

Kyoto Protocol architect 'frustrated' by climate dialogue

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Raul Estrada taps his gavel to pass the Kyoto climate change protocols in 1997. UN climate talks are going nowhere, as politicians dither or bicker while the pace of warming dangerously speeds up, Estrada, one of the architects of the Kyoto Protocol has told AFP.

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"It seems to me that negotiations are returning to square one," said Raul Estrada, the "father" of the world's only treaty to specify curbs in [greenhouse gases](#), as the first talks for a new [global pact](#) took place in Bonn.

In a telephone interview from Buenos Aires this week, Estrada defended his beleaguered accord and said efforts to engineer a replacement were in trouble.

"We are throwing the dice and then we advance three or four places. Then you throw again and you go back. This is the exercise on climate," said the Argentine ex-diplomat who steered the historic 1997 conference which yielded Kyoto's framework.

Kyoto binds 37 rich nations to reducing carbon emissions but does not have any targeted commitments for poor economies.

It is a format that critics say is hopelessly out of date today, given that China, India and Brazil are now giant emitters.

Kyoto's first roster of pledges expires at the end of the year. Renewing it is one of several keys to unlocking a wider deal to be completed by 2015 and take effect by 2020.

Kyoto "is an excellent source of experience for any successor treaty," Estrada said.



Environmental activists stage a rally near the US embassy in Manila last

December demanding more action to stop climate change. The Kyoto protocol binds 37 rich nations to reducing carbon emissions but does not have any targeted commitments for poor economies.

He added he had "serious concerns" about the 2020 negotiations launched last December in South Africa under the 194-party [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC).

Senior officials are meeting in Bonn for the first round of talks to follow up the so-called Durban Platform. The 11-day parlay runs until Friday.

"There is very little science in the discussion, mostly political interests or political arguments trying to use things that were decided 20 or 30 years ago," Estrada said.

With climate discussions in a fragile state since the chaotic 2009 Copenhagen Summit, Estrada said political and [economic problems](#) at home were preventing many countries from tackling climate change with the urgency it needed.

New research recently predicted Earth's temperature rising by as much as five degrees Celsius (9.0 degrees Fahrenheit) from pre-industrial levels on current pledges, instead of the 2 C (3.6 F) limit targeted under the UNFCCC banner.

He pointed the finger at countries that had failed to live up to their Kyoto undertakings.



An activist from British charity Oxfam pretends to eat a piece of coal as a protest during UN climate talks in Durban, South Africa, last year. Raul Estrada has "serious concerns" about the 2020 negotiations launched last December in South Africa.

"I'm frustrated by those governments with whom we adopted the protocol unanimously in Kyoto, not by consensus but unanimously, and later didn't ratify it like the USA or, having ratified the protocol, now they don't comply with it, like Canada and Italy," said Estrada.

Kyoto, which came into force in 2005, envisioned a five-percent reduction of warming gas emissions by rich countries by 2012 from 1990 levels.

Globally, though, emissions have leapt to ever greater heights, driven especially by emerging giants which are burning coal to power their growth.

The United States signed but did not ratify the accord, while Russia and Japan have said they did not intend to sign up after Kyoto expires this year.

Canada has become the only country to withdraw from the [Kyoto](#)

[Protocol](#), and recently said it would not achieve the target of reducing emissions by 17 percent by 2020 from 2005 levels.

Estrada said the new 2020 pact must include emission targets not only for countries but for industrial sectors, too -- "the amount of carbon you are going to emit by ton of iron or steel or 1,000 megawatts or something like that."

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