

# COP 15: Field Notes

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The climate change conference in Copenhagen was host to a summit of global leaders unprecedented in the recent history of diplomacy. The 15th conference of the parties to the Climate Convention was unique in the history of the Conference of the Parties (COP). It had more global leaders - more than one hundred - than any conference since Rio 92. Civil society had never been so mobilized. A COP conference was never preceded by so many demonstrations and actions calling for a climate change agreement in keeping with the principal recommendations of the best climate science available.

Despite the presence of the global political elite and an unprecedented demonstration of globally organized civil society, what made both the global summit and COP15 unique was the confused and melancholic conclusion. Why did a meeting that took place in the most favorable context in recent times, with a broad window of opportunity for a good agreement, end in ambiguity and subterranean impasses?

## **Direct Process**

The leaders of the principal world nations were involved in direct negotiations, over content and detail, without the preliminary work of diplomats and technocrats, as always takes place in this type of meeting. Normally, high-level staff negotiate and draft the result, and the politicians revise the text, sign it and take the commemorative photograph. At Copenhagen, the leaders negotiated and debated the final text, which they did not sign, and left without a photo or a formal conclusion to the summit. In a direct negotiating process like this one, without a superior level for appeal and without preliminary diplomatic work, the impasses that can be amicably resolved are addressed and those that have no immediate amicable solutions are ignored.

After the arrival of the heads of state and government, COP15 came to a complete halt. Another unprecedented element was that a political summit of government leaders intervened in a formal diplomatic meeting with a pre-established agenda and regulatory procedures. It was clear since the start that a political route would be opened in the negotiations, yet there was no clear plan to merge the political process into the legal negotiations within the framework of the UN Climate Convention. It would have been necessary for the summit agreement to have a kind of political “software” that would allow it to be properly transcribed from the plane of direct negotiations among heads of state, to the formalities of the United Nation’s legal process. But this “software” was not

contemplated in the negotiations. It appeared at the end, in improvised form, through the interference of multilateral diplomacy.

The COP15 had already experienced an unresolvable impasse on the diplomatic level, at the conclusion of the “technical phase” - which was the responsibility of diplomats and technicians - and which occupied the conference’s first week. In the “political phase,” under the command of the minister who led the delegations, the impasse deepened and the ministers left the solution to the heads of state and government, at the summit that took up most of the last day, Friday December 18. The conversations among leaders began Thursday night, the next to last day, and continued until Friday. It was not an official U.N. meeting, or that of any other institutionalized multilateral organization. Therefore, it was, for all purposes, an informal political meeting. In fact, there have never been so many informalities among so many and so powerful leaders. This was the fundamental reason that they should have provided the key that would allow translating their informal conclusions into a formal agreement, within the legal process instituted by the U.N. Climate Convention.

For this reason the negotiations aimed at drafting conclusive documents within the formal UN process, were interrupted. The two central documents that had been negotiated in the first ten days of the COP, in an agreement under the scope of the Climate Convention and the proposal for the second period of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, could not be concluded because, in principle, they would be substituted by the Copenhagen Agreement, negotiated by the government leaders. 1. No established procedure was adopted for the agreement to replace these documents. The president of the convention, Danish Prime Minister Lars Rasmussen, tried to have the plenary session approve the agreement and transform it into an official U.N. document. However, without political instructions from the governments to the delegations and without the final approval of the heads of state and government, there was no possibility for consensus at the plenary.

The final text of the Copenhagen Agreement was not negotiated by all of the leaders present at COP15. It was negotiated by a small group of politicians – by an elite summit within the summit. The principal drafters of this agreement and also those mainly responsible for its vague and watered-down structure were the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the so-called BASIC countries, which include, Brazil, South Africa, India and China. The final form was basically decided by the United States and the BASIC countries.

There were moments of tense exchange between President Obama and Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. The reason for the friction was the United States’ insistence on the establishment of mechanisms for transparent monitoring of compliance with emissions reduction goals by developing countries with advanced economies. This bilateral conflict was initially mediated by Brazilian President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, who contributed to a direct dialog between the two leaders. Soon after Obama arrived at Copenhagen, he made a direct

demand for transparency, and the Chinese premier refused to meet with him. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had already irritated the Chinese leaders at her press conference a day earlier in Copenhagen. Jiabao considered it to be an improper interference to demand that voluntary actions, financed by a country itself, be “measurable, reportable and verifiable.” Obama did not yield on this condition.

The two positions expressed unescapable domestic demands. Obama was not able to find support at home if he could not get greater commitment and transparency from China in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Jiabao’s position reflected the national culture of his country, which had suffered numerous invasions by foreign forces, and developed a concept of sovereignty and privacy very sensitive to any type of external control. It was left to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to intermediate the dispute over transparency. He suggested a mechanism similar to that used by the World Trade Organization (WTO) by which the verification of numbers reported by a country would be conducted by specific request of the other signatories to the agreement. Singh, a former finance minister largely responsible for the liberalization of the Indian economy, had great experience in economics and international trade.

At his first press conference after Copenhagen, the White House’s chief climate change negotiator, Todd Stern, recognized that the solution that wound up being inserted in the agreement was acceptable and justified his country’s adherence, which in UN language, was known as “association” to the agreement. Stern said that it included “A very important provision about transparency, including with respect to developing countries, including with respect to actions they take on their own as opposed to just actions they take when they’re funded. Very important stuff there.”<sup>2</sup> And in paragraph 5 of the agreement there are also further guidelines to spell out those transparency provisions. A task that will still require additional negotiations and which will perhaps be part of conversations leading up to COP16.

The greater problem continues to be whether China considers the outcome acceptable when the transparency mechanisms are finally negotiated. Both China and India have fully associated to the agreement with a delay that has raised concern for some time.

### **A Process at the Limit**

The G77 countries not in the BASIC group expressed strong discontent with the negotiations for the Copenhagen Agreement. They maintained it was a process “without transparency,” as Sudanese President, diplomat Lumumba Di-Aping, defined it in a press interview at the end of COP15. These countries later reiterated their opposition. The same is true in relation to the countries of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), which are highly vulnerable to rising sea levels caused by climate change. They want a more demanding

agreement, greater commitment from the developed countries and more aggressive goals for greenhouse gas reductions. A number of them refused to associate to the agreement.

The developed nations, particularly the United States, France and Germany, although frustrated with the result, made and continue to make efforts so that the agreement holds and is deepened. U.S. President Barack Obama, and French President Nicolas Sarkozy told the press before leaving Copenhagen that they had defended reaching a legally binding agreement, but were not able to do so. “But it is still going to require more work and more confidence-building and greater trust between emerging countries, the least developed countries, and the developed countries before I think you are going to see another legally binding treaty signed,” Obama said. Sarkozy said something very similar. Obama also declared that he preferred a binding agreement and that he would work for one throughout 2010. “This is going to be hard. It’s hard within countries, and it’s going to be even harder between countries” he admitted. Sarkozy told French journalists and the Twitter of the Elysée Palace that “the difficulties of this conference show that the UN system is exhausted. The situation raises the question of international governance because progress was not made.” He maintained, however, “it was the best agreement possible and I signed it in the name of France and I will honor it.” Obama said that he was not sure if, technically, the agreement would need to be signed, because it was not a treaty, “But I do think that this is a commitment that we, as the United States, are making and that we think is very important.”

These statements contrasted with silence from the developing countries, whose leaders left without making any final statements. President Lula did not speak with the press at the end of the conference. He left directly for the airport. Nevertheless, it was at his side that Obama sat to negotiate the terms of a possible agreement with the emerging countries, especially China. Sarkozy made a point at his final press conference to declare that “the first text that unblocked the conference was the French-Brazilian declaration demanding the meeting of the night before.” He was referring to a meeting of the heads of state or government that took place at the Bella Center, on Thursday night, December 17, after a dinner with Queen Margaret of Denmark, at which President Obama was not present. Obama would only arrive on Friday morning.

The disorientation that followed the departure of the heads of state perfectly reflected the essential contradiction of the Copenhagen meeting. Two completely distinct processes took place at the Bella Center, and it was very difficult for these processes to occupy the same political space. One was a unique summit meeting of heads of state which had no fixed rules, being horizontal, with an open, purely political, decision-making process. The other, was a Conference of the Parties to a UN Treaty, the Climate Convention, which was a vertical, formal hierarchical process, with rigid rules and a pre-defined decision-making process, governed by unanimity. Any country could veto and thus defeat the

agreement. In practice, a small group of countries was needed to issue a veto that effectively blocked the process. In any case, this built enormous complexity into the negotiations and drastically reduced the probability of significant results. This steered the conference towards a minimum, and not a maximum, common denominator. For this reason, many people expected that the summit would provide the key to unlocking the U.N. process. But this did not happen.

Upon arriving at Copenhagen, the heads of state interrupted the meeting of the parties, the COP15. By leaving Copenhagen without a collective declaration to formalize the political agreement that they had reached, the leaders created a political void. When it became clear that they had disbanded without announcing an agreement, COP15 failed. Everyone used one word to describe the situation: “failure.” This is what the president of the European Commission said at a press conference on Friday night, December 18, shortly before the attempt by Rasmussen to formally introduce the agreement, for a decision by the plenary of the COP15. And it was a failure, a clear failure of the collective leadership of the heads of the world’s great powers. They were not able to reach a common vision of their national and planetary responsibilities.

Obama, however, told the press in his country that an “unprecedented and meaningful agreement, not sufficient to combat the threat of climate change but an important first step” had been negotiated, and the majority believed him. On the following day, the major media in the United States spoke of an agreement negotiated by Obama as having been the “grand finale.” This was far from the case. Sarkozy told French journalists that it was the “the best agreement possible” and that he would honor it in the name of France. German Prime Minister Angela Merkel declared that Copenhagen was “the first step towards a new world climate order – no more, but also, no less.” U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, considered it a “meaningful agreement.” Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the Climate Convention, recommended that the agreement not be underestimated. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, also left Copenhagen without making a statement. But his energy minister and chief negotiator, Ed Miliband, displayed irritation and frustration with the result. He said that the agreement was important and covered 80% of global emissions.

When Obama recognized that he did not know if the agreement technically needed to be signed, he gave more proof of the unique character of the negotiations. The government leaders decided among each other, in a form and through a dynamic that - more than doing away with - practically impeded the technical intervention of the diplomats. This is what led to the unique final nature and the informality of the agreement.

How could failure give way to these declarations? There are only two possibilities: collective hypocrisy, everyone was lying, or something came from Copenhagen, which could be recovered and still have important consequences. This was what leaders like Obama and Sarkozy were betting on. They were hoping for the best. The U.N. leaders, obviously, had to do the same.

Technically, the government leaders, upon abandoning the scene before they conducted the final act of formalizing the Copenhagen Agreement, left the result of their conversations in a political vacuum. Since it was negotiated from above and outside the rules of the Climate Convention, the only way to transform these conversations into a political decision that would make sense, would be to announce it at a press conference, explain it, and sign a formal memo of understanding among the governments that adhered to it. Leaving its final terms to be negotiated in the formal route of the United Nations, generated incompatibilities with the rules established by the Climate Convention and proved to be a political error. It was this error that led to the failure of the summit of world leaders and the collapse of COP15.

Along the formal tracks of the Convention, paralyzed by multiple impasses, there was only one possible result: a document so watered down it had no meaning. In this vacuum, the plenary of COP15 did the only thing possible – it recognized the Copenhagen Agreement and concluded the work. The delegates did not have authority to formally undo or reject an agreement that their heads of state and government had made. If they were to vote on it under U.N. rules, the Copenhagen Agreement would be rejected. It did not pass at any time, through the formal negotiating channels of the Climate Convention, except at the final plenary session. When Lars Rasmussen tried to present it formally, at the end of a day of extraordinary events, which had no climax and thus led to an anticlimax, he encountered both open and veiled opposition.

It was then that the professional negotiators and U.N. authorities came to the rescue of the COP15 president. The plenary could not deliberate on, but only recognize the result of the parallel meeting of heads of state and government. The document's most significant portion, the appendix with the goals for reducing emissions by countries, was left blank.

Countries would have until January 31 to indicate if they would associate or not to the agreement and register their goals or agreement for reducing greenhouse gases. This proposal belonged to the politicians who began to negotiate its terms and left the discussions before it was finished. Now, it would be up to them to complete it and adhere to it. If they did so, if the table showed significant and real commitments by the part of the large polluters, both developed and under development, even if they were blow the scientific requisites, the Copenhagen Agreement would come to have meaning. Only then would it instruct the drafting of a formal and legal agreement, within the process of the Climate Convention at COP16, in Mexico City. This was what, in fact, took place. All of the countries registered their goals, and, with the exception of China and India, until now, all those who participated in the negotiations associated to the agreement.

From the perspective of climate change science, Copenhagen was also a great failure. It showed that instead of strong immediate mitigating measures, we will have a gradual process. Most scientists believe this will heighten risk to

the climate. But, from the political perspective of climate change, there was progress. What are the main factors in this uncommon agreement?

For the first time since the climate change negotiations became paralyzed by repeated deadlocks - I would say that has been since COP4, in Buenos Aires - all of the world's major polluters agreed to commit themselves to mitigation actions. The goals of the agreement are not in keeping with climate change science, but they've crossed a crucial line in politics, which separates a refusal from a commitment. Although technically insufficient, politically it was a fundamental step.

Second, the Copenhagen Agreement gained formal adhesion from the leaders who negotiated it. Even China and India, which have still not associated to it, said that they support it. All of the world's large polluting nations, which account for 80% of human greenhouse gas emissions, entered their qualified actions in the tables in the agreement's appendix. This data can instruct the delegates when drafting a formal proposal for a legal document, to be adopted at the plenary session of CoPI6 or CoPI7.

Third, the insufficient advance in the positions of the large polluters was, however, significant, in that they had previously refused to cooperate with global efforts at mitigation. The United States, China, Brazil and India, all registered the actions and the numbers to which they committed to at Copenhagen.

Fourth, a goal for CO<sub>2</sub> was finally accepted and institutionalized as a global objective for mitigation. Many scientists believe this goal has been exceeded by the most probable scenarios. To achieve it, it would be necessary to reduce the quantities of greenhouse gases accumulated in the atmosphere. In addition, everything indicates that the numbers registered in the Copenhagen Agreement conform, in the best hypotheses, to scenarios for average temperature rises of 3.5° C. But the agreement calls for a review of the goals and actions in a relatively short time, to determine if they are sufficient or not. Statistically it may be insignificant, but there are conditions for them to come to be dynamically sufficient.

Fifth, the decade-long impasse in the financing of mitigation actions and the adaptation of the developing countries was resolved. With the tables of the Copenhagen Agreement filled in, the short-term financing of US\$ 30 billion for 2010-2012 could be made available shortly for immediate actions in developing countries. If an agreement is formally reached at Cancun, in late 2010, the long-term fund would create and maintain a rising financial flow, until reaching a significant sum of US\$ 100 billion a year, after 2020. There was also progress and agreement about the adoption of the U.N. REDD program (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation), for financing for forestry protection measures.

Sixth, there was progress in technology transfer, another point of systematic impasse during a decade of negotiations.

Seventh, there was progress in the understanding of the MRV (Monitoring, Reporting and Verification) of “Measurable, Reportable and Verifiable“ mitigation actions. This, as mentioned, was the central point of conflict between China and the United States.

Eighth, the implosion of the G77 and the new roles assumed by the group of African countries, by the countries of Asia and by the BASIC countries, allowed a new geopolitics of climate to rise among the developing countries. These new groupings, although not free of problems, allowed more coherent articulation of interests, which remained clearer. This new division also helped to impede that the large emerging countries at COP manipulate the veto power of the smaller countries in their favor. It would no longer be possible to reconstruct the unity of the G77, at least on the issue of climate change. In all issues in which the heterogeneity of this group of 130 countries has been a decisive factor, it will probably prove to be inoperative.

Ninth, it became clear, as President Sarkozy said, that the U.N. process is at the brink of exhaustion. The issue of climate change is larger than the institutional arrangements within which it has been handled, regardless of the enormous competency of the executive secretary of the Climate Convention Yvo de Boer.

Global warming, because of the scope of the changes that it demands and the risks it presents, needs a new and exclusive system of governance. However, this new institutional structure for climate change, especially an independent multilateral organization, requires an agreement around a new legal framework that encompasses, at a minimum, all of the large greenhouse gas polluters of the developed and emerging world. The idea of a new institutional structure for climate change appears to finally be conquering space on the global agenda. Upon announcing his departure as executive secretary, Yvo de Boer spoke of the need for change. He defended negotiations by groups of countries to overcome impediments to unanimity at the plenary sessions. President Sarkozy defended an entity to address the climate issue similar to the World Trade Organization. British Energy Minister Ed Miliband spoke of the need to revise the Climate Convention (UNFCCC) to guarantee that it can meet the immense task of dealing with some of the most complex negotiations ever seen.

Despite the contradictory results, there is no doubt that COP15 was a historic event. The extraordinary demonstration of firmness by global civil society, both at Copenhagen and throughout the world; the unprecedented coverage by nearly 3,500 credentialed journalists and thousands of citizen journalists; the presence of more than 100 chiefs of state or government - a gathering without precedent since Rio 92 - and their inconsequential performance; and real progress in resolving the complex web of issues and interests that have been blocking a global climate agreement, are all ingredients of historic importance. COP15 was two weeks that marked the history of global climate policy, for better or worse.

## Towards COP16

There was no setback to global climate change policy, neither during or after Copenhagen. What took place was the reiteration of the “stop-and-go” movements that often characterize highly complex decision-making processes. The decision-making environment of climate change is nearly as complex as the climate system itself and is marked by what I call the Asimov Paradox.<sup>3</sup> With so many interests, decision makers and agents with veto-power involved, any both politically and scientifically significant solution could only be reached if it meets one of two requisites of the Asimov Paradox. The grand transformation needed to confront the climate change threat requires a revolution in capitalism’s consumption and production standards, in a relatively short period of time - in other words, revolutionary change of high intensity. To achieve this type of change or to obtain massive support, it is either necessary to gain active support of the absolute majority of the populations of all of the countries that release significant quantities of greenhouse gases, or it will require waiting decades, perhaps a century, so that this change occurs spontaneously and gradually.

Since there is no time for the gradual, spontaneous process, it is necessary to work intensely for the formation of a global consensus, while simultaneously strengthening sectors of the low-carbon economy that are already emerging on the domestic and global level. These new sectors need increased influence to counter the strong lobbies of the high-carbon sectors. These are the same interests that are financing the well-orchestrated war to discredit climate science, by means of systematic attacks on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and which deny the existence of a climate threat. They also work to block legislative initiatives to bolster low carbon sectors in the United States, the European Union and Brazil.

Simply creating conditions to alter the structure of incentives and disincentives to decarbonization of the industrial economies, would make it possible to resolve the Asimov paradox. To be viable, deep long term changes require both micro and macro changes of low and medium intensity in the short and long terms. These changes preliminary to great transformations would successively raise the price of carbon through regulatory or tax measures. A rising price of carbon would promote the conversion of consumer and voter preferences in favor of a low-carbon economy. It would allow making the high-carbon sectors less competitive and profitable and the low-carbon sectors more competitive and profitable. This would change the political and economic balance of power, which would allow a large transformation.

In the meantime, a progressive adjustment of politically viable goals for reducing emissions to those indicated by the scientific requisites could be achieved. The later the adjustments are made, the greater the additional effort will be needed to reduce emissions in the immediate future. There does not appear to be any other political solution to the climate challenge.

The Copenhagen Agreement was an important step in this direction. At least it has achieved a formalization of the first clear and numeric commitment to mitigation from the large polluters, and precisely those most reluctant to assume any goal: the United States, China, Brazil and India.

It should be noted that these goals resulted from the preparatory negotiations for COP15. All of the principal countries are implementing their own agenda of actions to respond to the climate change threat. These agendas became more explicit and transparent because of expectations that COP15 would result in an ambitious agreement. As a preventive measure, the most recalcitrant countries decided to establish in advance how much they were willing to commit. Upon registering their actions in the annex of the agreement, they created unprecedented conditions for holding them accountable, at least to public opinion, but not only this. These goals will be the object of scrutiny, pressure and counter pressure among countries. This is already happening: Brazil, India and China were convinced to register their goals and to associate to the agreement.

In the United States, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is establishing regulatory parameters that go far beyond what was agreed to at Copenhagen. They are actions that, because of their legal and regulatory nature, could not have future goals inserted into an international agreement. But they are as or more effective than such goals. China is also going beyond what it agreed to at COP. It is now the global leader in alternative renewable energy investments, especially in wind and photovoltaic. It is making extraordinary advances in “green construction” and in urban planning to reduce carbon emissions. India and Brazil are also progressing, although more slowly.

More significantly perhaps is that no large greenhouse gas polluter abandoned the commitments made at Copenhagen, despite disappointment with the final result. In sum, the political agreement that included actions aimed at confronting the climate change threat remain firm and there are signs of additional advances. Legally binding policies are being adopted by the main “climate powers” both developing and emerging, in addition to countless other countries from the two blocks. The establishment of legally binding commitments in a number of nations would lead to eliminating the resistance to a legally binding multilateral treaty. It may not happen this year, but it will probably happen before 2015.

The greatest obstacle to more significant progress in 2010 has been the financial crisis in the Euro zone. Greece, Spain and Portugal are only the most fragile links of an economic chain that is still weakened by the effects of the subprime crisis. Until resolved, the financial problems will contaminate the decisions at the preparatory meetings for COP16 and at Cancun.

This perspective requires that a realistic agenda be established for the Mexico meeting, one which avoids the inflation of expectations that tainted COP15 and a second frustrated result, which could seriously compromise this more formal route of climate negotiations. The departure of Yvo de Boer from

the executive secretary post has already caused an enormous expenditure of political energy to find his successor, which has inevitably strained relations among the countries involved in the dispute. It is important that COP16 is not seen as a failure, to preserve the Climate Convention as the institutional reference for the establishment of a global climate policy, until there is a new institution that is more suitable to the scope of the problem. That is, in addition to avoiding an explosion of expectations, it is also necessary to work against the opposite trend that could be even worse: a deflation of expectations that could lead to an anticipated failure.

In addition, a realistic, feasible and relevant agenda that the countries could adopt, even in a context of crisis, would be completely recommendable. It could be based on two central objectives. The first would be to bring to the formal U.N. route the original “spirit” of the Copenhagen Agreement, so that it would guide the drafting of the central documents of COP16. This would make it possible to begin work on a new legal statute within the Climate Convention, which would begin by encompassing the Copenhagen Agreement. This perhaps would also help define the second period of commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, for 2015. This conciliation between the political agreement and the legal-diplomatic route is perhaps quite viable by the end of the year.

The second objective would be to strengthen and deepen the Copenhagen Agreement itself, as a voluntary process, by adherence, but that could become increasingly more politically binding. Based on a determined degree of commitment, the distinction between a politically binding agreement and a legally binding agreement would in practice disappear. The agreement would take on political weight. There are also various points that require greater technical detail, which could be accomplished within the Climate Convention process.

If there is significant progress on these two points at Cancun, COP16 would have realized the minimum and sufficient requirements to maintain the global political momentum on controlling climate change and improving the basic conditions for reaching a legal agreement in 2011 or 2012. Until then, climate policy and science will continue to be out of step with each other. Nevertheless, dynamically, it is probable that the speed of the curve of global carbon emissions would significantly attenuate, even before achieving a definitive agreement.

## Notes

- 1 The most important document concerns the Climate Convention, which is the responsibility of the working group on Long Term actions (the AWG-LCA, in the COP jargon). The other refers to the Kyoto Protocol and is the responsibility of the Kyoto Protocol working group (AWG-KP).

- 2 United States of America, Department of State – “Briefing by the special envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern,” Washington, February 16 2010.
- 3 Abranches, S. O que fazer para persuadir as pessoas da urgência para a ação climática efetiva? *Ecopolitica*, 27 out. 2009. Available at: <<http://www.ecopolitica.com.br/2009/10/27/precisamos-de-um-sonho-para-fazer-a-maioria-das-pessoas-demandar-de-seus-governos-que-adotem-acao-climatica-efetiva/>>.
- 4 Abranches, S. Como transformar metas voluntárias em obrigações compulsórias, *ecopolitica*, 20 nov. 2009. Available at: <http://www.ecopolitica.com.br/2009/11/20/como-transformar-metas-voluntarias-em-obrigacoes-compulsorias/>.

*ABSTRACT* – COP15 had the best possible political conditions to be successful. The world’s most powerful rulers were there. There was the largest mobilization of global civil society ever to support a meaningful deal. The result was frustrating. How could such favorable conditions yield such dismal results? There are currently not enough elements to provide a full answer to this question - although there are some clues. The Copenhagen Accord was simultaneously a failure and a significant step forward. It was an important political operation, a nonstarter from a scientific standpoint, and a diplomatic failure.

*KEYWORDS:* Global Warming, Climate, Climate Science, Climate Change, Multilateralism.

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