

# A beginner's guide to speaking "Climate"

February 10 2015, by Richard Ingham, Mariette Le Roux

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The World Meteorological Organization says 2014 was the hottest year on record—part of a "warming trend" set to continue

Outsiders who walk into a UN climate conference often experience a "beam-me-up-Scotty" moment.

Like Star Trek's Captain Kirk, they find themselves in a alien world where the people speak "Climate", a language as unsettling as Klingon... and nearly as impenetrable.

Veteran speakers know a BINGO from a TUNGO. An ENGO from a YOUNGO. A NAMA from a NAPA. A COP from a MOP.

They read "non-papers" about [hot air](#), and talk wistfully about the days of the QUELRO. And they understand that Bottom Up versus Top Down is not smut—it's about alternative approaches to climate policy.

A new six-day round of negotiations opened in Geneva on Sunday, a stepping stone to a conference in Paris in December where a post-2020 deal must to be sealed.

Here's a primer on what [negotiators](#) are saying:

**ADAPTATION:** Measures to help cope with [climate impacts](#), such as building reservoirs as a defence against drought or sowing crops resistant to higher temperatures.

**ANNEX I & ANNEX II:** A division between rich and [developing countries](#) enshrined at the founding of the UNFCCC in 1992. The two lists define burden-sharing on climate change, with most responsibility on Annex I nations.

**AOSIS:** Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) highly vulnerable to sea-level rise.

**AR5:** The newly published Fifth Assessment Report of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the top expert authority on [global warming](#) and its impacts.

**BAU:** Business as usual. Used for projections of global warming based on current carbon emission trajectories.

**BASICs:** Bloc comprising Brazil, South Africa, India, China.

**BINGOs:** Business and industry non-governmental organisations.  
**ENGOS, TUNGOS and YOUNGOS** are environment, trade union and youth NGOs.

**BOTTOM-UP/TOP-DOWN:** Bottom-up means non-binding, voluntary targets on emissions cuts. Top-down means a global target divided among parties who sign up to binding commitments—the now unpopular approach used under the Kyoto Protocol.

**CAP AND TRADE:** Buying and selling unused [carbon emissions](#) quotas under a cap, or ceiling, imposed on a country, region or industrial sector.

**CARBON INTENSITY:** How much fossil fuel you burn to produce an economic unit—in other words, a measure of energy efficiency. Used by China to define its action on carbon.

**CBDR-RC:** Common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities, a phrase enshrined at the founding of the UNFCCC. It means countries should fight [climate change](#) on the basis of their individual circumstances, wealth and other resources—a thorny issue today as China, Brazil and India are now huge carbon emitters.

**CCS:** Carbon capture and storage, a fledgling technology to siphon and store carbon dioxide from power plants to stop it adding to the greenhouse effect.

**COP:** Conference of Parties, the supreme body of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The November 30-December 11 meeting in Paris will be COP 21.

**GCF:** Green Climate Fund (GCF), designed to channel potentially hundreds of billions of dollars in climate aid to poor countries.

GHGs: Greenhouse gases

G77 AND CHINA: Gathers developing countries—134 in all—which negotiates as a bloc in the climate talks. It is also divided into sub-groups along the lines of their differing interests.

HOT AIR: Surplus of greenhouse-gas quotas developed countries were allotted under the Kyoto Protocol.

INDCs: Intended Nationally Determined Contributions. Voluntary emissions-curbing pledges that must be put forward this year to provide the backbone of the 2020 climate deal.

KP: Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 accord on carbon emissions that will be superseded by the 2020 deal.

LDCs: Least Developed Countries.

LMDCs: Like-Minded Developing Countries.

LULUCF: Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry. A KP provision to count trees as "sinks" which absorb carbon dioxide, a hugely vexatious issue.

MITIGATION: Measures to reduce or slow emissions of greenhouse gases.

MOP: Meeting of Parties under the Kyoto Protocol.

MRV: Measurement, reporting and verification. A benchmark of transparency for.

NAMAs and NAPAs: Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action and

National Adaptation Programmes for Action. Initiatives to help LDCs ease carbon emissions or strengthen [climate](#) defences.

NON-PAPER: An informal document used to float possibly controversial ideas.

QUELRO: Quantified Emission Limitation and Reduction Obligation. A pre-INDC carbon pledge.

REDD: A forest programme (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation).

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