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Global Climate

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II. AIR AND ATMOSPHERE

3. Global Climate

(1) Introduction

Going down as yet another all-nighter in the history of the UN climate negotiations, the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 6th Conference of the Parties Serving as Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 6) in Cancún came to a close at around 3.30 a.m. on Saturday, 11 December 2010, with the adoption of the “Cancún Agreements”, which comprise one decision under the UNFCCC and two decisions under the Kyoto Protocol (Decision 1/CP.16, The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, contained in FCCC/CP/2010/7/Add.1, 15 March 2011; Decision 1/CMP.6, The Cancun Agreements: Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol at its fifteenth session, and Decision 2/CMP.6, The Cancun Agreements: Land use, land-use change and forestry, both contained in FCCC/KP/CMP/2010/12/Add.1, 15 March 2011).

With the future of the international climate regime hanging in the balance, the conference had seemed to be on the verge of breakdown for a long period of time. Expectations had been low to begin due to the fundamental differences of opinion between key Parties. Nobody therefore expected that Cancún would deliver a new global climate treaty. Instead, the hope was that it would be possible to achieve convergence on technical and implementation issues and thus generate new momentum which would then hopefully lead to the adoption of a new agreement at the next conference in Durban in 2011.

On the other hand, it was feared that another failed conference similar to Copenhagen might prompt countries to sideline the UNFCCC process and instead seek cooperation through bilateral and plurilateral channels, leading to a fragmentation of international climate policy. Many delegates and observers therefore breathed a deep sigh of relief when the Cancún Agreements were in the end adopted. This article lays out the main developments in Cancún as well as an assessment of the outcome.

The article discusses the process and outcomes along the central “building blocks” of the negotiations. According to the Bali Action Plan, the negotiations are proceeding under two tracks. First, the “Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments by Annex I Countries under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP)”, which was established at CMP 1 in Montreal in 2005, is negotiating future emission targets for industrialised countries (listed in Annex I of the UNFCCC). Second, while the “Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA)” also negotiates commitments for Annex I countries, in practice this was originally deemed to relate in particular to those that have not ratified the Protocol – that is, the USA. In addition, the AWG-LCA negotiates “nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs)” of developing countries, which are to be supported and enabled by industrialised countries through technology, financing and capacity building. Both the NAMAs and the support are to be undertaken in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner. Finally, the AWG-LCA negotiates ways to enhance adaptation efforts of developing countries, which are also to be financially and technologically supported by industrialised countries.

The following discusses the progress on mitigation, measuring, reporting and verification (MRV), adaptation, finance, technology, and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD), which is a special subset of the mitigation

debate. The most crucial question, however, is what legal form the future agreement should take. This will therefore be discussed first.

(2) One Treaty, Two Treaties, No Treaty? The Legal Form of a Future Agreement

Ever since the birth of the climate regime, negotiations have been characterised by fundamental differences of opinion on who should contribute how much to the fight against climate change and in particular who should go first. The so-called developing (non-Annex I) countries point to the historical responsibility of the so-called developed (Annex I) countries for creating the climate problem and insist that Annex I countries should therefore take the lead in combating climate change. The special responsibility of Annex I countries is indeed laid down in Art. 3.1 of the UNFCCC. Annex I countries for their part point to the rising emissions in the large rapidly industrialising countries of the South and demand that they need to step up their efforts as well.

The Annex I countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol are not prepared to go any further without significant action by the USA and the rapidly industrialising countries of the South. Ideally, they want to have the Protocol replaced by a new universal framework that also covers the USA and the rapidly industrialising countries.

The G-77 and China want the Kyoto Protocol to continue as a reflection of industrialised countries' historical responsibility and reject any suggestion to abandon it. However, there are also differences within the G-77. The countries that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, the small island developing states (SIDS) and the least developed countries (LDCs), have proposed to agree to a new legally binding protocol under the Convention as outcome of the AWG-LCA that would work in parallel to the Kyoto Protocol. By contrast, in particular China, India and Saudi Arabia have held that COP decisions would be sufficiently binding as outcome from the AWG-LCA and that first the content of the agreement should be determined before discussing its legal form. Their position strongly depends on the (lack of) willingness of the USA to commit to a sufficiently ambitious emission target in a legally binding form.

The USA for their part have demanded a new structure that should be "very different" from the Kyoto Protocol. They reject the top-down approach favoured by the EU and developing countries. According to the USA, the future regime should be based on a "pledge and review" bottom-up approach. According to the US concept, each country would basically determine its own level of ambition and the international system would mainly serve as a notary to collect and regularly review the implementation of pledges. The USA also insist that the degree of bindingness must be the same for all the major emitters – a demand that is vehemently rejected by developing countries.

These differences once again came to a head in Cancún. On the very first day of the conference Japan announced that it would not inscribe its emission reduction pledge under a second commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol. This announcement was later followed by a similar announcement from Russia. While these positions are not new, having them stated in such a forceful way created significant tensions as the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol is a *conditio sine qua non* for developing countries.

In the end, the question of the legal form was once again postponed to the next conference.

(3) Mitigation

The discussions on mitigation revolved around several crucial questions, some of which are:

- agreement on a global temperature target;
- “anchoring” the emission reduction pledges that had been made in the Copenhagen Accord in the UNFCCC process; and
- strengthening the level of ambition.

The broad agreement on keeping global warming to at most 2°C above pre-industrial levels was one of the few advances of the Copenhagen conference. However, SIDS and LDCs have for several years now called for an even stronger target of keeping global warming below 1.5°C. They argue that even an increase of 2°C would already have unbearable consequences for many of them.

In addition to setting a temperature target there is the question of how to achieve it. The Copenhagen Accord did not include any figures on emission targets but instead contained two empty appendices. Over the course of 2010, Parties filled these appendices with pledges on reducing their emissions by varying amounts by 2020. As the Copenhagen Accord was not adopted by the COP plenary in Copenhagen due to resistance by several countries, the question in Cancún was how to transfer these pledges to the formal UNFCCC negotiations. Achieving this goal in Cancún was seen as especially important as it was feared that the US pledge of reducing emissions by 17% below 2005 levels by 2020 might no longer be on the table in 2011.

However, this so-called “anchoring” of the pledges was caught up in the controversies about the legal form of the final outcome. As noted above, Japan and Russia refuse to inscribe new commitments under the Kyoto Protocol and subsequently opposed anchoring their pledges under the AWG-KP track.

In addition to the lack of formal standing of the pledges, a series of reports that came out in 2010 unanimously conclude that the pledges countries made under the Copenhagen Accord fall 5-10 Gt short of what is needed to maintain a good chance of staying below 2°C (e.g. UNEP, The Emissions Gap Report <http://www.unep.org/publications/ebooks/emissionsgapreport/>). While it was generally accepted that it would not be possible to strengthen these pledges in Cancún, the question was whether it would be possible to acknowledge this “emissions gap” and to establish a process to assess the pledges over the course of 2011 and subsequently increase their level of ambition.

The conference eventually managed to reaffirm the goal to keep global warming below 2°C – the first time this goal was endorsed in an official UN document. The Cancún Agreements also make reference to the 1.5°C target. Consideration of strengthening the temperature target is to be included in a review that is to start in 2013 and to be concluded in 2015.

The conference further managed to anchor on UN paper the pledges many countries had submitted under the Copenhagen Accord and industrialised countries are urged to increase their ambition. In addition, Japan and Russia inserted language and footnotes into the Cancún Agreements that make clear that this listing of pledges does not prejudice Parties’ positions on the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol.

Emission reduction pledges by developing countries are also noted in an information document. Developed countries are to provide financial, technology and capacity building support, as per the Bali Action Plan. NAMAs by developing countries that seek support from

developed countries are to be recorded in a registry. Modalities for the facilitation of support are yet to be developed.

(4) Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

Closely linked to the mitigation package, a further controversy revolved around the question of MRV. As outlined above, developing countries agreed in Bali to take verifiable mitigation actions if these are supported by industrialised countries in an equally verifiable manner. However, the details of this deal “MRV for MRV” remained to be worked out. A further MRV question was posed by the non-participation of the USA in the Kyoto Protocol, which has significantly stronger MRV requirements for Annex I countries than the UNFCCC. Annex I countries that have ratified the Protocol have therefore generally desired the Annex I MRV provisions under the UNFCCC to be brought in line with those under the Protocol.

MRV had emerged as a major bone of contention over the course of the last two years. While non-Annex I countries held the view that only actions that are supported by Annex I countries should be subject to international MRV, Annex I countries demanded that non-Annex I countries should also submit those actions to international MRV that they support through their own resources. Non-Annex I countries rejected this demand as being incompatible with their national sovereignty.

In Cancún, Parties eventually compromised on enhancing both Annex I and non-Annex I MRV. Developed countries are to submit annual GHG inventories and biennial reports on their progress in achieving emission reductions as well as on the provision of financial, technology and capacity building support to developing countries. However, the reporting requirements for countries that take action under the Convention are still not equivalent to the reporting requirements under the Kyoto Protocol. In addition, the Cancún Agreements establish an international process for the assessment of emissions and removals by developed countries. This provides a tool to call out countries that are not on track to reduce emissions but there is no mention of compliance. Indeed, the title of this section is “Nationally appropriate mitigation commitments or actions by developed country Parties” – the USA had long struggled even against the word “commitments”.

Developing countries are to submit national communications every four years. Flexibility is foreseen for LDCs and SIDS. Developing countries should also provide biennial update reports with updates on their national GHG inventories, information on mitigation actions, needs and support received.

Internationally supported mitigation actions will be MRVed domestically and will be subject to international MRV according to guidelines that remain to be developed. Domestically supported mitigation actions will be MRVed domestically in accordance with general international guidelines that are also still to be developed. The COP’s Subsidiary Body for Implementation is to conduct international consultation and analysis on the biennial reports in a manner that is non-intrusive, non-punitive and respectful of national sovereignty. The Cancún Agreements clarify that this process will concern the implementation of policies and measures only, not their appropriateness. Detailed modalities are to be elaborated in the future negotiations.

(5) Adaptation

Progress was made in Cancún in the field of adaptation mainly in the following respects:
Adoption of an Adaptation Framework including the establishment of an Adaptation

Committee and establishment of a work programme on loss and damages caused through the impacts of climate change.

The establishment of the Cancún Adaptation Framework significantly strengthens adaptation under the Convention and is a great improvement compared to the Copenhagen Accord that did not include any concrete decisions apart from finance for adaptation, even though much of the text on the adaptation framework was already finished in Copenhagen. The Adaptation Framework also includes explicit institutional support for LDCs by establishing a process to support least developed country Parties to develop longer-term national adaptation plans, building upon their experience with national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). It also invites Parties to strengthen or establish regional centres and networks for adaptation, in particular in developing countries.

The Cancún Agreements further establish an Adaptation Committee to promote implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner, inter alia by collecting information and experiences and developing recommendations for consideration by the COP. This is an enhancement compared to the scientifically-oriented Nairobi Work Programme on Adaptation, which does not have a mandate to formulate recommendations. Details on the composition, modalities and procedures of the Adaptation Committee will need to be negotiated in 2011.

Loss and damages has been one of the most contentious issues under adaptation. It relates to loss and damages from those climate impacts that cannot be avoided even through active adaptation measures. These include in particular extreme weather events and sea level rise. The issue has been pushed by SIDS who are at risk of being inundated with increasing sea-level rise. Not surprisingly, developed countries have had a different view on loss and damages than developing countries since they would largely be made accountable for compensation payments.

Many SIDS and LDCs feared that loss and damages would be entirely blocked by developed countries in Cancún, but this was not the case. In the end the Cancún Agreements establish a work programme on loss and damages. Even though the goal of SIDS to establish an international mechanism that would ensure concrete actions on loss and damages was not achieved, the establishment of a work programme must still be seen as a great success for island states and an anchored basis to push the issue forward.

(6) Financing

Financing ways for developing countries to adapt to and mitigate climate change has been one of the main stumbling stones of the climate negotiations of the previous years. While there are various negotiation items under this issue, they ultimately all relate to two main topics: mobilisation of the needed amount of financial resources and the institutional structure of funding.

On the mobilisation issue, a report on financial flows produced by the UNFCCC Secretariat puts the financial resources needed in 2030 at 130 billion USD for mitigation activities and several tens or possibly hundreds of billions for adaptation in developing countries only (UNFCCC; Investment and financial flows to address climate change: an update, Technical paper FCCC/TP/2008/7, 26 November 2008). Other estimates come to similar or even higher results. These figures go far beyond the total amount of resource flows provided by the existing mechanisms within the climate regime – the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, the LDC Fund, and the Adaptation Fund – and the resources provided through the funds established outside of the

Convention, most notably the World Bank's Clean Technology Fund and Strategic Climate Fund/Pilot Program for Climate Resilience.

One of the main causes of the lack of sufficient resources is that under the current climate regime industrialised countries provide financial contributions on an ad hoc basis, through replenishment negotiations in the case of the GEF Trust Fund and on a pledge basis in the case of the other funds. In order to ensure sufficient financial flows, it is indispensable to establish a new scheme that creates financial flows at a much higher scale and on a mandatory basis.

Regarding the institutional structure of the funding body, developing countries and industrialised countries have still not overcome the conflict they have had since the establishment of the GEF. Industrialised countries want to provide financing through bilateral or established multilateral channels such as the World Bank and the GEF. They argue that the expertise of these institutions should be used and point to the costs and effort involved with establishing new institutions. By contrast, developing countries perceive the existing institutions to be donor-dominated. They also complain that the procedures to access funding through these institutions require too much effort. They have therefore proposed to establish a new fund that would be fully accountable to the COP and operate according to the rule of one country one vote. Furthermore, in their view only resources provided through such a new fund should be counted towards industrialised countries' financing commitments under the UNFCCC and the Bali Action Plan.

In Copenhagen, developed countries pledged up to 30 billion USD for fast-start finance over three years, and a long-term commitment to "mobilise" 100 billion USD per year "from various sources" by 2020. There was also a general agreement in Copenhagen to establish a new fund. However, as the Copenhagen Accord was not an official COP outcome, these pledges were only weakly binding.

In Cancún, negotiations on the finance issues were stalled for a long time. Things moved forward only in the last day and a half of the conference. First and foremost, the financing pledges made in Copenhagen were formalised and are now part of the outcome of COP 16. Adaptation and mitigation shall receive a balanced allocation and the most vulnerable countries are to have priority access to adaptation funding. Furthermore, Parties are invited to provide information on their fast start funding sources through an information document in order to heighten the transparency of their actions, albeit there is as yet no common reporting standard.

On long-term financing, the pledges as recognized in the Cancún Agreements confirm those made in the Copenhagen Accord – by 2020, 100 billion USD shall flow annually to cover climate change costs in developing countries. However, the text leaves the question of sources completely open.

In addition, the agreement establishes a Green Climate Fund, to which a large part of this funding, especially for adaptation, is to be channelled. The text remains as yet unclear on the question of whether mitigation will be covered as well. Crucially, the decision includes the possibility for developing countries to get direct access to funding, instead of having to go through intermediary implementing institutions like the World Bank or United Nations agencies. Developing countries agreed to invite the World Bank to act as interim trustee to the Fund, subject to review after three years. A transitional committee is established in order to finalise the design of the Fund by the time of the next COP in Durban. Finally, a Standing Committee is to be established to serve as overview body for climate finance. The Standing Committee is going to assist the COP in ensuring sound work of the financial mechanism, and is not tied to the Green Climate Fund. However, its functions are not yet fully defined. Parties are to work out its specific role, possibly by the next COP in Durban.

(7) Technology

Agreed as another building block in Bali in 2007, technology transfer had initially started as one of the fastest-moving issues in the negotiations for the future climate regime, but negotiations ground to a halt in the following years. Developing countries call for a strong technology transfer system, including an independent financing scheme to support it. Some developing countries, including China, have in the past also asked for a weakening of the international intellectual property rights (IPR) system established by the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) under the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Industrialised countries, by contrast, argue that strong protection of intellectual property is a precondition for fostering innovation. Institutionally, industrialised countries prefer a mere network of experts without political power.

The Copenhagen Accord has language on establishing a Technology Mechanism but does not specify any details. This was now fleshed out in Cancún. The new Mechanism will consist of two main components. The Technology Executive Committee (TEC) takes over its work from the discontinued Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT) immediately, while the design and work of the new Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) is as yet largely undetermined.

The TEC will provide, inter alia, recommendations on actions on technology, recommend guidance, foster collaboration among public and private stakeholders and play a leading role in the development of technology roadmaps. The final mandate of the TEC and criteria for qualification of the TEC's members will have to be developed in more detail over the course of 2011.

As its name implies, the CTCN consists of both an information centre and a network of possible regional nodes. It shall, inter alia, serve to provide advice to Parties, identify best methods and technologies, facilitate training and enhance cooperation with existing initiatives and technology centres, as well as facilitate partnerships of the public and private sector. Its governance structure and terms of reference will have to be determined in the coming meetings.

The final text omits any language concerning the funding of technology activities under the Convention. This has been one of the largest points of contention in the past negotiations. The issue of IPRs has also been taken out of the final text completely. It can, however, be assumed that the issue will crop up again in the next negotiating sessions and it remains to be seen if delegates will be able to deal with the topic in a manner satisfactory for all.

(8) Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)

Accounting for about 1/5 of global CO₂ emissions, deforestation in developing countries is another one of the essential building blocks of the Bali Action Plan. While a well-advanced draft on REDD was discussed at COP 15 in Copenhagen, the text could not be adopted due to the controversies about the fundamentals of the new regime as a whole.

In Cancún, Parties discussed, among other things, the scope of a future REDD mechanism, financing issues, the role of national versus subnational approaches, as well as how social and biodiversity safeguards should be MRVed. The issue of national vs. subnational approaches is in particular at which level to set reference levels against which to measure progress. Subnational reference levels are linked to greater risks of leakage (i.e. shifting of deforestation to other areas) but at the same time provide better opportunities to integrate, for example, local forest communities and involve private businesses in REDD

activities. While the EU pushed for national reference levels, the USA and many developing countries advocated for sub-national approaches. The role of market-based solutions to finance REDD activities was another controversial issue. While in particular industrialised countries are in favour of market-based approaches, many of the ALBA countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Venezuela) are strongly opposed and also Brazil is very sceptical.

The final agreement first of all defines the scope of REDD to include conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, thus providing a very broad REDD+ definition. The main part of the text lays out the elements developing countries need to develop in order to prepare their REDD engagement process: these begin with a national strategy plan, followed by the development of a forest reference level and a corresponding monitoring system, and the introduction of an information system on safeguards, such as respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and other stakeholders. Concerning the reference level, subnational approaches are accepted as an interim measure only.

The safeguards mentioned in the decision are further detailed in an annex; they provide REDD actors with environmental and social principles, making reference, *inter alia*, to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to issues of biological diversity and forest conservation. Unfortunately, the language is not very strong. In particular, the safeguards have non-binding “should” rather than binding “shall” provisions and no explicit reference is made to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Furthermore, how these provisions are to be operationalised remains unclear.

Finally, the text details a future work programme on, *inter alia*, modalities for reference levels and monitoring systems. What the text does not state is a quantified mid-term target or a long-term goal. While most industrialised countries have been pushing for quantified targets, developing countries have emphasised that forests are a national resource and perceive targets as putting constraints on their future development. Instead, the text sets an unspecified goal of halting and reversing forest loss. Moreover, a couple of other issues also remain unresolved, such as the way results-based activities in phase three will be financed, *i.e.* via public funding or involving market-based approaches.

(9) What Future Climate Regime?

One thing that will certainly enter the collective memory of Cancún is the series of standing ovations COP President Espinosa received on Friday evening. However, the deep sense of relief that washed through the room and was palpable in every statement probably came more from a desperate desire to avoid another Copenhagen rather than from the substance of the text — as late as Friday afternoon another train wreck seemed all too likely and journalists were already sharpening their pencils to write obituaries. Many countries therefore accepted the text from a sense of a weak deal being better than no deal.

At first glance, the list of positive outcomes does actually look rather impressive:

- For the first time, the below 2°C target was endorsed in an official UN document.
- The text includes provisions for a review, including consideration of the 1.5°C target, which is to start 2013 and end 2015.
- The Copenhagen emission reduction pledges have been „anchored“ in UN text.
- There is a recognition that in particular the pledges of industrialised countries are too weak and they are urged to strengthen their targets.

- MRV provisions have been strengthened, including a process to evaluate actual progress.
- The Green Climate Fund and the Technology Mechanism have been established and there is a clear process for agreeing details on the Fund by Durban. In addition, a Standing Committee is to be established to provide some much-needed co-ordination to the currently very decentralised bi- und plurilateral climate financing flows.
- An adaptation committee has been established to promote implementation.
- There is a work programme on loss and damages, including the possibility of an insurance facility.
- There is a work programme on deforestation.

However, most of these agreements exist only at the level of institutional arrangements, with little to no detail on implementation. In particular, the Cancún Agreements do not lose any word on how these new institutional arrangements are to be financed and there is no dedicated process for addressing this issue during the negotiations in 2011. Quickly putting flesh on the bare skeletons of these institutions will therefore be crucial to maintaining the constructive atmosphere created in Cancún.

On mitigation, Cancún saw major movement on the framework of non-Annex I mitigation while there was hardly any movement on Annex I mitigation. MRV provisions for non-Annex I countries were fleshed out to a significant amount of detail and have become much more stringent than they used to be. By contrast, if anything, the future of the Kyoto Protocol is now even more uncertain than before Cancún due to the strong opposition from Japan and Russia.

Yet, developing countries have been very clear in saying that from their point of view the work under the LCA is proceeding on the understanding that there will be a second commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol. If there is no resolution to this question, it is therefore conceivable that developing countries might start to dig in their heels or even go back on the items that were agreed in Cancún.

In terms of emission reductions, the pledges have not moved an inch since Copenhagen and are much too weak to give a good chance of staying below 2°C. There is hardly any mention of a top-down science-based approach to setting targets in the text and no indication that countries are considering to raise their pledges.

In summary, agreement in Cancún was possible by papering over the fundamental issues and focusing on more technical aspects. However, it should be emphasised that all these weaknesses are no fault of the UN process as such. The UN is simply a negotiation platform and the results are determined by the domestic politics of countries. The main obstacle is that the USA is currently fundamentally unable to move forward and most other countries tie their position directly to what the USA is doing. Given the deep anti-climate mood currently prevailing in the Republican Party, the USA would probably at the moment not be able to ratify any kind of climate treaty, even if China and other major emitters did commit to legally binding emission targets.

On this basis, several scenarios for the future development of the UNFCCC regime may be thought of, such as:

- a degeneration of the international regime from the binding Kyoto approach, with the possibility to determine targets top-down based on science, to a non-binding bottom-up “pledge and review” approach as advocated by the USA;
- a repetition of the Kyoto scenario where the rest of the world decides to move ahead without the USA; or

- a hybrid where ambitious industrialised countries commit to a second Kyoto period while other countries follow a pledge and review approach.

Scenario 1 is where the UNFCCC is currently at by default. The Cancún Agreements have laid down the pledges and contain the basic parameters for an iterative review process. Any outcome other than scenario 1 will require that somebody does some heavy lifting.

Nevertheless, many countries are currently enacting policies and measures to achieve their pledges despite the absence of a legally binding international treaty. And this momentum is not confined to the national level. While climate legislation is stalled at the federal US level, many US states are implementing climate actions. More and more cities around the world are developing municipal climate action programmes and companies are contributing as well. Achim Steiner has dubbed this rising groundswell the “silent momentum on climate change” (Achim Steiner; Silent Momentum on Climate Change, <<http://www.projectsyndicate.org/commentary/asteiner10/English>>). One may hope that this drive will gather further steam and ultimately culminate in a corresponding strengthening of the international framework. Crucially, the review foreseen in the Cancún Agreements for the years 2013-2015, which coincides with the next assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, provides a formal hook for ratcheting up both the level of ambition and the degree of bindingness.

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