



COP for Environmental Conservation

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Man's concern for natural environment has always been there but his serious concern about the issues of resource depletion and degrading environment began after World War II when industrialization started vigorously. Environmental protection is a practice of protecting the natural environment on individual, organizational or governmental levels, for the benefit of both the environment and humans. However, nothing tangible was done to control damage afflicted to environment till 1960s.

The government in 1960s especially in developed countries was undergoing a social change; later such change also started in developing countries. The social change raised aspiration and hopes of people for improvement in quality of human life and living standards which in turn opened up numerous issues relating to development, sustainable development, economic growth and

consumerism; all issues being linked to environment. Soon people recognized that environment was deteriorating and natural resources were depleting due to developmental activities. The Earth's physical and biological systems came under great strain. A large number of environmental problems surfaced as for example, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases started building up, earth's temperature started rising, large cities started choking up with pollution, and large number of species came under heavy stress to the extent that mass scale damage of biodiversity appeared. In short, environmental problems became critical. Literature appeared that aimed at educating not only the public but more so the policy makers and the politicians about matters of environmental concerns. Protection of environment and conservation of natural resources came to be realized at national and international levels and a concern for ecology became a watchword.

In early decades industry, trade and business resisted efforts aimed at environmental protection and resource conservation because money spent on such efforts would diminish profit. However, the attitude is changing, not

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because of legal action only but also due to realization that cutting down on raw material and generating less waste could be a financial gain. Also, there was an International angle to environment which could not be ignored. It became clear that problems like Ozone Depletion or Global Warming cannot be tackled at national level alone. Leaders, politicians and people in general, therefore, started looking up at organization like UN for environmental issues.

United Nation's Conference on Human Environment

The United Nation's Conference on Human Environment was held in 1972 at Stockholm. It marked the beginning of organized international efforts for comprehensive programme to safeguard environment while also promoting economic development. The following two strategies emerged in this conference.

1. The principles and action plan were evolved for controlling and regulating human environment.
2. Institutional and financial arrangements were proposed for achieving the goal for regulating human environment. This has been called the *Magna Carta* on environment. It declared:
 - (i) Humans have the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life in an environment of quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being.
 - (ii) Human beings have responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generation.

Environmental Education Conference

In 1977, United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) organized an Intergovernmental Education Conference at Georgia. The Conference was attended by over 400 delegates from 74 countries. The UNEP Executive Director underscored that environmental education was a matter of life and death and that problems of environment were jeopardizing the development of mankind.

World Commission on Environment and Development

In 1980s, international community became seriously concerned with increasing problems of environment. Problems of ozone depletion, climate change (global warming), declining of fisheries and forest cover, loss of biodiversity, pollution and hazardous wastes attracted the attention at global level. Equally issues of sustainable development became of paramount importance especially for the developing countries. It was at this time that Norwegian Prime Minister, Harlem Brundtland was appointed the Chairman of World Commission on Environment and Development, known as Brundtland Commission. The report of this commission called "Our Common Future" (1987) dealt with many issues but the issue of poverty in developing countries in relation to environmental damage was a special focus. It stated that problems of environment could not be resolved without poverty reduction. The commission also addressed problems relating to inequity between rich and poor countries.

Brundtland Commission served as preparatory framework for Rio Conference.

United Nation Conference on Environment and Development

UN convened a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It is called as earth summit. An eight-hundred-page document, called Agenda 21 was issued at this conference. It contains comprehensive blueprint for government on everything from population strategy, management of hazardous waste, recycling, energy conservation, renewable energy, business strategies to role of women in environment. Secretary General of UNCED in his Foreword to the Agenda 21 document states “that hunger and poverty are both a cause and an effect of environmental degradation. Industrial countries continue to be addicted to the patterns of production and consumption which have so largely produced the major risk to the global environment”.

World Summit on Sustainable Development

The second world summit on sustainable development was held in Johannesburg from August 26 to September 4, 2002. The summit reaffirmed sustainable development as central elements of the international agenda and gave a new impetus to global action to protect environment and fight poverty. It was decided to establish World Solidarity Fund for eradication of poverty. The linkage between poverty and environment/resource use was re-examined to strengthen this relationship. Governments agreed to reaffirm the targets and commitments for action for better implementation of sustainable development.

Energy and sanitation issues became important elements of negotiation than previous international meetings.

UN Conference on Sustainable Development

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio 2012, Rio+20. Earth Summit 2012 was the third international conference on sustainable development aimed at reconciling the economic and environmental goals of the global community. This conference was Hosted by Brazil in Rio de Janeiro from 13 to 22 June 2012, Rio+20 was a 20-year follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit / United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in the same city, and the 10th anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The ten-day mega-summit, which culminated in a three-day high-level UN conference, was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and included participation from 192 UN member states — including 57 Heads of State and 31 Heads of Government, private sector companies, NGOs and other groups. The conference had three objectives:

1. Securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development
2. Assessing the progress and implementation gaps in meeting previous commitments.
3. Addressing new and emerging challenges.

COP 1

The first UNFCCC Conference of Parties took place from 28 March to 7 April 1995 in Berlin,

Germany. It voiced concerns about the adequacy of countries' abilities to meet commitments under the Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

COP 2

COP 2 took place in July 1996 in Geneva, Switzerland. Its Ministerial Declaration was noted (but not adopted) on July 18, 1996, and reflected a U.S. position statement presented by Timothy Wirth, former Under Secretary for Global Affairs for the U.S. State Department at that meeting, which:

1. Accepted the scientific findings on climate change preferred by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its second assessment (1995);
2. Rejected uniform "harmonized policies" in favor of flexibility;
3. Called for "legally binding midterm targets".

COP 3

COP 3 took place in December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan. After intensive negotiations, it adopted the Kyoto Protocol, which outlined the greenhouse gas emissions reduction obligation for Annex I countries, along with what came to be known as Kyoto mechanisms such as emissions trading, clean development mechanism and joint implementation. Most industrialized countries and some central European economies in transition (all defined as Annex B countries) agreed to legally binding reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of an average of 6 to 8% below 1990 levels between the years 2008–2012, defined as the first emissions budget period. The

United States would be required to reduce its total emissions an average of 7% below 1990 levels; However Congress did not ratify the treaty after Clinton signed it. The Bush administration explicitly rejected the protocol in 2001.

COP 4

COP 4 took place in November 1998 in Buenos Aires. It had been expected that the remaining issues unresolved in Kyoto would be finalized at this meeting. However, the complexity and difficulty of finding agreement on these issues proved insurmountable, and instead the parties adopted a 2-year "Plan of Action" to advance efforts and to devise mechanisms for implementing the Kyoto Protocol, to be completed by 2000. During COP4, Argentina and Kazakhstan expressed their commitment to take on the greenhouse gas emissions reduction obligation, the first two non Annex countries to do so.

COP 5

COP 5 took place between October 25 and November 5, 1999, in Bonn, Germany. It was primarily a technical meeting, and did not reach major conclusions.

COP 6

COP 6 took place between November 13 and November 25, 2000, in The Hague, Netherlands. The discussions evolved rapidly into a high level negotiation over the major political issues. These included major controversy over the United States' proposal to allow credit for carbon "sinks" in forests and agricultural lands that would satisfy a major proportion of the U.S. emissions reductions in

this way; Disagreements over consequences for noncompliance by countries that did not meet their emission reduction targets; and difficulties in resolving how developing countries could obtain financial assistance to deal with adverse effects of climate change and meet their obligations to plan for measuring and possibly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

COP 7

At the COP 7 meeting in Marrakech, Morocco from October 29 to November 10, 2001, negotiators wrapped up the work on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, finalizing most of the operational details and setting the stage for nations to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. The completed package of decisions is known as the Marrakech Accords.

The main decisions at COP 7 included:

1. Operational rules for international emissions trading among parties to the Protocol and for the CDM and joint implementation;
2. A compliance regime that outlined consequences for failure to meet emissions targets but deferred to the parties to the Protocol, once it came into force, the decision on whether those consequences would be legally binding;
3. Accounting procedures for the flexibility mechanisms;
4. A decision to consider at COP 8 how to achieve a review of the adequacy of commitments that might lead to discussions on future commitments by developing countries.

COP 8

Taking place from October 23 to November 1, 2002, in New Delhi COP 8 adopted the Delhi Ministerial Declaration that, amongst others, called for efforts by developed countries to transfer technology and minimize the impact of climate change on developing countries. It is also approved the New Delhi work programme on Article 6 of the Convention. The COP8 was marked by Russia's hesitation, stating that it needed more time to think it over. The Kyoto Protocol could enter into force once it was ratified by 55 countries, including countries responsible for 55 per cent of the developed world's 1990 carbon dioxide emissions. With the United States (36.1 per cent share of developed world carbon dioxide) and Australia refusing ratification, Russia's agreement (17% of global emissions in 1990) was required to meet the ratification criteria and therefore Russia could delay the process.

COP 9

COP 9 took place between December 1 and December 12, 2003 in Milan. The parties agreed to use the Adaptation Fund established at COP7 in 2001 primarily in supporting developing countries better adapt to climate change. The fund would also be used for capacity building through technology transfer. At COP9, the parties also agreed to review the first national reports submitted by 110 non Annex I countries.

COP 10

COP 10 took place between December 6 and December 17, 2004.

COP10 discussed the progress made since the first Conference of the Parties 10 years ago and its future challenges, with special emphasis on climate change mitigation and adaptation. To promote developing countries better adapt to climate change, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action was adopted. The parties also began discussing the post Kyoto mechanism, on how to allocate emission reduction obligation following 2012, when the first commitment period ends.

COP 11

COP 11 (or COP 11/CMP 1) took place between November 28 and December 9, 2005, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It was the first *Meeting of the Parties* (CMP 1) to the Kyoto Protocol since their initial meeting in Kyoto in 1997. It was one of the largest intergovernmental conferences on climate change ever. The event marked the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. Hosting more than 10,000 delegates, it was one of Canada's largest international events ever and the largest gathering in Montreal since Expo 67. The Montreal Action Plan was an agreement to "extend the life of the Kyoto Protocol beyond its 2012 expiration date and negotiate deeper cuts in greenhouse gas emissions". Canada's environment minister, at the time, Stéphane Dion, said the agreement provides a "map for the future".

COP 12

COP 12/CMP 2 took place between November 6 and 17, 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. At the meeting, BBC reporter Richard Black coined the phrase "climate tourists" to describe some delegates who attended "to see Africa, take

snaps of the wildlife, the poor, dying African children and women". Black also noted that due to delegates concerns over economic costs and possible losses of competitiveness, the majority of the discussions avoided any mention of reducing emissions. Black concluded that was a disconnect between the political process and the scientific imperative. Despite such criticism, certain strides were made at COP12, including in the areas of support for developing countries and clean development mechanism. The parties adopted a five-year plan of work to support climate change adaptation by developing countries, and agreed on the procedures and modalities for the Adaptation Fund. They also agreed to improve the projects for clean development mechanism.

COP 13

COP 13/CMP 3 took place between December 3 and December 15, 2007, at Nusa Dua, in Bali, Indonesia. Agreement on a timeline and structured negotiation on the post2012 framework (the end of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol) was achieved with the adoption of the Bali Action Plan (Decision 1/CP.13). The Ad Hoc Working Group on Long term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWGLCA) was established as a new subsidiary body to conduct the negotiations aimed at urgently enhancing the implementation of the Convention up to and beyond 2012. Decision 9/CP.13 is an Amended to the New Delhi work programme. These negotiations took place during 2008 (leading to COP 14/CMP 4 in Poznan, Poland) and 2009 (leading to COP 15/CMP 5 in Copenhagen).

COP 14

COP 14/CMP 4 took place from December 1 to 12, 2008 in Poznan, Poland. Delegates agreed on principles for the financing of a fund to help the poorest nations cope with the effects of climate change and they approved a mechanism to incorporate forest protection into the efforts of the international community to combat climate change. Negotiations on a successor to the Kyoto Protocol were the primary focus of the conference.

COP 15

COP 15 took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, from December 7 to December 18 2009.

The overall goal for the COP 15/CMP 5 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Denmark was to establish an ambitious global climate agreement for the period from 2012 when the first commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol expires. However, on November 14, 2009, the *New York Times* announced that "President Obama and other world leaders have decided to put off the difficult task of reaching a climate change agreement... agreeing instead to make it the mission of the Copenhagen conference to reach a less specific "politically binding" agreement that would punt the most difficult issues into the future". Ministers and officials from 192 countries took part in the Copenhagen meeting and in addition there were participants from a large number of civil society organizations. As many Annex 1 industrialized countries are now reluctant to fulfill commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, a large part of the diplomatic work that lays the foundation for a post Kyoto agreement was undertaken up to the COP15.

The conference did not achieve a binding agreement for long-term action. A 13 paragraph 'political accord' was negotiated by approximately 25 parties including US and China, but it was only 'noted' by the COP as it is considered an external document, not negotiated within the UNFCCC process.

COP 16

COP 16 was held in Cancún, Mexico, from November 29 to December 10, 2010. The outcome of the summit was an agreement adopted by the states' parties that called for the 100 billion USD per annum "Green Climate Fund", and a "Climate Technology Centre" and network. However the funding of the Green Climate Fund was not agreed upon. Nor was a commitment to a second period of the Kyoto Protocol agreed upon, but it was concluded that the base year shall be 1990 and the global warming potentials shall be those provided by the IPCC.

All parties "*Recognizing that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet, and thus requires to be urgently addressed by all Parties*". It recognizes the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report goal of a maximum 2 °C global warming and all parties should take urgent action to meet this goal. It also agreed upon greenhouse gas emissions should peak as soon as possible, but recognizing that the time frame for peaking will be longer in developing countries, since social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries.

COP 17

The 2011 COP 17 was held in Durban, South Africa, from November 28 to December 9, 2011.

The conference agreed to a start negotiation on a legally binding deal comprising all countries, to be adopted in 2015, governing the period post 2020. There was also progress regarding the creation of a Green Climate Fund (GCF)

for which a management framework was adopted. The fund is to distribute US\$100 billion per year to help poor countries adapt to climate impacts. While the president of the conference, Maite Nkoana Mashabane, declared it a success, scientists and environmental groups warned that the deal was not sufficient to avoid global warming beyond 2°C as more urgent action is needed.

Year	Conference/Conventions
1972	United Nation's Conference on Human Environment
1977	Environmental Education Conference
1987	World Commission on Environment and Development
1992	United nation Conference on Environment and Development
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development
2012	UN Conference on Sustainable Development

Table 1: List of United Nation's Environment related conferences and conventions

COP 18

Qatar hosted COP 18 which took place in Doha, Qatar, from 26 November to 7 December, 2012. The Conference produced a package of documents collectively titled *The Doha Climate Gateway*. The documents collectively contained:

1. The Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (to be accepted before entering into force) featuring a second commitment period running from 2012 until 2020 limited in scope to 15% of the global carbon dioxide emissions due to the lack of commitments of Japan, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, New Zealand (nor the United States and Canada, who are not parties to the Protocol in that period) and due to the fact that developing countries like China (the world's largest emitter), India and

Brazil are not subject to emissions reductions under the Kyoto Protocol.

2. Language on loss and damage, formalized for the first time in the conference documents.

The conference made little progress towards the funding of the Green Climate Fund.

COP 19

COP 19 was the 19th yearly session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 9th session of the Meeting of the Parties (CMP) to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (the protocol having been developed under the UNFCCC's charter). The conference was held in Warsaw, Poland from 11 to 23 November 2013.

COP 20

From December 1–12, 2014, Lima, Peru hosted the 20th yearly session of the

Conference of the Parties (COP) to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 10th session of the Meeting of the Parties (CMP) to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (the protocol having been developed under the UNFCCC's charter). The pre COP conference was held in Venezuela.

COP 21

COP 21 was held in Paris from November 30 to December 12, 2015. Negotiations resulted in the adoption of the Paris Agreement on 12 December, governing climate change reduction measures from 2020. The adoption of this agreement ended the work of the Durban platform, established during COP17. The

agreement will enter into force (and thus become fully effective) only if 55 countries which produce at least 55% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions ratify the Agreement.

COP 22

COP 22 was held in Marrakech during 7-18 November, 2016. The conference successfully demonstrated to the world that the implementation of the Paris agreement (CMA 1) is underway and the constructive spirit of multilateral cooperation on climate change continues.

Year	COP	Place
1995	COP1	The Berlin Mandate
1996	COP2	Geneva, Switzerland
1997	COP3	The Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change
1998	COP4	Buenos Aires, Argentina
1999	COP5	Bonn, Germany
2000	COP6	The Hague, Netherlands
2001	COP7	Marrakech, Morocco
2002	COP8	New Delhi, India
2003	COP9	Milan, Italy
2004	COP10	Buenos Aires, Argentina
2005	COP11	Montreal, Canada
2006	COP12	Nairobi, Kenya
2007	COP13	Bali, Indonesia
2008	COP14	Poznan, Poland
2009	COP15	Copenhagen, Denmark
2010	COP16	Cancun, Mexico
2011	COP17	Durban, South Africa
2012	COP18	Doha, Qatar
2013	COP19	Warsaw, Poland
2014	COP20	Lima, Peru
2015	COP21	Paris, France
2016	COP22	Marrakech, Morocco

Table 2: List of COP Conferences