

Commonwealth seeking strong solutions on climate change

November 26 2015, by Robin Millard



Commonwealth leaders hope to thrash out an agreement on climate change ahead of the COP21 climate talks which officially start in Paris on November 30

Commonwealth foreign ministers hunkered down for talks in Malta on Thursday as the organisation moved towards clinching climate change deals that could pave the way for next week's UN environment summit.

The family of 53 nations is gathering on the Mediterranean island with a

focus on reaching agreements that will open doors for wider deals at the COP21 climate talks in Paris.

The Commonwealth's biennial summit formally opens Friday, with countries such as Britain, Canada, India and South Africa sitting down on equal terms with tiny Caribbean island nations and developing microstates.

"The beauty of the Commonwealth is that its diversity makes it into a prototype or microcosm of the whole world," its Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma said.

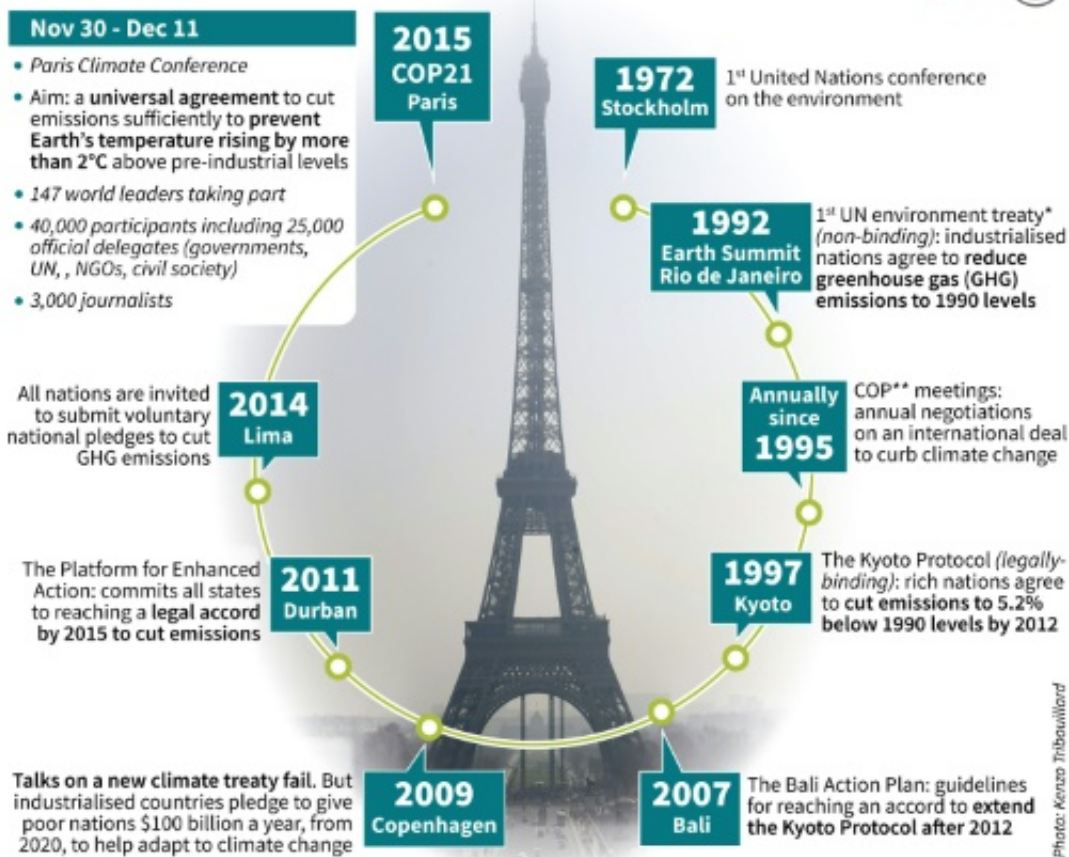
Maltese host Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said he was targeting strong outcomes rooted in "realism" as the organisation tackles issues of "direct concern"—namely climate change, extremism, trade and migration issues.

Born out of the British empire, the Commonwealth of Nations brings together around a quarter of the world's countries and a third of its population. Its focus nowadays is split between democracy, development and diversity.

"The Commonwealth reflects the tensions that exist because around the same table you have some of the most developed and vulnerable economies in the world," Muscat said.

"Most other groupings either have a region or an economic standing in common."

Climate change: the long road to a global deal



Source: UN, French govt *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) **Conferences of Parties to the Convention **AFP**

A history of climate change negotiations. (135 x 124 mm)

'Ethical imperative'

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) runs until Sunday, a day before the COP21 talks officially start in Paris.

Speaking in London, new Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said US President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel had urged him to "make a real effort" at the Commonwealth's climate talks "to make sure that it is a global effort".

Queen Elizabeth II, the Head of the Commonwealth, was due to arrive in Malta later Thursday to start her state visit coinciding with the summit.

Foreign ministers were holding a second day of pre-summit talks at a coastal retreat. Britain is hoping the organisation will put pressure on the Maldives following political unrest that has rocked the Indian Ocean nation.

"The Commonwealth countries could be doing more to deliver a clear and consistent message to the Maldives about the need for a genuine political dialogue," a British government source said.

On [climate change](#), Sharma said the summit's final statement should have a "strong political component" and would also "indicate measures which the Commonwealth is going to undertake, particularly for small and vulnerable states".

"It's a larger question of moral hazard and of an ethical imperative," he explained.

"Small states that have contributed most negligibly to the carbon footprint of the world would be the first to be affected—many in an existential sense—by the consequences of global warming.



Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip will have a packed three-day schedule during their visit to Malta including attending the opening ceremony of the 24th Commonwealth summit and revisit beloved spots from when they were newlyweds

"We will come up with ideas of how to build capacities and access finance."

Alternatives to radicalisation

French President Francois Hollande will be a guest at Friday's climate negotiations in Valletta, where he is also expected to take in interest in its talks on countering extremism, two weeks after a devastating jihadist assault on Paris.

"It's highly symbolic that this is President Hollande's first visit to an international forum ... after the Paris attacks," Muscat told AFP.

"Around the same table we will have a mixture of countries not united by religion, race or region. So that facilitates a discussion on what can be done in order not to have more young people being lured by radicalisation."

He said young people were drawn towards extremism by the offer of "money and hope—something we should be offering them" instead, through employment and education.

"I expect some member states to announce initiatives that will be directly aimed aimed at taking [young people](#) away from radicalisation and offering them alternatives."

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Commonwealth seeking strong solutions on climate change (2015, November 26)
retrieved 27 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2015-11-commonwealth-strong-solutions-climate.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--