

Light trim for rough draft of climate pact

July 24 2015, by Marlowe Hood



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Senior diplomats charged with condensing an unwieldy draft for a global climate rescue pact, due to be inked in December, handed in their much-anticipated homework on Friday.

A near 90-page draft accord that has emerged from the 195-nation talks so far, was a laundry list of unresolved issues and a myriad of options,

often clashing, for averting climate disaster.

Negotiators agreed at the last UN climate meeting in June to let the body's joint chairmen take a machete—or at least a scalpel—to the text.

With only 10 official negotiating days ahead of a crucial November 30-December 11 conference in Paris to seal the deal, the pair produced a slightly shorter version Friday, though still nearly 80 pages long.

The document "presents a clearer picture of the possible final outcome, while not omitting any of the options put forward by the parties," said a statement by the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, under whose auspices the negotiations take place.

"The Co-Chairs' intention... is to offer the document as a tool that can allow (negotiators) more effectively to negotiate when they reconvene" in Bonn from August 31 to September 4."

The chairmen's brief had been limited to "streamlining and consolidating" the working document—no substantive changes allowed.

In 2011, the UNFCCC's 195 member nations gave themselves until December this year to conclude a deal to protect Earth from the ravages of extreme [global warming](#).

The target is to prevent mean global temperatures from rising more than two degree Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial levels, dating from about 1850.

Scientists note that at current greenhouse gas-emission rates the thermostat will rise by twice than much before century's end.

The parties remain far removed on politically-divisive issues which have

bedevilled the talks for years.

They include opposing country views on how to review and hike pledges—if at all—to ensure the 2 C target remains on track.

Also unclear is how rich countries will meet a promise to muster \$100 billion (88 billion euros) annually in climate aid from 2020.



UN assistant Secretary-General on Climate Change Janos Pasztor talks during the World Summit - Climate and Territories at the Rhone-Alpes Regional Council in Lyon, France on July 1, 2015

Cut through the clutter

The thorniest issues will ultimately be left to ministers or government leaders to settle. Last week, ministers and top-level diplomats from 46 countries met informally in Paris to push things along.

While their talks were not part of the formal negotiating process, participants from both rich and developing countries said they made significant headway in talking through some of the core issues.

"The progress we've made, both with the text and in informal talks, has put an agreement within reach," said Thoriq Ibrahim, Environment and Energy Minister for the Maldives, who chairs the Alliance of Small Island States at high risk of climate change-induced [sea level rise](#).

Jennifer Morgan of the World Resources Institute thinktank said the streamlined text was a "strong foundation" for advancing negotiations.

"The co-chairs have cut through the clutter to make the text more coherent, clarifying the key choices to be made," she commented.

Added Greenpeace climate expert Martin Kaiser, "the text has a long way to go to being the unquestionable, concise document it needs to be.

"It cannot be a circus-tent for the Paris performers but rather an airtight mandate which forces politicians to produce the necessary policies needed for a just energy transformation for a healthy population and a healthy planet."

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