



Fact sheet: Copenhagen – Background information

The negotiating process on climate change revolves around the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP), which meets every year to review the implementation of the Convention. The COP adopts decisions and resolutions, published in reports of the COP. Successive decisions taken by the COP make up a detailed set of rules for practical and effective implementation of the Convention. The COP serves as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), which also adopts decisions and resolutions on the implementation of its provisions. For the sake of simplicity, the COP/CMP is termed “United Nations Climate Conference”. This term covers the entire event, including the sessions of the subsidiary bodies to the Convention and the ad hoc working groups as well as the many side events and exhibits held parallel to the talks and negotiations.

Why is the UN Climate Change Conference being held in Copenhagen?

Expressions of interest or invitations to host a climate change conference come from the governments of a prospective host country and are decided by the COP. Following the procedural rules of the Conference, the office of President normally rotates among the five UN regional groups. For 2009, the Conference will take place within the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). When a COP is held at the invitation of a host country, it is customary for the COP and CMP to elect as President a Minister from that country, usually the Environment Minister. The last time WEOG held the Presidency of the Conference was in 2005 (COP 11/CMP 1). The meeting took place in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and was presided over by the Canadian Environment Minister. Whilst the Presidency rotates, the actual location of the sessions can vary. Following technical missions to assess the facilities at the venue envisaged by the host country, the Government and the UNFCCC secretariat conclude a Host Country Agreement indicating all the facilities and equipment needed.

How many people will attend?

Traditionally, the COP/CMP attracts several thousand participants, including government representatives and observer organizations. The sessions in Bali in 2007 attracted close to 11,000 participants, including some 3,500 government officials, over 5,800 representatives of UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and nearly 1,500 accredited members of the media. The UN Climate Change Conference in Poznań last year came close to that size, with around 9,300 participants.



Who comes to the United Nations Climate Change Conferences?

Participation in COP 15 and CMP 5 is restricted to duly nominated representatives of Parties, observer States, accredited observer organizations and accredited press/media. Those Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to the Protocol may participate as observers in the CMP. Conferences traditionally have a high-level segment attended by anywhere from 70 to 150 ministers and senior officials, usually held during the last three days of the session. The high-level segment includes an opening or welcoming event often with head of state participation. The UN Secretary-General is likely to attend at least part of the meeting.

How much is the conference likely to cost?

When a Government offers to host a UNFCCC conference, the secretariat provides a list of requirements, including an appropriate conference centre, equipment, security, logistics and utilities. Some governments have ready-made facilities, and can deliver at relatively low costs. Others need to either rent the facilities or construct temporary structure, at significantly higher costs. The direct cost for the UNFCCC secretariat will be approximately US\$ 2 million. Much of the additional cost to the secretariat is indirect, relating to staff time and other efforts in preparing substantive input, planning for and servicing the conference.

A finalised budget for government expenditure related to COP 15 has not yet been produced, due to a number of uncertainties regarding the total number of delegates, the level of security measures needed etc. At present, the Danish government has allocated approx. US\$ 62 million on the government budget to COP activities, but it is possible that the final amount will exceed this figure.

What is expected to happen politically in Copenhagen?

Parties agreed at Bali to jointly step up international efforts to combat climate change and get to an agreed outcome in Copenhagen in 2009. Thus, an ambitious climate change deal will be clinched to follow on the first phase of the UN's Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. The Copenhagen agreed outcome need not resolve all details, but it must provide clarity on four key issues:

- Ambitious emission reduction targets for developed countries
- Nationally appropriate mitigation actions of developing countries
- Scaling up financial and technological support for both adaptation and mitigation
- An effective institutional framework with governance structures that address the needs of developing countries

Copenhagen is to result both in a post-2012 outcome as well as important decisions and start-up finance to immediately kick-start action on climate change in 2010.



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United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

What is worth covering from the perspective of the media?

A UN Climate Change Conference is both a political conference and a climate change “fair”, attracting key members from governments and civil society who professionally deal with climate change on a daily basis. Whilst the opening day and the high-level segment at the end of the conference attract high level government participation, newsworthy events take place on a daily basis. Such events are press briefings (up to fourteen on a single day) for example on the part of governments, environmental organisations and UN bodies. These media briefings give an update on the status of the negotiations are used to launch new studies and to announce key decisions. In addition, several hundred side events are held in the course of every COP. Side-events, which the potential to generate interesting news stories, are not only given by multilateral organisations, governments and ngos, but for example academia and industry associations. As far as the political proceedings of the COP/CMP are concerned, it should be noted that concluding negotiations usually go well into the night of the final day of the conference.

To what extent is the conference carbon-neutral?

Denmark's first goal is to avoid all unnecessary emissions of GHG within the given conditions of the conference. Every delegate can make a difference. Still, a conference of this size will always produce a lot of GHG that cannot be reduced. Therefore, Denmark has decided to offset emissions for COP 15 through a project in Bangladesh organised by the Danish Energy Agency. The DEA calculates this project will cut more than 50,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions each year and improve air quality in one of the world's most polluted cities. More details can be found on our fact sheet Minimising the Copenhagen carbon footprint:

http://unfccc.int/files/press/fact_sheets/application/pdf/fact_sheet_carbon_footprint.pdf.