked to an existing convention, but as a separate and additional agreement which must be signed and ratified by the Parties to the convention concerned. Protocols typically strengthen a convention by adding new, more detailed commitments.

Quantified Emissions Limitation and Reduction Commitments (QELROs)

Legally binding targets and timetables under the Kyoto Protocol for the limitation or reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions by developed countries.

Radiative Forcing

Radiative forcing is the flow of radiant energy in the atmosphere. Positive radiative forcing occur when the effect is in the direction of warming Earth's surface. Units – watts per square meter (W/m²)

Ratification

An international act whereby a state, through congressional or parliamentary approval, indicates its consent to be bound to a treaty if the parties intended to show their consent by such an act. (VC)

Formal approval, often by a Parliament or other national legislature, of a convention, protocol, or treaty, enabling a country to become a Party. Ratification is a separate process that occurs after a country has signed an agreement. The instrument of ratification must be deposited with a "depository" (in the case of the Climate Change Convention, the UN Secretary-General) to start the countdown to becoming a Party (in the case of the Convention, the countdown is 90 days).

Recommendation

A formal act of the COP which is weaker than a decision or a resolution, and is not binding on Parties to the Convention.

Reforestation

Replanting of forests on lands that have previously contained forests but that have been converted to some other use.

Regional groups

Alliances of countries, in most cases sharing the same geographic region, which meet privately to discuss issues and nominate bureau members and other officials for activities under the Convention. The five regional groups are Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), and the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG).

Reservoir

A component or components of the climate system where a greenhouse gas or a precursor of a greenhouse gas is stored. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Resilience

This refers to the capacity of people or economies to absorb loss and recover. Poor households often have low resilience to loss due to a lack of savings, reserves or insurance. However social factors such as extended families and community networks increase resilience. Vulnerability is sometimes used in a wider sense to encompass the concept of resilience. Vulnerability and resilience change over time. {{31 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UNISDR) 2009}}

Resolution

Directives that guide the work of the COP -- opinions rather than permanent legal acts. Unlike decisions, resolutions do not generally become part of the formal body of legislation enacted by the COP.

Review of commitments

Regular scrutiny by Convention Parties of the adequacy of the treaty's Article 4.2 (a) and (b) outlining developed country commitments to limit greenhouse-gas emissions. The first review took place at COP-1 and led to a finding that progress was not "adequate" -- and so to negotiations that led to the Kyoto Protocol, which has more stringent commitments for developed countries.

Rio Conventions

Three environmental conventions, two of which were adopted at the 1992 "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), while the third, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), was adopted in 1994. The issues addressed by the three treaties are related -- in particular, climate change can have adverse effects on desertification and biodiversity -- and through a Joint Liaison Group, the secretariats of the three conventions take steps to coordinate activities to achieve common progress.

Safeguard

In the technical language of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) system, a safeguard is used to restrain international trade in order to protect a certain home industry from foreign competition. A member may take a "safeguard" action (i.e. restrict importation of a product temporarily) to protect a specific domestic industry from an increase in imports of any product which is causing or which is threatening to cause serious injury to the domestic industry that produces like or directly-competitive products. They are usually seen as

responses to fair trade behaviors, and are supposed to be used only in very specific circumstances, with compensation and on a universal basis. (Wikipedia)

Secretariat

To make arrangements for session of the COP, and compile and transmit reports submitted to it. [See Article 8, UNFCCC] {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Sink

Any process, activity or mechanism which removes a greenhouse gas, and aerosol or a precursor of a greenhouse gas from the atmosphere. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Soft Law

Non-legally binding agreements. Though governments may sign them, they are less precise than hard law instruments and have less stringent obligation and weaker delegation. Compared to hard law instruments, they are easier to achieve, provide strategies for dealing with uncertainty, infringe less on sovereignty and facilitate compromise among differentiated actors. (Abbot and Snidal, 2000)

Sovereignty

This concept has both emotional and rational components and is often a matter of perception. It relates to the state's monopoly on the use of force and its position as final authority over matters within its territory. State sovereignty is diminished with the rise of international corporations, multinational organizations and transnational forces like religion, ethnicity and culture.

Source

Any process or activity which releases a greenhouse gas, an aerosol or a precursor of a greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF)

The SCCF was established to finance projects relating to adaptation; technology transfer and capacity building; energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management; and economic diversification. This fund should complement other funding mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the entity that operates the financial mechanism of the Convention, has been entrusted to operate this fund.

"Spill-over effects"

Reverberations in developing countries caused by actions taken by developed countries to cut greenhouse-gas emissions. For example, emissions reductions in developed countries could lower demand for oil and thus international oil prices, leading to more use of oil and greater emissions in developing nations, partially off-setting the original cuts. Current estimates are that full-scale implementation of the Kyoto Protocol may cause 5 to 20 per cent of emissions reductions in industrialized countries to "leak" into developing countries.

Subsidiary body

A committee that assists the Conference of the Parties. Two permanent subsidiary bodies are created by the Convention: the Subsidiary Body for

Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). COP-1 also established two temporary bodies: the Ad hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, which concluded its work on 30 November 1997, and the Ad hoc group on Article 13. Additional subsidiary bodies may be established as needed.

Square brackets

Typographical symbols [--] placed around text under negotiation to indicate that the language enclosed is being discussed but has not yet been agreed upon.

Stakeholder

An institution, organization, or group that has some interest in a particular sector or system of outcome of a project, program or policy initiative.

Stakeholder Analysis

An organized effort to identify groups or individuals interested in any initiative but may differ in some way from others' interests and includes an analysis of perspectives, roles, views, needs, relationships and access to power and information.

Subsidiary Body for Implementation

A Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) helps review how the Convention is being applied, for example by analyzing the national communications submitted by member countries. It also deals with financial and administrative matters. The SBI meets twice each year. (UNFCCC)

Provides the COP with timely information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to the Convention. It shall be open to participation by all Parties and shall be multidisciplinary. It shall comprise government representatives competent in the relevant field of expertise, and shall report regularly to the COP. [See Article 9, UNFCCC] {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

A Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) counsels the Conference of the Parties on matters of climate, the environment, technology, and method. It meets twice a year. (UNFCCC)

Assists the COP in the assessment and review of the effective implementation of the Convention. It shall be open to participation by all Parties and comprise government representatives who are experts on matters related to climate change. [See Article 10, UNFCCC] {{21 UNFCCC; }}

Sustainable Development

There are literally hundreds of definitions of sustainable development. Perhaps the most famous is that included in the Brundtland Commission report, *our common future*, stating that sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it, two key concepts: the concept of 'needs' in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of 'limitations' imposed by the state of technology and future needs. However, it must be remembered that the Brundtland Commission did not invent the term sustainable development. Others including the IUCN had used the term in the context of

the time and based on the understanding of the meetings held in relation to producing its final report. (UNCED)

Technology transfer

A broad set of processes covering the flows of know-how, experience and equipment for mitigating and adapting to climate change among different stakeholders

Third Assessment Report (TAR)

The third extensive review of global scientific research on climate change, published by the IPCC in 2001. Among other things, the report stated that "The Earth's climate system has demonstrably changed on both global and regional scales since the pre-industrial era, with some of these changes attributable to human activities. There is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities." The TAR also focused on the regional effects of climate change.

Treaty

An international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation.¹

Its fundamental principle is 'the intention to create legal relations'²

UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)

The UNCED was held from 2-14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Five major agreements on global environmental issues were signed. Two of these, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and The Convention on Biological Diversity are formal treaties whose provisions may eventually be binding on the parties. The other three UNCED agreements are non-binding statements on the relationship between sustainable environmental practices and the pursuit of social and socio-economic development: *Agenda 21* is a wide-ranging assessment of social and economic sectors with goals for improving environmental and developmental impact of each; the *Rio Declaration* summarizes consensus principles of sustainable development, and the *statement on Forest Principles* pledges parties to more sustainable use of forest resources.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

The UNFCCC was signed in 1992 at the Earth summit in Rio de Janeiro by more than 150 countries. It consists of a Preamble, 26 Articles and two Annexes and has its objective to achieve the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that could prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner. The treaty took effect in March 1994 upon the ratification of more than 50 countries; some 186 nations have now ratified. (UNFCCC)

¹ Article 2, Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 1969

² "every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith" Article 26, Vienna Convention

Voluntary commitments

A draft article considered during the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol that would have permitted developing countries to voluntarily adhere to legally binding emissions targets. The proposed language was dropped in the final phase of the negotiations. The issue remains important for some delegations and may be discussed at upcoming sessions of the Conference of the Parties.

Vulnerability

The degree to which exposed people or economic assets are actually at risk is a function of their vulnerability. Vulnerability refers to a propensity or susceptibility to suffer loss and is associated with a range of physical, social, political, economic, cultural, and institutional characteristics. For example, unsafe poorly built housing, schools, hospitals and lifeline infrastructure are characteristics of physical vulnerability. {{31 United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UNISDR) 2009}}

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

A world meeting held from 26 August-4 September 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa. According to UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 55199, the meeting's goal was to hold a ten-year review of the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development at the Summit level to reinvigorate global commitment to sustainable development. Over 21,000 participants from 191 countries attended and included representatives from intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, academic and the scientific community. The WSSD adopted two main documents: the Plan of Implementation and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. (WSSD)

Coalitions

Group of 77

{{21 UNFCCC;}}

- Established in 1964 by 77 developing countries at the first session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Members of the G-77 have increased to 130 countries.
- It is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing states in the UN.
- It provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the UN system, and promote South-South cooperation for development.
- Member States: see Appendix 1 {{22 G-77}}
- Because the group is so diverse, individual developing countries also intervene in debates, as do groups within the G-77 such as the Alliance of Small Island States.

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

{{21 UNFCCC;}}

- Coalition of 43 low-lying and small island countries, most of which are member of the G-77, that are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise.
- United by the threat the climate change poses to their survival and frequently adopt a common stance in negotiations.

- First to propose a draft text during the Kyoto Protocol negotiations.
- Functions as an ad hoc lobby and negotiating voice for small island developing States (SIDS) within the UN system.

The 43 members and observers are American Samoa, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cape Verde, Comoros, Cook Islands, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Grenada, Guam, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Nauru, Netherlands Antilles, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Singapore, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, US Virgin Islands, and Vanuatu.

Least Developed Countries

{{21 UNFCCC;}}

The World's poorest countries.

- Defined by the UN (specifically the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)) using three criteria:
 - a low income criterion, based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income per capita (under \$750 for inclusion, above \$900 for graduation);
 - a human resource weakness criterion, involving a composite Human Assets Index (HAI) based on indicators of: a) nutrition, b) health, c) education and d) adult literacy;
 - an economic vulnerability criterion, involving a composite Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) based on indicators of: a) the instability of agricultural production b) the instability of exports c) the economic importance of non-traditional activities d) the handicap of economic smallness, and the percentage of population displaced by natural disasters
- Have become increasingly active in the climate change process, e.g. with regards to vulnerability and adaptation.
- Member states (see Appendix 3)

The European Union

{{21 UNFCCC;}}

European

Union

(EU)

As a regional economic integration organization, the EU is a Party to both the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. However, it does not have a separate vote from its member states. Because the EU signed the Convention when it was known as the EEC (European Economic Community), the EU retains this name for all formal Convention-related purposes. Members are Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

The Umbrella Group

{{21 UNFCCC;}}

- a loose coalition of non-EU developed countries which formed following the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol.

- There is no formal list, but the group is usually made up of Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, The Russian federation, Ukraine and the US.

The Environmental Integrity Group

{{21 UNFCCC;}}

- a recently formed coalition comprising Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland.

OECD

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

OPEC

- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Acronyms

AWG-KP	Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol
AWG-LCA	Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
BAP	Bali Action Plan
BaU	Business-as-Usual
CGE	Consultative Group of Experts
CRF	Common reporting format
COP	Conference of the Parties
COP/MOP	Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
ICA	international consultation and analysis
KP	Kyoto Protocol
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LULUCF	Land use, land-use change and forestry
MRV	Measuring, reporting and verification
NAMA	Nationally appropriate mitigation actions
REDD+	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
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body Scientific and Technological Advice
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
TEC	Technology Executive Committee
UNFCCC	U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change

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