

EDAM Climate Action Paper Series 2015/5



Turkish Position in the UNFCCC

Climate Change Negotiations

Gökşin Bavbek

Research Assistant, EDAM

November 2015

Introduction

A new global climate change agreement will be negotiated at the Paris Conference which is due to take place on December, 2015. The Kyoto Protocol was the first global agreement aimed at curbing the greenhouse gas(GHG) emissions. However, the agreement imposed binding reduction targets only on the industrialized countries. The objective of the new agreement that will succeed the Kyoto Protocol will be to commit all the countries in the world with varying levels of reduction pledges based on each country's national circumstances. In contrast with the Kyoto Protocol, each country will determine its own reduction commitment with a bottom-up approach in a document called the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution(INDC). The ultimate aim of the conference will be to limit the global temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius over this century. A number of developments across the world have increased the hopes that a substantive agreement will be reached at the outcome of the negotiations such as the consensus reached between the two largest emitters in the world, China and US. The conference will be critical in deciding the shape of the new global climate regime as various contentious issues still remain between various parties to the conference.

The Paris Conference will also bear considerable importance for Turkey. For the first time in its history Turkey will be undertaking a GHG mitigation target underlined in its pledge submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change(UNFCCC). The outcome of the negotiations will have direct effects on Turkey's carbon market in the near future. On the other hand, Turkey can potentially play an important role in the negotiation process. As a middle income country, Turkey can potentially help to conciliate between the diverging interests of the developed and developing country parties to facilitate in reaching an overarching global agreement acceptable to all parties. After a discussion of the main issues surrounding the climate change negotiations, the implications of a new global climate change regime on Turkey will be analyzed in this paper as well as the potential contributions of the country to the negotiation process.

Background of the Paris Conference

UNFCCC is an international treaty that has been agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on 1992 and came into force on 1994. The objective of the treaty has been described as the 'stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system'¹. Currently, the treaty has reached near universal acceptance with 195 of the countries in the world being parties to the convention².

The parties to the conference meet on an annual basis to further the stated goal of the convention. The Kyoto Protocol was signed at the 3rd Conference of Parties (COP) gathered in Kyoto on the year 1997. The Protocol committed its parties to adopt internationally binding GHG reduction targets but the developing country parties were not assigned any commitments. The time frame of the protocol included the period between 2008 and 2012 but several countries later extended their commitments to 2020 in the outcome of the Doha talks on 2012³. In the first commitment period, 37 industrialized countries and the European Community took up commitments to reduce their emission levels compared to the year 1990⁴. The Protocol also included the three market based mechanisms of emissions trading, clean development mechanism and joint implementation to enable more flexibility for countries to meet their mitigation commitments.

The binding period of the Protocol ended on 2012, and after 2020 there will be no international agreement in force to limit the GHG emissions. The need for a new agreement to succeed the Kyoto regime has been acknowledged for some time. The 15th COP in Copenhagen on 2009 was seen as an important opportunity for a post Kyoto deal to be reached. However, the negotiations were not successful as the diverging views of different countries made it impossible to reach a legally binding agreement acceptable to all parties. Instead, several of the parties agreed to state voluntary targets for the year 2020. The Copenhagen conference thus marked a point where the international negotiations started to move away from the discussion of a Kyoto style agreement to negotiations

¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf> on 30.09.2015

² United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/6036.php on 30.09.2015

³ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from http://unfccc.int/key_steps/doha_climate_gateway/items/7389.php 30.09.2015

⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php on 30.09.2015

based on nationally determined voluntary mitigation pledges⁵. At the 17th COP in Durban on 2011, the parties to the convention have decided to begin talks for a new climate change agreement covering the period after 2020 to be concluded on 2015. The official negotiations for the agreement began on 2012⁶. Afterwards, a draft negotiating text with many alternative options was prepared at COP 20 in Lima on 2014⁷. The post 2020 climate change regime is currently set to be finalized at the outcome of the 21st COP at the Paris Conference.

Main Issues to be discussed at the Conference

The main disagreements that have prevented a deal to be reached in the past mostly revolved around the conflicting views of the rich and poor nations. Large developing countries like China and India have traditionally emphasized historical responsibility in inducing climate change, arguing that the industrialized nations should take more responsibility because of their historical role in inducing climate change. On the other hand, the industrialized countries instead stress the current responsibilities and capabilities of each country in fighting climate change. The apparent conflict between the concerns for adaptation and mitigation is also a contentious issue. Many developing nations are highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and have generally lower capabilities and thus demand financing aid and loss and damage compensation from the developed countries validated by their historical role in bringing about climate change. On the other hand, the industrialized nations generally want to avoid stringent commitments in this regard and instead prioritize the mitigation aspect of the struggle against climate change. Thus, the main points of contention included whether the agreement should be legally binding or not, to which parties it should be binding, how much aid should be provided to the developing countries to help in mitigation and adaptation to climate change and whether compensation should be provided to developing countries in the form of loss and damage mechanisms⁸.

As the date of the conference draws closer, some of the basic characteristics of the prospective agreement begin to take shape. Currently, the negotiations for the draft of the new climate change agreement are ongoing through the 'Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced

⁵ Jacoby, Henry D. and Chen, Y. H. Henry, 'Expectations for a New Climate Agreement' (2014), MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change, p. 3

⁶ Xue Du, Lü, 'Assessment of achievements of the Lima Climate Change Conference and perspectives on the future' (2015), p. 220

⁷ 'Lima Call for Climate Action', accessed from

https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/lima_dec_2014/application/pdf/auv_cop20_lima_call_for_climate_action.pdf on 24.09.2015

⁸ Carbon Brief, 10.12.2014, 'Infographic: Mapping country alliances at the international climate talks', accessed from <http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2014/12/infographic-mapping-country-alliances-at-the-international-climate-talks/> on 3.10.2015

Action' and will continue until the text will be finalized in the Paris Conference⁹. Some general characteristics of the agreement were confirmed at the first ministerial level meeting between the main parties to the conference on July, 2015. The participants reiterated that the agreement should be 'universal, ambitious, durable, dynamic, equitable and rules-based', should cover mitigation, adaptation, means of implementation and transparency of both action and support, should capture the 2°C or 1.5°C goal, should reflect 'the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in light of different national circumstances' and should provide the proper support to the developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation efforts¹⁰.

A main difference that the new climate change agreement will have in comparison to the Kyoto Protocol is that the new agreement aims to be universal in scope. The target is that nearly all countries in the world will take on mitigation commitments. Each party will decide the shape and degree of its commitment based on its own national circumstances. It is required for the countries demonstrate that their pledges are fair and ambitious according to their own capacities to reach the ultimate aim of limiting the global temperature increase to 2°C. It is currently not clear whether and what kind of mechanisms will be put into place to ensure that the parties satisfy their pledged contributions. Many countries currently oppose the agreement to be legally binding in character, such as the United States¹¹.

An important element that will be central to the new climate change deal is the concept of Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC). The INDC's are documents in which each country's GHG reduction plans are outlined and detailed. Under the Kyoto Protocol, the reduction requirements of the participant countries were imposed on them in a top-down manner. Conversely, under the new agreement, each party will decide its own reduction commitment through its INDC based on its respective national circumstances. At COP 21, a decision was taken calling the parties to intensify their preparation of INDC's in a manner that facilitates 'the clarity, transparency and understanding of the intended contributions'¹². It is hoped that the aggregation of the different country INDC's will enable the world to limit the global temperature increase to 2°C. All parties are required to submit their INDC's to the UNFCCC in advance of the Paris Conference. As of the beginning of October, most

⁹ UNFCCC Newsroom, 11.09.2015, 'Governments 'Green Light' for Draft Agreement for Negotiation in October in Advance of Paris', accessed from <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/governments-give-green-light-for-draft-agreement-for-negotiation-in-october-in-advance-of-paris/> on 29.09.2015

¹⁰ First informal ministerial consultations to prepare COP21 Paris, 20-21 July 2015, Aide-mémoire produced by France and Peru, accessed from www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/file/1124/download?token=F2RYDyjN on 29.09.2015

¹¹ Xue Du, Lü, 'Assessment of achievements of the Lima Climate Change Conference and perspectives on the future' (2015), p. 221

¹² 'Report of the Conference of the Parties on its nineteenth session', accessed from <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/10a01.pdf> on 6.10.2015

of the parties to the UNFCCC have announced their commitments. 121 INDC's are currently submitted to the UNFCCC, including the INDC of the European Union on behalf of all its member states¹³. The timeframe for the commitment period is set between the years 2020 and 2030. Most of the country pledges cover this period of time, although some countries have chosen to limit their contributions to the year 2025. According to the Climate Action Tracker, the pledges made so far have put the world in a track to limit the global temperature increase to 2.7°C¹⁴. Therefore, a significant gap still exists between the 2°C target and the current trajectory. Whether and how to increase the ambition in the INDC's to meet the 2°C goal will be one of the main considerations of the Paris Conference. One option is to increase the ambition in the INDC's during the conference to make them compatible with the 2°C target. It is also important to ensure that countries will not backtrack from the pledges announced in their INDC's. The decision taken at the Lima Conference did not foresee any international assessment of the individual INDC's to be carried out. The sum of the ambition levels of the INDC's will be assessed in a synthesis report to be prepared on 1 November 2015. The limited time between the preparation of the report and the Paris Conference doesn't leave much chance of a substantial revision to be done in the INDC's before the conference¹⁵.

The issue of climate finance will also be at the center of the negotiations in the upcoming COP 21. The World Economic Forum argues that, around 700 billion US dollars would be required annually by the year 2020 in order to keep the global temperature rise below 2°C¹⁶. It is estimated that around a total 450 billion US dollar worth of investments will be required by the developing countries starting from the same year. 350 billion of this figure would be required for the mitigation needs and 100 billion would be required for the adaptation needs. A part of these investments will be provided by the developing countries themselves, but a significant portion will have to come from the developed world. These figures are quite high but it must be kept in mind that the total flows of debt and equity into the developing countries amount to an annual 1.2 trillion US dollars¹⁷. Several developing countries have included conditional reduction targets in their INDC's depending on international

¹³ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx> on 8.10.2015

¹⁴ Gütschow, Johannes, Jeffery, Louise, Alexander, Ryan, Hare, Bill, Schaefer, Michiel, Rocha, Marcia, Höhne, Niklas, Fekete, Hanna, van Breevoort, Pieter and Blok, Kornelis, 'INDC's lower projected warming to 2.7°C: significant progress but still above 2°C' (2015), p.2

¹⁵ Ott, Hermann, Arens, Christof, Hermwille, Lukas, Mersmann, Florian, Obergassel, Wolfgang and Wang-Helmreich, Hanna, 'A first assessment of the Climate Conference in Lima – COP20 moves at a snail's pace on the road to Paris 2015' (2014), Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, p. 153

¹⁶ Amin, Amal-Lee and Gallagher, Liz, 'Aligning Finance to Deliver Climate Ambition and Climate Resilience in a 2015 Climate Agreement' (2014), World Resources Institute, p.2

¹⁷ Daily Development, 11.09.2015, 'Climate Finance: Investing in our Collective Future', accessed from <http://www.dailydevelopment.org/blog/climate-finance-investing-our-collective-future> on 5.10.2015

finance. By the end of September, it was estimated that the financing requirements of the developing country parties amounted to a total of 3,529 billion US dollars for the period between 2015 and 2030, including both domestic and international sources¹⁸.

In order to provide a mechanism to account for the climate finance needs of the developing countries, the Green Climate Fund was initiated on 2010 at the Climate Change Conference in Mexico. The Green Climate Fund is currently the only international financing institution with the sole mission of furthering UNFCCC's climate change target. It is aimed at supporting both mitigation and adaptation efforts in the developing world¹⁹. The target for the Green Climate Fund is to increase the funding levels to 100 billion US dollars annually, starting from the year 2020²⁰. However, the target for the initial period between the years 2015-2018 was set as 10 billion US dollars. At the end of the Lima Conference, the pledged amount of financing for the fund was 10.2 billion dollars, so the initial target has been exceeded²¹. Even though the initial target has been reached, significant progress still needs to be made before 2020 to reach the 100 billion target as the industrialized countries still haven't committed to a clear roadmap for reaching this goal.

The issue of technology transfer constitutes another contentious issue between the developed and developing countries. Currently, the Technology Mechanism established under the UNFCCC only provides consultancy and information services. Several developing country parties instead demand to expand the role of the organization to provide technology investment, development and transfer. Developed country parties, on the other hand, were not very eager to provide these²². The issue will remain in the forefront of the discussion at the Paris Conference and be one of the points of contention.

Loss and damage considerations will be another important issue to be decided at the conference. Loss and damage is traditionally framed as the residual impacts of climate change that could not be prevented by mitigation and adaptation²³. Throughout the years many developing country parties, especially those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, have demanded loss and damage

¹⁸The Carbon Brief, 28.09.2015, 'Paris 2015: Tracking requests for climate finance', accessed from <http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2015/09/paris-2015-tracking-requests-for-climate-finance/>, on 6.10.2015

¹⁹ The Green Climate Fund, accessed from <http://www.gcfund.org/about/the-fund.html> on 7.10.2015

²⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from http://unfccc.int/bodies/green_climate_fund_board/body/6974.php on 7.10.2015

²¹ Ott, Hermann, Arens, Christof, Hermwille, Lukas, Mersmann, Florian, Obergassel, Wolfgang and Wang-Helmreich, Hanna, 'A first assessment of the Climate Conference in Lima – COP20 moves at a snail's pace on the road to Paris 2015' (2014), Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, p. 155

²² Xue Du, Lü, 'Assessment of achievements of the Lima Climate Change Conference and perspectives on the future' (2015), p. 222

²³ Okereke, Chukwumerije, Baral, Prajwal and Dagnet, Yamide, 'Options for Adaptation and Loss and Damage in a 2015 Climate Agreement' (2014), World Resources Institute, p. 3

compensation to be paid to them by the developed country parties who have a historical responsibility in instigating climate change. These include compensation for the various adverse effects of climate change such as the damages incurred by extreme weather events or the much slower effects of climate change such as sea level rise²⁴. The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage was founded with these considerations in mind on 2013. The developing country parties argue that this mechanism should be incorporated in the new agreement but the developed countries oppose the idea on the grounds that climate change adaptation is a locally beneficial action and thus should mainly be the responsibility of local authorities²⁵. The issue is currently only mentioned in the introductory paragraphs of the Lima 'Call for Climate Action' and is not included in the operative paragraphs of the document²⁶.

Another important item on the agenda of the conference will be the fate of the market mechanisms established by the Kyoto regime and the prospects for new mechanisms being created. On the Lima Conference, a decision to continue the clean development mechanism and joint implementation was adopted. The 'Lima Call for Climate Action' also involves a reference to a carbon market mechanism, although the details of the mechanism are not provided²⁷.

Transparency is another issue that will be the subject of debate among different countries. There are several items that can be subjected to calls for transparency such as national emission reduction targets, policies and actions and the support means provided by the developed countries to the developing countries. Typically, the priority of the developed country parties is to ensure that the mitigation targets and actions of all countries are subject to a transparent monitoring, reporting, and verification system (MRV). On the other hand, the developing country parties insist that the support provided to the developing world should also be subject to a similarly transparent process²⁸.

²⁴ Oberthür, Sebastian, G. M. La Vina, Antonio and Morgan, Jennifer, 'Getting Specific on the 2015 Climate Change Agreement: Suggestions for the Legal Text with an Explanatory Memorandum'(2015), World Resources Institute, p. 3

²⁵ Xue Du, Lü, 'Assessment of achievements of the Lima Climate Change Conference and perspectives on the future'(2015), pp. 220-221

²⁶ Ott, Hermann, Arens, Christof, Hermwille, Lukas, Mersmann, Florian, Obergassel, Wolfgang and Wang-Helmreich, Hanna, 'A first assessment of the Climate Conference in Lima – COP20 moves at a snail's pace on the road to Paris 2015'(2014), Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, p. 155

²⁷ 'Lima Call for Climate Action', accessed from https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/lima_dec_2014/application/pdf/auv_cop20_lima_call_for_climate_action.pdf on 24.09.2015

²⁸ Xue Du, Lü, 'Assessment of achievements of the Lima Climate Change Conference and perspectives on the future'(2015), p. 221

Major Alliance Groups in Climate Change Negotiations

Traditionally, the two main negotiating blocs in the climate change negotiations comprised of the industrialized and the developing countries. However, as the negotiations progressed over the years, several differentiated negotiating blocs also emerged both within the industrialized and developing country alliances. Currently, the international landscape is much more fragmented with multiple interconnected alliance groups adopting different priorities and positions. Nowadays, the strict divide between the developed and developing countries doesn't make as much sense as it used to. The main alliance groups that have recently taken part in the climate negotiations can be given as follows:

- **European Union**

As an intergovernmental organization, the members of the European Union work together to form a common climate change policy. Traditionally, the EU has been on the forefront for climate change mitigation and led the other developed countries to take on increased reduction commitments.

- **Umbrella Group**

The Umbrella Group is a loose coalition of non-EU developed countries made up of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the US. The group has mainly been involved in the Kyoto Protocol negotiations²⁹.

- **Environmental Integrity Group(EIG)**

The EIG includes the countries Mexico, Liechtenstein, Monaco, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland. The members have cooperated in the past to increase the global GHG mitigation ambitions and facilitate in reaching a legally binding agreement.

- **Cartagena Dialogue for Progressive Action**

The Cartagena Dialogue for Progressive Action is an informal discussion group that aims to increase the global mitigation ambitions and to support the adoption of a legally binding agreement. The group includes 32 developed and developing country parties that have come together with these aims³⁰.

- **G77 Countries**

The G77 countries group is the largest negotiating bloc composed of developing countries. As of May,

²⁹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/parties/negotiating_groups/items/2714.php on 24.09.2015

³⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_jun_2013/in-session/application/pdf/adp2-2_cartegena_04062013.pdf on 5.10.2015

2014, the bloc included a total of 133 countries³¹. It defends a wide range of interests as its members include a very diverse mix of countries such as large emerging economies like China, much less advanced and smaller countries and some more developed countries such as South Korea and Mexico. Although the bloc generally defends the interests of developing countries in the world, the interests of its members have become more fragmented and diversified in the recent past and several other alliances have emerged within the group³².

- **Like-Minded Developing Countries(LMDC)**

LMDC are another group of developing countries bringing together a diverse range of countries including Bolivia, China, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Iran, Iraq, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Venezuela. The group cooperates to put pressure on the developed country parties to increase their commitments and provide climate change finance and loss and damage payments to the developing country parties³³.

- **BASIC Countries**

The BASIC countries are a bloc formed by the four large newly industrialized countries of Brazil, South Africa, China and India at the result of a deal signed on November, 2009. The bloc has worked cooperatively in the past to protect their interests against the developed country parties.

- **Least Developed Countries(LDC)**

The least developed countries in the world often cooperate within the UN system to defend their interests. The group is comprised of the 48 countries classified as least developed by the UN. Their main concerns include urging the international community to help in addressing their vulnerabilities and adaptation to climate change, given their limited capabilities.

- **Alliance of Small Island States(AOSIS)**

AOSIS is a coalition of small island states and low-lying coastal countries that have similar concerns related to the developmental challenges and similar environmental problems. Most of the members are also members of the G77. The member countries are particularly threatened by the effects of sea

³¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/parties/negotiating_groups/items/2714.php on 24.09.2015

³² 'Climate negotiations reveal new alliances in the Global South', accessed from <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/climate-change-road-paris/climate-negotiations-reveal-new-alliances-global-south-311641> on 3.10.2015

³³ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from https://unfccc.int/files/documentation/submissions_from_parties/adp/application/pdf/adp_lmdc_workstream_1_20130313.pdf on 24.09.2015

level rise. The alliance actively lobbies for securing compensation to be paid by the industrialized countries for current and future damages caused by climate change. The alliance also functions as a standing lobby and negotiating voice for the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) within the United Nations system³⁴.

- **Pacific Alliance**

Four Latin American countries that border the Pacific Ocean, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru make up the Pacific Alliance which is a regional trade bloc that has also been in cooperation in the climate change negotiations. The bloc stresses the vulnerability of its members to climate change and works to advance the global commitments on both climate change mitigation and adaptation³⁵.

- **The Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean(AILAC)**

AILAC countries include the Latin American countries of Peru, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala. As middle income countries, the main aim of the AILAC members is to bridge the gap between the rich and poor countries in the world that has so far prevented an agreement to be reached. They are also seeking to pursue ambitious climate action to proactively urge the more hesitant countries to also increase their ambition³⁶.

- **Central American Integration System(SICA)**

SICA is another Latin American alliance group which is composed of eight Central American countries. The bloc aims to urge the international community to recognize Central America as a region highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and to increase the flow of financial resources, technical assistance and technology transfer into the region for the aim of combating climate change³⁷.

- **ALBA Countries**

Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela are members of the ALBA countries.

³⁴ Alliance of Small Island States, accessed from <http://aosis.org/about/> on 3.10.2015

³⁵ 'Presidents presented the Declaration of the Pacific Alliance on Climate Change', accessed from http://www.sice.oas.org/TPD/Pacific_Alliance/Presidential_Declarations/Lima_Declaration_on_climate_change_e.pdf on 9.10.2015

³⁶ Roberts, Timmons and Edwards, Guy, 'A New Latin American Climate Negotiating Group: The Greenest Shoots in the Doha Desert', accessed from <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2012/12/12-latin-america-climate-roberts> on 2.10.2015

³⁷ 'SICA Sends Declaration on Climate Change, Disasters to Rio+20', accessed from <http://sd.iisd.org/news/sica-sends-declaration-on-climate-change-disasters-to-rio20/> on 9.10.2015

ALBA is an intergovernmental organization that is taking a proactive role in the climate negotiations by trying to influence the developed nations to pay for their 'climate debts' by committing to ambitious mitigation targets³⁸.

- **African Group**

African Group is another geographical bloc which includes many African countries which occasionally work together to defend their interests in the climate negotiations.

- **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries(OPEC)**

OPEC countries have also often worked together in the climate change negotiations. Their priority has mainly been to defend the interests of the oil industry and to try to slow down the emission reductions³⁹.

- **CACAM Countries**

CACAM countries are composed of Albania, Moldova, a group of countries from Central Asia and a few countries from the Caucasus which have cooperated in the past to defend their common interests.

The Turkish Position over the Years

Turkey was referenced in the UNFCCC after its inception on 1992 as both an Annex I and an Annex II country. While the Annex I listed developed countries and economies in transition that were obligated to take on mitigation commitments by the Kyoto Protocol, Annex II listed the OECD countries that were obligated to provide financial and technical support to developing countries and countries in transition. All other countries were referred to as non-Annex parties⁴⁰. As a result of this classification, Turkey declined to sign the agreement. Then, starting from COP 1 on 1995 to COP 6 on 2000, Turkey has made efforts to be excluded from the UNFCCC annexes⁴¹. The main argument that Turkey provided was that it was not a fully developed country nor was a country in economic transition⁴².

³⁸ Roberts, Timmons and Edwards, Guy, 'A New Latin American Climate Negotiating Group: The Greenest Shoots in the Doha Desert', accessed from <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2012/12/12-latin-america-climate-roberts> on 2.10.2015

³⁹ Carbon Brief, 10.12.2014, 'Infographic: Mapping country alliances at the international climate talks', accessed from <http://www.carbonbrief.org/blog/2014/12/infographic-mapping-country-alliances-at-the-international-climate-talks/> on 3.10.2015

⁴⁰ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/items/2704.php on 5.10.2015

⁴¹ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanlığı, accessed from <http://www.enerji.gov.tr/tr-TR/Sayfalar/Uluslararasi-Muzakereler> on 25.09.2015

⁴² Kayhan, Ali Kerem, 'Country Report: Turkey, Turkey's Climate Change Dilemma' (2013), IUCNAEL EJournal, p. 270

Later, on 2001, following a slightly different proposal by Turkey, it was agreed that Turkey be left out of Annex II and continue to be an Annex I country albeit with 'special circumstances'. On 2004, Turkey became an official party to the convention as an Annex II country with its special circumstances recognized. Later, Turkey also became a party to the Kyoto Protocol on 2009, without taking any mitigation commitments. On the year 2010, Turkey's part in the UNFCCC as an Annex 1 country with special circumstances was confirmed by the other parties to the convention. On 2012, the special circumstance of Turkey was referenced again with the decision that mandated the Annex II countries to extend their technological, capacity building and financial support to the countries with special circumstances. Currently, the negotiations for Turkey to receive climate change support are still ongoing⁴³. After the Lima Conference, Turkey agreed to join the new climate change deal by preparing an INDC. The Turkish INDC was submitted at the end of September, 2015 marked the first time Turkey officially announced a GHG mitigation pledge⁴⁴.

So far, the two main concerns of Turkey in the climate change negotiations have been to avoid taking on mitigation commitments and to ensure climate change finance to be provided into the country. Turkey has also opted not to be a part of any climate change negotiation blocs. Turkey hasn't been aligned with the more conservative countries or the progressive countries in the climate talks. While this may help the country to have more flexibility regarding its position, it also seriously hinders the country's capacity to influence the decisions taken at the climate meetings.

Turkey has also submitted its national communications as required by the UNFCCC. The Turkish position regarding climate change is summarized in the Fifth National Communication of Turkey submitted to the UNFCCC⁴⁵. Moreover, the strategy of Turkey in fighting against climate change is detailed in the National Climate Change Action Plan prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Affairs⁴⁶.

Even though Turkey's per capita GHG emission levels are still much below those of many developed countries, one worrisome indicator is that the emission levels of the country have been rapidly increasing in the last decades. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, the total GHG emissions of the country amounted to 459 million tons of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) on the year 2013. This marks a large increase of 110.4% increase compared to the 1990 levels. Meanwhile, the per capita emissions

⁴³ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Enerji ve Tabii Kaynaklar Bakanlığı, accessed from <http://www.enerji.gov.tr/tr-TR/Sayfalar/Uluslararasi-Muzakereler> on 25.09.2015

⁴⁴ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed from <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/indc/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx> on 3.10.2015

⁴⁵ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, 'Turkey's Fifth Communication under the UNFCCC' (2013)

⁴⁶ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, 'National Climate Change Action Plan' (2011)

in the country increased from 3.96 tons to 6.04 tons in the same period⁴⁷. With these figures, Turkey became the second among the OECD countries in terms GHG emission increases⁴⁸.

The Turkish INDC has been submitted to the UNFCCC on 30 September 2015. This is a significant step since it marks the first time that the country is undertaking a mitigation pledge. However, the ambition and fairness exhibited at the pledge can be considered questionable. The document envisions a 21% emissions reduction from the business as usual(BAU) scenario between the years 2020 and 2030. Most of the developing countries have presented plans involving reductions from business-as-usual scenarios and a reduction of 21% can be considered acceptable. However, the problem with the Turkish INDC is that the business-as-usual scenario foresees an unusually high growth in emissions and therefore the promised reduction doesn't amount to much. According to the BAU scenario, the country is set to increase its emissions from 459 million tons of CO₂e on 2013 to 1175 million tons on 2030⁴⁹. With a 21% reduction, the figure totals 929 million tons of CO₂e for 2030. Even with the pledged reduction, this figure would mean that Turkey intends to increase its GHG emissions by approximately 102% between the years 2013 and 2030, which corresponds to an approximate 5% annual rate of increase.

Thus, Turkey intends to increase its annual growth rate of GHG emissions for the commitment period compared to the growth rate at the last two decades. The TEMA Foundation claims that with the current projection, the per capita GHG emissions in Turkey are set to reach two times that of the EU average by the year 2030⁵⁰. A recent study undertaken by the Istanbul Policy Center and World Wildlife Fund-Turkey estimates in their base pathway scenario that the annual GHG emissions of the country would only reach 659 million tons of CO₂e by the year 2030 which is much less than the government projections included in the country's INDC. The same study estimates the GHG emission levels to reach 852 million tons of CO₂e on 2030 under the high economic growth scenario and states that the emission levels would have to be limited to 340 million tons of CO₂e by 2030 to be able to

⁴⁷ Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 'Seragazi Emisyon Envanteri, 2013', accessed from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18744> on 3.10.2015

⁴⁸ Bianet, 1.10.2015, 'Türkiye 2030'da Sera Gazı Salımını Yüzde 21 Azaltacağını Açıkladı, Peki Bu Doğru mu?', accessed from <http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/167955-turkiye-2030-da-sera-gazi-salimini-yuzde-21-azaltacagini-acikladi-pek-bu-dogru-mu> on 3.10.2015

⁴⁹ 'Republic of Turkey, Intended Nationally Determined Contribution', accessed from http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Turkey/1/The_INDC_of_TURKEY_v.15.19.30.pdf on 30.9.2015

⁵⁰ Cumhuriyet, 2.10.2015, 'Türkiye sera gazı emisyonlarını %116 artırmayı planlıyor', accessed from http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/380329/Turkiye_sera_gazi_emisyonlarini_116_artirmayi_planliy_or.html on 5.10.2015

comply with a 2°C trajectory⁵¹. According to these calculations, the Turkish INDC evades making a significant mitigation pledge by making very high GHG emission projections in its BAU scenario.

With this pledge, Turkey effectively announces that it will not exert significant effort to for the transition into a low-carbon economy until 2030 and will continue with the high carbon growth trajectory it has followed for the last decades, mostly fueled by the recent expansion of coal-fired electricity generation capacity in the country. This outlook is at odds with the position of the country as a geographically vulnerable country to the negative effects of climate change and would contrast with the vision of the Paris Conference to keep the global increase in the temperature levels below 2°C. As a large developing country with a rapid growth rate, a more meaningful reduction commitment would be expected from Turkey.

Several developing countries in the world with similar characteristics to Turkey have announced much more ambitious mitigation targets. For example, Mexico is a country with very close figures to Turkey both in terms of GDP per capita⁵² and in terms of GHG emissions per capita⁵³. Mexico intends to reduce its GHG emissions by 25% on an unconditional basis and possibly by 40% conditionally by the year 2030 compared to a baseline scenario. Using the figures in its baseline scenario, this would mean that Mexico aims to increase its GHG emissions only by around 15% between 2010 and 2030 unconditionally⁵⁴ while Turkey will have increased its emissions by 131% for the same period according to its INDC⁵⁵. Under its conditional pledge, Mexico may even decrease its emissions by 8% in the same timeframe. The mitigation commitment of Mexico also implies a net emissions peak by the year 2026⁵⁸. This large difference in the commitments undertaken by the two countries with similar development levels exposes the inadequacy of the mitigation target underlined in Turkey's INDC.

⁵¹ Yeldan, Erinç, Voyvoda, Ebru, Özgür Berke, Mustafa, Şahin, Ümit and Gacal, Funda, 'Türkiye için Düşük Karbonlu Kalkınma Yolları ve Öncelikleri'(2015), İstanbul Politikalar Merkezi, World Wildlife Fund-Turkey, p. 42

⁵² World Bank, accessed from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

⁵³ UN Millennium Development Goal Indicators, accessed from <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=751> on 9.10.2015

⁵⁴ World Resources Institute, accessed from <http://cait.wri.org/historical> on 9.10.2015

⁵⁵ Mexico's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, accessed from <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Mexico/1/MEXICO%20INDC%2003.30.2015.pdf>

⁵⁶ 'Republic of Turkey, Intended Nationally Determined Contribution', accessed from http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Turkey/1/The_INDC_of_TURKEY_v.15.19.30.pdf on 30.9.2015

⁵⁷ Turkish Statistical Institute, accessed from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=10829> on 9.10.2015

⁵⁸ Mexico's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, accessed from <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Mexico/1/MEXICO%20INDC%2003.30.2015.pdf>

Another good example is China, a country that has for long avoided taking on mitigation commitments. The INDC of China targets a peaking of the GHG emissions by the year 2030 at the latest⁵⁹. No such emissions peak is foreseen in the Turkish INDC, nor any deceleration in growth rate of the emissions until 2030. This is despite the fact that Turkey can be considered a more developed country than China with a GDP per capita of 10530 US dollars compared to China's 7594 for the year 2014⁶⁰. The INDC's of Morocco and Ethiopia can be shown as other good examples for ambitious targets adopted by developing nations. The INDC's of the two countries have been ranked as 'sufficient' by the Climate Action Tracker in terms of ambition, ahead of the targets of many industrialized parties such as the European Union and the United States⁶¹.

The lack of ambition apparent in its mitigation pledge is likely to hinder Turkey's ability to play a proactive role in the Paris Conference. As things stand, it seems that the Turkish position at the Paris Conference will not considerably diverge from the relatively passive role Turkey played at the earlier climate change negotiations.

The Potential Role of Turkey in the upcoming Negotiations

Currently, many developing countries in the world are playing a much more active and influential role in the climate change negotiations. The actions of the AILAC countries constitute a good example to how developing country parties can nowadays lead the discussion in climate change. The AILAC group consists of the Latin American countries Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama and Peru. The group presents itself as a third way in climate talks beyond the old divide between the industrialized and developing countries and aims to push for a progressive climate change agreement. The AILAC group was formally formed as a negotiating bloc on 2012, but the member countries had begun coordinating in the discussions years before⁶². For example, at the Cancun climate talks on 2009, Colombia pushed for the passage of the final agreement by taking the floor after Bolivia tried to upend the agreement. On 2010, the AILAC countries sided together with the small island states, the least developed countries and the European countries to push for a progressive climate change agreement. Reportedly, that alliance was in turn influential in making the United States, China and

⁵⁹ Enhanced Actions on Climate Change: China's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, accessed from <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/China/1/China's%20INDC%20-%20on%2030%20June%202015.pdf>

⁶⁰ World Bank, accessed from <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

⁶¹ Climate Action Tracker, accessed from <http://climateactiontracker.org/indcs.html> on 9.10.2015

⁶² AILAC group website, accessed from <http://ailac.org/en/sobre/> on 12.10.2015

India to agree to a binding agreement for the year 2015⁶³. The AILAC group also made a joint submission with Mexico to the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action on the issue of adaptation. The submission urged for adaptation to be included in the agreement as a global goal with collective and individual adaptation commitments, means of implementation and institutional arrangements⁶⁴. Other proposals of the AILAC bloc included a submission on enhancing pre-2020 ambition, a submission on the legal architecture and elements of the 2015 agreement and a submission on the ex-ante assessment process of the INDC's⁶⁵.

Later, at the Lima Conference, several developing country parties again played a decisive role in the adoption of several proposals. The AILAC bloc and Brazil contributed to the negotiations by submitting constructive proposals⁶⁶. Several developing country parties have also, for the first time, pledged to contribute to Green Climate Fund. The seven developing countries that have declared their contributions to the GCF included Peru, Panama, Colombia, Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea and Mongolia⁶⁷.

The contributions of different developing countries to the UNFCCC negotiations prove that the process is no longer dominated by the industrialized nations and the large developing nations. Relatively smaller developing countries can influence the discussions by taking action at critical points. There is also a potential for Turkey to play a constructive role and influence the final outcome. However, to do this, Turkey first needs to increase the ambition of its own mitigation pledge and align itself with other negotiating blocs.

Until now, Turkey has referenced its 'special circumstances' to avoid taking on responsibility in terms of GHG mitigation. However, Turkey's position as a middle-income country not fully sharing the interests of the industrialized nations or the developing nations can prompt the country to play a facilitator role between the poor and rich countries to ease the reaching of a final agreement. In this regard, several countries provide a good example for Turkey to follow such as the countries in the

⁶³ 'AILAC: The new Latin American "third way" at UN climate talks', accessed from <http://climatefinance.info/profiles/blogs/ailac-the-new-latin-american-third-way-at-un-climate-talks> on 3.10.2015

⁶⁴ 'Adaptation in the ADP, Joint Submission of AILAC and Mexico' accessed from http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/Lists/OSPSubmissionUpload/39_99_130581311840849856-Adaptation%20Submission%20AILAC-Mexico%20vf.pdf on 8.10.2015

⁶⁵ AILAC group website, accessed from <http://ailac.org/en/submissions/> on 12.10.2015

⁶⁶ Ott, Hermann, Arens, Christof, Hermwille, Lukas, Mersmann, Florian, Obergassel, Wolfgang and Wang-Helmreich, Hanna, 'A first assessment of the Climate Conference in Lima – COP20 moves at a snail's pace on the road to Paris 2015' (2014), Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, p. 156

⁶⁷ Ott, Hermann, Arens, Christof, Hermwille, Lukas, Mersmann, Florian, Obergassel, Wolfgang and Wang-Helmreich, Hanna, 'A first assessment of the Climate Conference in Lima – COP20 moves at a snail's pace on the road to Paris 2015' (2014), Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, p. 155

AILAC group, which have comparable development levels to Turkey. Partnerships can be forged with such groups in order to take a more effective part in climate change negotiations. Moreover, as a country that is aiming to be an EU member, the EU can be viewed as a natural partner for Turkey. Increasing cooperation with other countries can significantly boost Turkey's power to influence the final Paris agreement.

One of the main priorities of Turkey in the climate talks have been to secure climate finance flow into the country. In its INDC, Turkey states that it intends to use the Green Climate Fund in its mitigation efforts. By taking a more active role in the negotiations, Turkey can take part in urging the industrialized countries to elevate the levels of climate finance. Another issue of importance for Turkey can be the inclusion of adaptation in the agreement. As a country in the Eastern Mediterranean basin, Turkey is set to be sorely effected by the negative effects of climate change. The inclusion of adaptation in the document as adaptation finance commitments and as a global goal would therefore be to Turkey's benefit. Additionally, Turkey can play a positive role in urging the industrialized nations to recognize the loss and damage demands of the least developed countries and the vulnerable island states. So far, Turkey has been reticent to weigh in on many of the main issues on the climate change discussions. By continuing to play a relatively passive role in the negotiations, Turkey may run the risk of having to accept an agreement it has put little input into.

Even though the current mitigation pledge of the country is insufficient, one phrase in the Turkish INDC indicates that there is still a chance for Turkey to make adjustments in its climate change policy. In a part of its INDC, it states that 'Turkey may revise this INDC in accordance with changing circumstances'⁶⁸. It is not clear what the 'changing circumstances' in the document may stand for but the inclusion of such an expression in the document certainly leaves room for the country to modify its mitigation plans.

There is a real potential for Turkey to play a proactive role in the upcoming climate change talks. However, in order to be influential in the discussions, Turkey first needs to be able demonstrate that it is willing to do its part in the global mitigation effort by taking on a fair mitigation commitment. If Turkey can play an active role in the discussions, it can better influence the outcome according to its own interests and contribute to an agreement that will help limit the negative consequences of climate change.

⁶⁸ 'Republic of Turkey, Intended Nationally Determined Contribution', accessed from http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Turkey/1/The_INDC_of_TURKEY_v.15.19.30.pdf on 30.9.2015