

INDIA'S CLIMATE DIPLOMACY: A CURRENT SCENARIO

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"We are the first generation to be able to end poverty and the last generation that can take steps to avoid the worst impact of climate change. Future generations will judge us harshly if we fail to uphold our moral and historical responsibilities." - Ban Ki Moon (Former UN Secretary General)

"There is one issue that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other and that is the urgent threat of a changing climate." - Barak Obama (Former President USA)

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, Climate Change is one of the most concerning challenge that is facing globally. The Climate Diplomacy platform has been dedicated to monitoring and supporting the climate debate by gathering and promoting awareness which touch on different aspects of climate diplomacy.

The several conferences, conventions, summits have been held/concluded to discuss the issues, causes and impact of climate change, environmental issues by UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, Copenhagen Accord, COP's etc. India is emerging as a key factor in the climate negotiations while at the national and sub-national levels. The climate diplomacy is becoming more active and ambitious. It is essential to unveil this complex scenario of climate change. If we need to understand why climate diplomacy looks and the extent to which India might contribute well to a future international framework for tackling climate change as well as how international parties might cooperate with and support India's domestic efforts or initiatives.

After being analyzing the primary and secondary data for the climate change with reference to India's Climate Diplomacy was strongly influencing policies at different levels. It is being a shaped to serve national and sub-national development interests. While India always practiced smart climate diplomacy through their several programmes such as Integrated Nationally Determines Contribution (INDC) etc.

Climate Diplomacy has become the locus of current global environment governance efforts. Furthermore, recently under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has fully taken on the role of a responsible steward in the management of global issues and this was reflected in its contribution towards the Paris Agreement. Similarly, since the turn of the millennium, India's geopolitical shift towards pragmatism and reflected in its engagement with climate change.

According to UN Secretary General contemporary world is facing such global environmental threats which may be a Geo-paradise, Human Wellness & Peace and International Security such as Nuclear Peril, Terrorism, Violation of International Laws, Unresolved Conflicts, Growing Inequalities, Problems of Refugees and Migrants of Climate Change.

"We are a world in the pieces; we need to be a world in the peace."

Antonio Guterres
9th UN Secretary General

Keywords: Climate Change, Climate Diplomacy, Global, Environment.

INTRODUCTION

There is no question that Climate Change is one of the most concerning challenges which the world facing in the present days. The Climate Diplomacy platform has been dedicated to monitoring and supporting the climate debate by gathering and promoting stories which touch on different aspects of Climate Diplomacy.

The 28th Ministerial meeting on Climate Change which was represented by Indian Union Minister for Environmental, Forest and Climate Change Mr. Prakash Javedekar at Sao Paulo, Brazil from 14-16 August 2019 by the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) countries. In the run-up United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP-25) which held at Madrid, Spain from 02-13 December 2019.^[1]

India has stimulated himself from a protest voice on the edges of global climate diplomacy to one that is actively shaping international efforts to combat climate change. The analysis of drivers behind India's negotiating positions on climate change thus far has focused on the competing motives of equity and co-benefits, which has however been insufficient to explore some of India's recent actions in global climate governance. India's climate diplomacy through the perspective of its broader foreign policy strategy arguing that India's engagement with international climate politics can be better understood by locating its climate diplomacy as a subset of its foreign policy agenda. There is a shifts in India's climate change negotiation stance in the past years which is a part of its overall foreign policy adjustments in favour of greater responsibility in management of the global commons. Moving ahead, the tracking of Indian Foreign Policy objectives will give prominent clues towards the role of India in global climate action.

A series of discussions and negotiations were started over the agreements on international environmental issues at the first global conference on the environment held at Stockholm in a year

1972. At the Rio Earth Summit, countries gathered to agree on the United Nations Framework Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity over the past twenty years. The Summit also led to the creation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. All these agreements which forms the basis of current international cooperation on environmental issues. The phasing out of substances that deplete the Ozone layer which came into existence in 1989 at the Montreal Protocol.

India has always practiced smart climate diplomacy. To stay on course on its INDC (Intended Nationally Determined Contribution) the government needs to accelerate the pace of important reforms and mainstream climate change in public policy and implementing decisions. The Government of India adapt the climate change as the regional cooperation strategy in the region of South-East Asia as an important agenda. Without making the substantial headway in the global climate dynamics there will be no better coalition without a strong political support, which should have smarter diplomacy and have superior statesmanship for best technical cooperation without engaging the substantial headway in the global climate dynamics.^[2]

BACKGROUND

We can conceptualize that it is a fairly positive story in which India made effective efforts by reducing its economic growth. The success of India was praised by the world bank in setting a record low price for solar power in the renewable energy auctions.

In 1972, former Indian Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi raised his concern in its speech about the tradition of India's climate policy which pits socio-economic development against environmental protection for the developed northern countries which causing global environmental problems.^[3] India has been central to the International Climate

order since the beginning of the climate change negotiations in 1992.

1. **Role of India in global climate politics:** ^[4]

The historical responsibility of the North and per capita rights to the global carbon budget were quickly adopted by India's climate negotiators as the bedrock of India's position in the first climate change negotiations. As India is the world's third largest emitter with rising emissions and therefore matters significantly to climate action. The dual nature in India's position is seen as a large emitter currently but not bearing great historical responsibility for climate change, which it is highly vulnerable to a problem, puts India in a unique position.

2. In Kyoto Protocol 1997, India managed to secure its place in the world order in maintaining its efforts and negotiations in the global climate change in which India has played an important role. For taking more responsibilities for developing nations, India was able to safeguard its space for socio-economic development.

3. At COP15 Copenhagen (2009), India persuaded global talks on the climate policies with the emerging powers of the world. In 2007 at COP 13, India acknowledged that the developing need to participate in the developing countries in the global mitigation effort on voluntary basis based on their capabilities.

- In 2008 at an internal level, India has released its National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). Moreover, ahead of the Copenhagen summit in late 2009, India by 2020 along with other BASIC countries announced voluntary targets to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 20%-25% and will not increase its per capita emissions of Annex I countries.

4. At COP-17 in Durban, countries agreed to terminate the Bali Action Plan and replace it with a new process called the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, which further unravelled the firewall disintegrating between North and South for climate action. Unlike the Copenhagen Accord and the Cancun Agreements which reemphasized the importance of equity and CBDR, the Durban Platform made no such reference to these founding principles which were called for the negotiations towards a new global agreement which is applicable to all by 2015.

The group of 77 (G77) i.e. developing countries who recommended developed nations to take some bold actions on climate change about India's Climate Diplomacy at UNFCCC in 1992 while pointing that developing nations might take on some non-compulsive commitments for the finance and technology transfers.

23RD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP 23), BONN, GERMANY

Great achievement for the developing countries and India ^[5]

The lost agenda in Climate Change negotiations at COP-23 on ambitious pre-2020 mitigation action by developed countries was redeemed with efforts by India, China and other developing countries. Many of the proposals floated by India as part of Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) were agreed upon by the COP Presidency and found a place in the draft decision text. A strong message was communicated to the developed countries that post-2020 climate action as part of the Paris Agreement cannot be divorced from pre-2020 commitments. Failure by developed countries to act on previous COP decisions will undermine the integrity of the UNFCCC process and unduly burden the developing countries to do more than their fair share in the post-2020 era.

Early entry into force of second commitment period of Kyoto Protocol-II is at the

heart of pre-2020 discussions, which entails revisit of greenhouse gas mitigation targets by developed countries and provision of finance, technology and capacity building support to developing countries. Although this agenda has a significant bearing on developing countries and has been under discussion since 2007, it has slowly been relegated to the background.

The developing nations raised their sturdy voice about their concerns regarding climate change at KP-II and there is early call for the ratification under the United Nations General Secretary to encourage it at different aspects. Other important decisions include a periodic stock take of pre-2020 implementation and ambition at COP-24 in 2018 and COP 25 in 2019. Hence it would be the final occasion to end up the emission gap by developed countries and it also resulted 2018 as a crucial year in respect for Climate Change negotiations which will help in finalizing the Paris Agreement rulebook. In this regard, the scope of the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue has been expanded from taking stock of collective efforts for the long-term mitigation goal and informs the preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to considering pre 2020 action and support as well. It is expected that the 2018 Facilitate Dialogue will focus on closing the emissions gap so as to have a better starting point in 2020 for the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

24TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP 24), KATOWICE, POLAND

There will be no bargaining on the basic principles such as equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) which is mentioned at the Paris Climate referred as “non-negotiable” on December 12, 2018. Indian counterpart Mr. A. K. Mehta, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment, forest and Climate Change made an official statement at the conference-^[6]

“The statement came amid a move by the developed countries, led by the US and the EU, to

dilute CBDR-RC, assumption within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that recognize the different capabilities and differing responsibilities of individual countries in addressing climate change.”

The BASIC group of nations comprising Brazil, South Africa, India and China had made its stand clear on the UN report on limiting global warming to **1.5 degrees Celsius** above the pre-industrial levels at a joint-press conference held on the sidelines of the UN climate talks.

POINTS MADE INDIA AT COP 24, PERPETRATE TO PARIS AGREEMENT

[7]

1. India’s statement at the conference, that "We all agree that the Paris Agreement is non-negotiable. Therefore, the delicate balance reached between developed and developing countries must be retained, and the principles such as equity and CBDR-RC must be given its impact".
2. It said the outcome at Katowice should be inclusive, consensus based and an integrated package, including all the components of the Paris Agreement Work Programme, to reflect the global consensus reached three years ago on this very day while adopting the Paris Agreement.
3. "Most importantly, we must stand with the poor, marginalized and vulnerable communities who would be most impacted by climate change to show that 'WE CARE'," India said in its statement.
4. It added that it was time we focused on finding common grounds and supporting each other, based on the principles of equity and climate justice, so that "no one is left behind".
5. "It is important to ensure equitable access to global commons for all. The Paris Agreement signifies progress towards enhanced implementation of the Convention. While we do so, we have to

maintain continuity in action by fulfilling pre-2020 commitments."

6. "While we continue to take stock of pre-2020 action and ambition next year as well, we expect that developed countries shall honor their pre-2020 commitments so that no undue burden is shifted to the post-2020 period. We also look forward to see the Doha Amendment coming into force as soon as possible," said the statement.
7. "The vulnerable populations are the worst hit by extreme weather events due to a lack of resources to cope with them. The report enjoins upon us to collectively address the issues of climate change with the urgency that it deserves," India said, days after the UN scientific report was blocked by countries, including the US, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait, at the ongoing climate conference.

INDIA'S GROWING FOOT PRINT IN CLIMATE DIPLOMACY ^[8]

1. **Leading in Global Efforts:** India is on track to meet a majority of its Paris goals and become a global climate leader by meeting its targets a decade earlier, as said by the US-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).
 - Similarly, the recent BRICS ministerial on Environment has agreed to include "Green Good Deeds", a societal movement to protect environment and promote good living, in its official agenda.
 - India is being appreciated for the Indian Presidency of the fourteenth session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Playing a crucial role to mitigate climate change.
 - India recently, announced its support with a 25 per cent increase over its

contribution to the \$15 million Global Environment Facility's new investment cycle.

- On the political front, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was selected for this year's Champions of the Earth award - the UN's highest environmental honor.
2. **Policy Support and Schemes:** Key initiatives as Swachh Bharat Mission, Waste Management Rules, Nationally Determined Contributions, National Clean Air Programme, electric mobility, marine litter, urban forestry scheme, development of resource efficiency policy among others for improving urban environmental quality are well acknowledged by the various platforms including BRICS Countries.
 - "Human Health Mission" and "Coastal Areas Mission" adding as new missions by the government which gradually expanded the scope of the NAPCC
 3. **Engaging in 'Practical' and 'Result-Oriented' Climate Diplomacy initiatives with other Countries:** 14th India-European Union (EU) Summit, the two Parties not only adopted a Joint Statement on Clean Energy and Climate Change but also "agreed to work towards reciprocal opening of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 'Horizon 2020' and Indian Programmes and called for an intensified two-way mobility of researchers."
 - Building multilateral collaborative frameworks such as with the International Solar Alliance.
 4. **Role at COP-24 at Katowice:** India this year succeeded in its multilateral diplomacy to evolve a roadmap for the international community to decisively address climate change. Also, India's success in renewable energy auctions, in reducing emissions

besides its largest commitment to eliminate all single-use plastic in the country by 2022, has enabled it to win accolades globally.

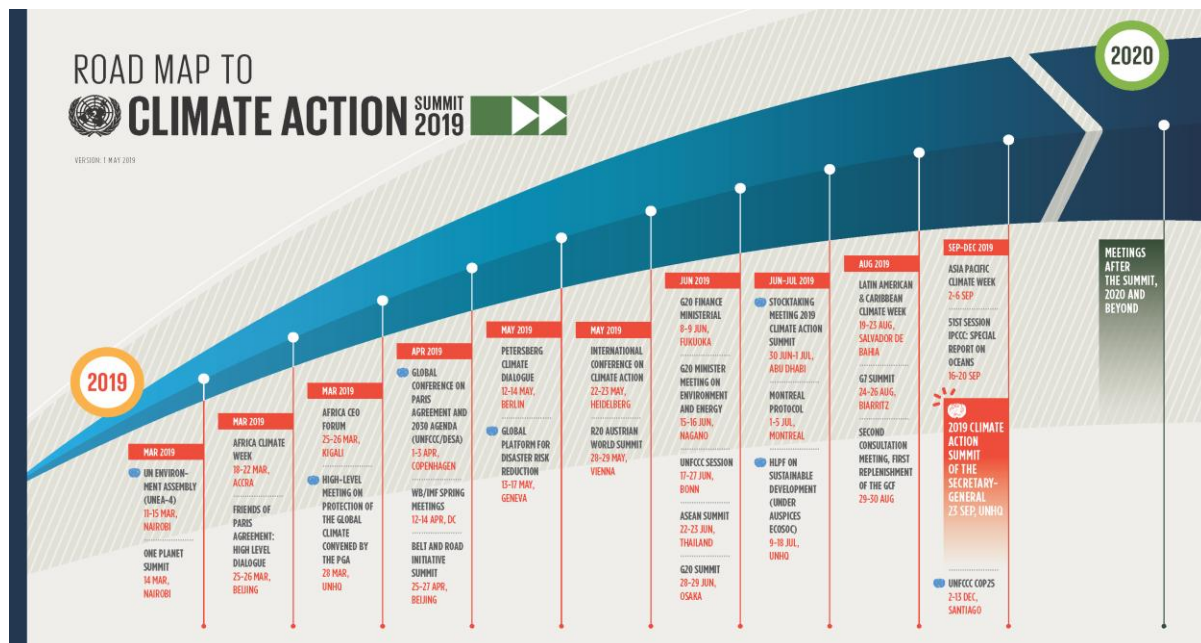
- Voicing its reservations at the COP24 talks, India went vocal over the lack of equity in the rules relating to the global stocktaking in the rulebook that implements the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement.

5. **Leveraging Private Sector:** Even the Indian private sector is not lagging behind in joining the ranks of leading global companies that have committed to set a scientific target to be carbon negative.

Taking the lead, Mahindra & Mahindra, announced its commitment to become a carbon neutral company by 2040.

UN SUMMIT ON CLIMATE ACTION ^[9]

Global emissions are reaching record levels and show no sign of peaking. The impacts of climate change are being felt everywhere and are having very real consequences on people's lives. Climate change is disrupting national economies, costing us dearly today and even more tomorrow. But there is a growing recognition that affordable, scalable solutions are available now that will enable us all to leapfrog to cleaner, more resilient economies.



The latest analysis shows that if we act now, we can reduce carbon emissions within 12 years and hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C and even, as asked by the latest science, to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Thankfully, we have the Paris Agreement – a visionary, viable, forward-looking policy framework that sets out exactly what needs to be done to stop climate disruption and reverse its impact. But the

agreement itself is meaningless without ambitious action.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is calling on all leaders to come to New York on 23 September with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050.

“I want to hear about how we are going to stop the increase in emissions by 2020, and dramatically reduce emissions to reach net-zero emissions by mid-century.”

ACTION PORTFOLIOS

In order to ensure that the transformative actions in the real economy are as impactful as possible, the Secretary-General has prioritized the following action portfolios, which are recognized as having high potential to curb greenhouse gas emissions and increased global action on adaptation and resilience.



- **Finance:** mobilizing public and private sources of finance to drive decarbonization of all priority sectors and advance resilience;
 - **Energy Transition:** accelerating the shift away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy, as well as making significant gains in energy efficiency;
 - **Industry Transition:** transforming industries such as Oil and Gas, Steel, Cement, Chemicals and Information Technology;
 - **Nature-Based Solutions:** Reducing emissions, increasing sink capacity and enhancing resilience within and across forestry, agriculture, oceans and food systems, including through biodiversity conservation, leveraging supply chains and technology;
 - **Cities and Local Action:** Advancing mitigation and resilience at urban and local levels, with a focus on new commitments on low-emission buildings, mass transport and urban infrastructure; and resilience for the urban poor;
 - **Resilience and Adaptation:** advancing global efforts to address and manage the impacts and risks of climate change, particularly in those communities and nations most vulnerable.
- In addition, there are three additional key areas:
- **Mitigation Strategy:** to generate momentum for ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.
 - **Youth Engagement and Public Mobilization:** To mobilize people worldwide to take action on climate change and ensure that young people are integrated and represented across all aspects of the Summit, including the six transformational areas.
 - **Social and Political Drivers:** to advance commitments in areas that affect people’s well-being, such as reducing air pollution, generating decent jobs, and strengthening climate adaptation strategies and protect workers and vulnerable groups.

CONCLUSION

In early climate negotiations leading up to the UNFCCC, the didactic arguments of equity and CBDR were useful rhetorical pivots supporting underlying motivations of sovereignty and independence of choice that were a central pillar of Indian foreign policy at the time. Similarly, since the turn of the millennium, India's geopolitical shift towards pragmatism and then later norm setting has been reflected in its engagement with climate negotiations.

Greater understanding of a country's climate and foreign policy strategy going forward will require more participation from scholars of international relations. In general, global environmental governance has been an understudied field in international relations - just 2 percent of articles in top journals in the field are on environmental subjects and only 1.2 percent address global environmental politics.^[10] The study of global climate politics will benefit from the unique disciplinary attributes that are housed under the field of international relations and political science. Insights from these disciplines can help break deadlocks in climate negotiations by revealing the deeper strategic preferences of critical actors, which may help to increase the collective ambition of action to take on one of the most pressing challenges of our times.

Furthermore, recently under Prime Minister Modi, India has fully taken on the role of a responsible steward in the management of the global commons and this was reflected in its contribution towards the Paris Agreement.^[11]

In political ecology and environmental policy, climate governance is the diplomacy, mechanisms and response measures "aimed at steering social systems towards preventing, mitigating or adapting to the risks posed by climate change. Climate policy has become the locus of current global environmental governance efforts.

Filling the Leadership Vacuum:^[12] US' skepticism on climate change provides an opportunity for

countries like India and China to act on their common interests such as transformation of the coal sector, rapid deployment of renewable and electric vehicles, building sustainable urban infrastructure and, collaboration on R&D and cross-border transfer of climate-friendly technologies.

The future of climate diplomacy depends on the creation of extensive knowledge-action networks that promote collaborative, trans-disciplinary, innovation and solutions-oriented research and help implement long-term strategies geared towards sustainability. Climate diplomacy needs to be tied to other agendas such as that of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), biological diversity, food security, water security, land development and so on. India needs to accelerate the pace of important reforms and mainstream climate change in public policy and investment decisions.

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