



“CLIMATE ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT: WILL THE EU LEAD THE WAY TO AMBITIOUS GLOBAL COMMITMENTS IN 2015?”

*CARE International and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Expert Roundtable - Brussels, February 3rd 2015*

Climate change is an extreme global injustice; those who are least responsible for its cause—the poorest people, communities and countries—are the most burdened by its impact. Recognizing the **substantial link between climate change and sustainable development**, it is clear that climate change, poverty and inequality need to be tackled together.

2015 is a crucial year for climate action and sustainable development. Governments will seek to agree three major international policy frameworks with long-term implications: a post-2015 Sustainable Development framework, a UN climate change agreement, and a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. **The EU is a major player in all of the 2015 global debates**: as cooperating partner for developing countries, as contributor of finance to development and climate action, and as one of the greatest economies and country coalitions on this planet with a substantial carbon and ecological footprint.

This event jointly organized by CARE International and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung brought together over 50 participants from the European Commission, the European External Action Service, Members of the European Parliament, academia, think tanks, and NGOs, including experts from developing countries, to discuss sticking points in international climate change negotiations and the important role that the EU can play in 2015, a crucial year for global commitments on climate change and sustainable development. The below summary prepared by the organisers provides for a reflection of views, issues and proposals raised and discussed, but does not intend to present a consensus document.

See the event in review on [Storify \(#EUclimate2015\)](#)

2015: AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The international community is set to adopt a new sustainable development framework this year, in addition to global agreements on disaster risk reduction and climate change. If it succeeds in agreeing on a transformative and universal agenda as is the current aim, 2015 will be a significant year. The agenda as it is currently discussed reflects the global nature of (development) challenges and would transform societies. Difficult decisions will be required, especially with regards to gridlocked consumption and production patterns in industrialised countries. Politicians and activists need to develop a narrative, which underlines the universality of challenges and bridges the necessary and the (politically) possible. Citizens' ownership is key for an effective and sustainable answer to what is at stake.

THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Human influence on the climate system is clear and scientifically proven. Irresponsible human actions, such as continued greenhouse gas emissions or the perverse system of fossil fuel subsidies, increase the likelihood of irreversible impact of climate change on our planet. However, **humanity also has the means to limit climate change.** With true commitment to tackling climate change, there are many opportunities to increase mitigation, while also addressing adaptation, loss and damage, and integrating other societal objectives such as gender equality in programming for sustainable development. In terms of climate **mitigation** action, we are far off track. The current commitments are 25% below what is necessary to limit global warming, and even those insufficient commitments are not guaranteed to be met. Even though the forthcoming Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) are important as a basis for discussion, clear domestic action plans and legislation are necessary to achieving results.

In addition, **adaptation is critical** to limiting the effects of climate change. Adaptation can empower the populations most vulnerable to climate change to adapt their livelihoods and strengthen local structures in the face of climate impacts, and is essential for sustaining development progress and future economic growth. As such, **adaptation is more of a priority for poorer countries than mitigation.** At the same time, it is recognised that the

potential of adaption measures is limited, as even significant investments in adaptation make rather little difference to overall risk; i.e. adaptation will have limited impact in a world of global warming by 4 degrees, with the disastrous consequences that this entails.



Prof. Jean Pascal Van Ypersele's key note speech

Experts at the roundtable generally agreed **that both mitigation and adaptation are indispensable** in the fight against climate change. Noticeably through-out the debate, participants stated that the EU has failed to take into account the importance of adaptation in the negotiations, thereby alienating for example the African and the Latin-American bloc. Also constructive ideas on loss and damage are largely absent in the EU's approach to international negotiations.

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE COPENHAGEN-NEW MOMENTUM AT EU LEVEL?

Since the 2009 Climate Conference in Copenhagen, the importance and impact of climate change has increasingly been recognized at EU level. Indeed, climate change is seemingly high on the agenda of EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission (HRVP) Federica Mogherini. At her initiative, the EU Foreign

Affairs Council discussed and agreed upon an **action plan for climate diplomacy**, and there is a general ambition to achieve a transformational climate and sustainable development framework in 2015.



Roberto Ridolfi, Director for Sustainable Growth and Development at DEVCO.

In terms of finance, 10 billion euro was committed at COP20 in Lima in 2014 for the Green Climate Fund, half of it devoted to adaptation. The EU committed to spend 20% of the 2014-2020 budgets on climate-friendly policies. While these are all welcome steps, several participants stated that the EU needs to get its own house in order too, as the 2030 climate and energy package agreed upon in 2014 does not meet the EU's stated ambitions of leadership on climate action.

For the upcoming COP21 in Paris in December 2015, the EU aims to secure a legally binding international agreement consistent with science, including a commitment to keep the increase of global average temperature below

2 degrees. Furthermore, the EU looks to ensure a comprehensive coverage in terms of climate finance, as well as ambitious mitigation, adaptation and capacity building measures. The EU is in favour of strong rules to ensure compliance of the various parties. It was confirmed that a dynamic review every 5 years was part of the negotiations, but this should be used to strengthen commitments, rather than to allow a weak agreement in Paris.

At the same time, in light: - of the EU's weak compromise in 2014's 2030 climate and energy policy framework; - its challenges in bringing strong common positions to international negotiations; - its inconsistent approach to alliances; - and its relatively blinkered focus on mitigation a common refrain of workshop participants was that **"the EU has fallen off its pedestal."** With the EU's stated ambitions for the 2015 global processes, the expectations are nonetheless high that Europe can this time play a leading role—in strategic alliances with others—to achieve transformational commitments on climate action and a robust global sustainable development framework, and also to counter minimal agreements driven by countries such as the USA and China.

ON THE ROAD TO PARIS: PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION

To genuinely achieve the transformational change we seek, participants agreed that a **wide variety of policy perspectives and sectors need to be engaged in the discussion on climate change:** including sectors such as environment, development, energy, agriculture, industry, transportation, waste management, and research.

It will also be important at the COP in Paris for parties **to recognise the continuity of the problem of climate change.** Rather than regarding climate change as one of many problems and trying to find a one-off solution for it at the Paris negotiations, it will be up to the EU and others to stress that only sustainable, effective and long-term measures may bring about a solution—one which will need to be implemented forever, and which

will imply changes in our economic and societal paradigms, with impacts on all of our lives.

As no other of the big parties is leading the way towards ambitious results in 2015, **the EU needs to play a stronger role,** drive discussions and build trust at both the multi and bilateral levels, while also reflecting on the responsibility for the EU and its Member States themselves. However, while more leadership is expected from the EU, it should not be overrated. Experience from the 'EU-led Alliance' in Durban (With LDCs and the Alliance of Small Island States) shows this can backfire, particularly if the EU is not sufficiently open-minded to include new or divergent ideas from developing countries into the discussion.

For **multilateral negotiations** with other blocks, **context is a critical consideration**. Even within the G77-block, there are large differences in opinion due to the different trade-offs that countries have to make. Apart from questions of finance, little unites them. As in all international processes, it is very important that there are **incentives for participation**. The incentives to participate in the current international climate change negotiations are actually constantly reducing, with not even the prospect of finance clearly on offer in 2015. **Finance will be the dealmaker**. That being said, this does not imply that Official Development Assistance (ODA) has to finance all climate action- even if ODA remains an important resource to fund adaptation. Parties need to re-think various sources that could deliver climate finance. **Furthermore, there is the need to re-consider where and how money could be used most effectively**. For instance, as per one suggestion made in the discussion, middle income countries could be prioritised for mitigation funding and poorest countries for adaptation money. The overall **transparency** of climate finance needs to be improved and in the process, it is essential to identify a clear **common definition of climate finance**. It should also be taken into consideration that, in some regions, there is a particular need to **build capacity** to absorb the funds received.

In terms of content, the incentive and imperative for developing countries to participate in climate negotiations is not climate change, even if they face its major consequences, but **'development'**: how can the lives of their citizens be improved. To get them on board, another important factor will be the clarification of the meaning of 'common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities' (CBDR&RC). Currently, for instance, the EU interprets CBDR&RC more flexibly while African groups want an increased focus on differentiation. To achieve convergence between parties, the EU and AU should work together to develop and equity framework, including guidelines and indicators to define better the concepts of equity and fairness. And as mentioned before, balanced consideration to mitigation and

adaptation will be a decisive factor for developing countries. Crucially, however, **successful alliances** between the EU, AU, and other geographic groupings **require a higher level of trust than currently exists** between the different blocks.



Peter Wehrheim, Head of Unit, DG Climate Action

With regards to the agreement in Paris, all parties need to negotiate not only on multilateral levels, but also **bilaterally**. As this process of climate change negotiations is essentially in crisis, the strategy could also include 'naming and shaming' the ones who are not delivering what they are expected to. Given the role of **EU delegations** in bilateral cooperation, they can and should engage a lot more, instead of the overarching focus on project implementation. The EU could also implement a "More for More" approach in its bilateral cooperation agreements, as an incentive for all to commit to and deliver on more ambitious climate change and sustainable development objectives.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC-GETTING CITIZENS ON BOARD

To achieve lasting change, some speakers stressed that it is not only up to governments to 'fix the problem', but it is the role of every individual person to engage in creating the solution. Therefore, one key part of the process will be to **communicate with the public what this means for them and how they can address individual consumption**

patterns. Everyone can contribute to establishing a new economic model that respects ecological limits. For example, each individual could question their pension investment scheme and the ways in which banks invest their money. It is also important to communicate the fact that sustainable development makes economic sense—not just in developing countries, but world-wide.

As mentioned above for negotiations, in connecting to citizens context is also a critical factor. In regions like Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) special consideration for urban solutions is required since 80% of the population lives in cities. Following this logic, for the LAC region, a focus on connecting INDCs to citizens through the linkages to urban solutions to climate change would be more transformative and would resonate more with citizens than focusing on the transformation of their carbon markets.



Céline Mias, CARE International, EU Representative

CONCLUSION: WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM THE EU IN 2015?

There was broad agreement by participants at the roundtable that **the EU should focus its efforts on achieving a genuinely transformational change in 2015** climate negotiations in order to ensure urgent and bold progress is made to stave off the devastating impact of climate change on the well-being of humankind. As part of this effort, the EU needs to acknowledge that

mitigation-centric approaches are only part of the picture, and should be complemented by significant attention to adaptation as well as consideration of loss and damage. The EU should therefore deliver on existing commitments, ensure ambitious common positions (the weak position of a single member state should not be an excuse for a lack of EU ambition!), adopt ambitious INDCs, and strengthen its negotiation outreach on adaptation politics.

Participants agreed that **both a necessity and a challenge is to link ongoing climate change discussions with other key policy processes** such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Humanitarian Summit, and the Financing for Development conference. However, linking these different processes adds to the complexity for donors such as the EU of carefully **lining up incentives and disincentives**, which will be essential for reaching meaningful commitments in 2015. For instance, do donors offer all available funds in Addis, or hold back on some offers of climate finance for negotiations in Paris? Given the complexity and variety of 2015 global negotiations, there is no simple way forward.

Finally, it was that argued the EU cannot lead an ambitious agenda alone, but should lead in partnership with others—alliances are part of the key to reaching the long-lasting and robust solutions all believe are needed. However, the building of trust remains a key challenge to the success of negotiations in 2015. Partnerships are required at multilateral and bilateral levels, as well as at societal level, in terms of galvanizing the support of citizens both to hold governments to account and to affect the changes in the current economic model that are needed to have a real impact on climate change over the longer term.

We all have a role to play.

CARE International and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung would like to thank the keynote speakers, expert panellists, and moderators, as well as the roundtable participants, who all contributed to a stimulating discussion.

FURTHER READING FOR THE POST-2015 CLIMATE ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

CARE Publications:

- [CARE International Briefing Paper](#): 2015 and beyond: Action for a just, gender-equitable and sustainable future, by Agnes Otzelberger and Sven Harmeling, September 2014.
- [CARE International Paper](#): Tackling the double injustice of climate change and Gender Inequality, by Agnes Otzelberger with Mipsie Marshall, 2014.
- [CIEL and CARE International Briefing note](#): Climate change: tackling the greatest human rights challenge of our time – Recommendations for effective action on climate change and human rights, prepared by the Centre for International Environmental Law and Care, 2015.
- CARE International Paper: [PMERL: Participatory monitoring evaluation reflection and learning, a revised manual](#) [Community-based adaptation in practice: CARE's practice of CBA](#), by Sally King, July 2014.
- CARE International Paper: [Choice not control: why limiting the fertility of poor populations will not solve the climate crisis](#), by Agnes Otzelberger, September 2014.
- [CARE International Paper: Stepping up to the challenge: six issues facing global climate change and food security](#), by Karl Deering et al, 2014.
- [CARE International Paper: A sustainable future for all: Eradicating poverty and tackling climate chaos](#), by Sven Harmeling, September 2014.

FES Publications:

- Gianella, Cecilia; Canziani, Elisa, Exploring sustainable low carbon development pathways: overall situation of low carbon development strategies (LCDS) in Peru, FES 2014, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/10907.pdf>
- Anna Antwi, Climate change and food security: an overview about the issue, FES 2014, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10518.pdf>
- Yaro, Joseph A., Building resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change: implications for food security in Ghana FES 2014, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10517.pdf>
- Ofei-Nkansah, Kingsley, Promoting rights in the fight against climate change, FES 2014, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10516.pdf>
- Debapriya Bhattacharya, Lagging behind: lessons from the least developed countries for a development agenda post-2015, FES 2013, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/10354.pdf>

Other relevant publications:

- [CDKN Opinion Paper: How to win the argument on climate change: A five-point plan](#), by Simon Maxwell, March 2014.
- [The Way Forward in International Climate Policy: Key Issues and New Ideas 2014](#) by de Heleen de Coninck et al, September 2014.
- [What does it take to mainstream disaster risk in key sectors?](#) by Aditya Bahadur et al, April 2014.
- [The Sustainable Development goals: will they deliver climate compatible development for vulnerable countries?](#) by Helen Picot and Nicolas Moss, September 2014.
- [The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report: What's in it for Africa?](#) by Elizabeth Carabine et al, September 2014.
- [The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report: What's in it for South Asia?](#) by Elizabeth Carabine et al, August 2014.
- [ECDPM Briefing Note](#): Run up to 2015: A Moment of Truth for EU External Climate Action? By Aliza Herrero and Hanne Knaepen, September 2014.
- [Devex article](#): From Lima to Paris: 5 promising pathways for a joint EU-Africa position on climate change (article based on ECDPM Discussion Paper "Africa and Europe Combatting Climate Change: towards a Common Agenda in 2015" by Hanne Knaepen, Fabien Tondel and Lesley-Anne van Wyk. To be published early March 2015)