

## ASIC 200

### CLIMATE NEGOTIATION SIMULATION

#### PARTICIPANT INSTRUCTIONS

This simulation is an 8-group (10 actor) role-play that simulates the negotiations at a hypothetical international climate change conference in Vancouver in September 2030. The formal title of the conference is the Vancouver Conference of the Parties (COP 31) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The objective is to reach agreement on the text of a “Vancouver Protocol” to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This simulation is focused on three negotiation areas:

- Mitigation: negotiating reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and 2100;
- Adaptation: negotiating dollar contributions to a New Green Climate Fund to support countries and communities affected by climate change;
- Geo-engineering: negotiating two Additional Protocols to the UNFCCC to establish programs to support solar radiation management and carbon dioxide removal.

The Vancouver Protocol would replace the Paris Agreement, which has proven to be an insufficient mechanism for managing climate change.

#### I. OVERVIEW OF THE NEGOTIATION

This negotiation simulation is played with ten roles, eight of which are state delegations composed of country representatives played by students. One of these is the COP Presidency that acts as the Chair of the meeting and facilitates discussion. The state delegations are:

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)  
Brazil  
China  
European Union  
India  
Japan  
United States  
COP Presidency/Canada (Meeting Chair)

The remaining two roles are representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) representing the International Geo-engineering Association and the Global Green Climate Fund Action Network. These NGOs will be played by the course TAs.

## II. AGENDA FOR THE SIMULATION

The COP Presidency/Canada will serve as meeting chair and conference host that facilitates the country representatives in the process of negotiation. In addition to being a party to the negotiations, the COP Presidency/Canada wants the Conference to reach a successful conclusion, in the form of a negotiated Protocol. The instructors will manage the simulation according to the following agenda:

1. Introduction by COP Presidency (10 minutes) Lecture Hall
  - a. Welcome
  - b. Presentation and Approval of the Agenda
2. First Plenary: Presentation of Opening Statements (20 minutes) Lecture Hall
3. Group meeting: discussion of negotiation priorities and positions (10 minutes)
4. First Negotiation Session (45 minutes)
5. Recess and Country Deliberation (15 minutes)
6. Final Negotiation Session (20 minutes)
7. Group Meeting: preparation of final positions and statements (10 minutes)
8. Second Plenary: Presentation of final positions. (15 minutes) Lecture hall.

## III. THE NEGOTIATION ISSUES AND GOALS

**Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions.** It is 2030. There remains widespread consensus in the scientific community that preventing temperatures from increasing 2°C above pre-industrial levels is necessary to prevent dangerous climate change (drought, glacier melt, flooding, famine in certain areas). To achieve this goal, it is widely agreed that we must prevent carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations from rising above 450 parts per million (ppm). According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in 2009 CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations were already at 379 ppm compared to pre-industrial levels of 280 ppm, and temperatures had already increased by approximately 0.7°C over pre-industrial levels. In 2017, atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> reached 400 ppm (the highest concentrations in 3 million years), and in 2016 global temperatures were approximately 1.1°C higher than pre-industrial levels.

In 2030, atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> have now reached 425 ppm, and in 2029 (last year) global temperatures were 1.7°C higher than pre-industrial levels.

According to IPCC AR5 (2013), keeping CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at about 450 ppm or lower (*likely* to keep global temperature increases to 2°C) will require GHG emission reductions of 40-75 percent by 2050 compared to 2010, and emissions to be near zero by 2100.

**Adaptation.** In 2030 it is recognized that adaptation to climate change is a permanent feature of local, national, and regional policies and practices around the world. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established through the UNFCCC framework in 2010. The mandate of the GCF is to help developing countries “limit or reduce their greenhouse gas

(GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change. It seeks to promote a paradigm shift to low-emission and climate-resilient development, taking into account the needs of nations that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.” In the Paris Agreement of 2015, the GCF was given an important role of serving the agreement and the needs of developing countries. The GCF is funded by pledges of financial support from the advanced economies/countries. The initial pledge campaign began in 2014 and reached approximately US\$10.3 billion (mostly intended to fund start up costs). The GCF uses these funds to support grants, loans, equity, or guarantees for projects in the developing world that will reduce GHG emissions and enhance adaptive responses to the impacts of climate change. The GCF had set the goal of raising \$100 billion a year by 2020.

In 2030, the GCF is raising approximately \$10 billion a year. Much larger investments are required in order for the GCF to achieve its goals.

**Geo-engineering.** Two core geo-engineering approaches are available to reduce climate change impacts: solar radiation management (SRM) and carbon dioxide removal (CDR).

In 2030, technological developments have improved the viability of both approaches, but both still entail considerable costs, technological uncertainties, and risk. Investment in both is now considered essential if (in combination with GHG emissions reductions) the goal of holding global temperature increases to 2°C is to be met. The goal is to establish international programs under the UNFCCC to coordinate research and development and produce plans that member states can implement in coordination with each other.

#### IV. NEGOTIATION FRAMEWORK

It is 2030. Delegations are attempting to negotiate a new protocol to the UNFCCC that addresses the total percentage reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from 2010 levels by 2050 and 2100. This will require participating states to adjust their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) under the Paris Agreement in order to meet these targets: these new targets will then be considered mandatory and legally binding. The negotiations will also attempt to establish firm commitments to the Green Climate Fund, which requires significant additional investment in order to perform its tasks. The negotiations will also attempt to establish an agreement to establish an international framework for the use of solar radiation management and carbon dioxide removal programs. Below is a chart summarizing the negotiation issues:

Issues	Percentage reduction in GHG emissions by 2050	Financial contribution to Green Climate Fund	Establish SRM and/or CDR programs
	Country/Group Position	Country/Group Position	Country/Group Position

#### IV. DECISION MAKING UNDER THE UNFCCC

Decisions under the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement are made by consensus, not majority vote. Consensus decision-making requires that all major countries consent to the arrangements you negotiate. If a country/country group does not agree to the arrangements and the group adopts a decision without them, that country is unlikely to sign or ratify the new arrangement, which eliminates the possibility of achieving an international climate treaty.

Under the Paris Agreement, countries submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to GHG reductions without establishing required emissions targets. However, by 2030 it is evident that in total these INDC reductions are insufficient to meet the GHG emissions reductions required to hold global warming at 2°C. As a result, the Vancouver COP must agree to deeper reductions and a negotiated formula for percentage reductions by states by 2050 and 2100.

All country groups have to reach agreement on the negotiation issues above in order to achieve a treaty.

## V. NEGOTIATION RULES

The following negotiation rules have been previously agreed to by all parties to the UNFCCC:

- Behave respectfully and avoid making personal attacks on others;
- Share relevant information with other group members;
- Explain the reasons behind one's statements, questions, and actions;
- Keep to the agenda;
- Make decisions by consensus, rather than majority rule.

## VI. SOCIAL SCIENCE SIMULATION REFLECTION

You must submit a 750 word written essay reflecting on the outcomes and process of the Vancouver COP simulation. This assignment is worth 5% of your course grade.

The reflection should be divided into three parts of approximately 200 words each (you can adjust word count a bit from section to section but your reflection cannot exceed 600 total words and should not be less than 500 words):

- Part I: Describe the emissions reductions formula agreed to in the UNFCCC in 1992 and in the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Describe the core features of the Paris Agreement in 2015. How did Paris differ from the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol? In what ways was the Vancouver COP simulation results similar to, and different from, the UNFCCC, Kyoto, and Paris?
- Part II: What were the most significant challenges in the simulated Vancouver 2030 negotiations? Discuss in light of the individual, state/group, and system levels of analysis. In light of these challenges, what is your view of the prospects for successful climate change negotiations in the future?
- Part III: In your own perfect future world, what would have been the preferred outcomes of the Vancouver COP simulation, in all three areas of mitigation, adaptation, and geo-engineering? Discuss what you would hope to see in terms of future agreements on these issues.

Your written reflection is due **before class** via e-mail to [asens@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:asens@mail.ubc.ca) on Feb. 1.