Review

Climate Change Fiasco: What Multilateral Arrangements Have to Offer?

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Climate Change Fiasco: What Multilateral Arrangements Have to Offer?

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Abstract

Multilateral arrangements have been a talking thing for decades now. As the globalization process unleashed nations’ potential to converge on matters of concern, there has been a spiraling increase in agreements and arrangements. Climate change is the buzzword in multilateral arrangements now. In the recent past, startling changes in environment have caught the attention of countries, both developed and developing, to take a call of action. The present discourse seeks to understand multilateral arrangements’ itinerary in facing global climate change.

Keywords: Climate change; Multilateral agreements; UNFCCC.

1. INTRODUCTION

As Barack Obama rightly said, “There’s one issue that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other, and that is the urgent threat of a changing climate (The White House, 2014).” Climate change has taken over as the “first thing first” in the agenda of multilateral organizations and arrangements. Climate change came aboard for discussion the very first time at the World Climate Conference in 1979. It is defined as “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer” (Cubasch et al., 2013). The discussion on climate change has suddenly taken a major upturn as earth faces an ever-fastening increase in temperature, a swell in sea levels, and an imbalance in ecosystem. A part of it gathers weightage from the alarming accentuation in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on account of mounting industrial activities, and the remaining hullabaloo is nonabidance by many parties to the climate change motto. The kickoff of industrialization brought manufacturing advances in many nations, viz. England, Europe, and North America, in gradual steps. This gradual aggravation in industrial activity, in addition to bringing economic outcomes, led to environmental concerns as well. The environmental impact of industrialization followed a superior fashion than that of economic and societal impact. Records suggest early signs of climate change via increase in earth’s temperature showed in as early as the 1830s (The Conversation, 2016). However, the whole process has its roots in the industrial revolution, which began from Great Britain in the 1750s. The trigger to climate change was pulled by the extensive use of coal in the newly explored production processes. Coal usage has propelled climate change to take the devastating form it now is. Being a carbon exhaustive fuel, coal increases carbon content in the atmosphere. The total temperature increase since preindustrial times amounts to approximately 1.2 degrees Celsius. We have now surpassed the 1-degree mark, an important marker as it brings us more than halfway to the global limit of keeping warming below 2 degrees Celsius (Ritchie and Roser, 2018). The main players in wreaking havoc with earth’s natural level of temperature include a whole combination of GHGs, like carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and F gases. Other elements also have a part in the climate wrack, however.
As the global civilization underwent transition from a primitive society to an industrial-based one, countless innovations and inventions brought into fore a whole lot of new production functions. These involved generous employment of coal and fossil fuels and the usage just multiplied with centuries passing by. Amplified energy need as communities flourished further raised coal consumption, thus infusing more carbon into the atmosphere. Table 1 reflects the pattern in coal usage lately for a plethora of countries.

As Table 1 makes clear the quantity of coal consumed by major economies across a five-year range starting from 2011 to 2015, it also reflects the notion that when coal consumption has risen, the carbon venting must be following a similar path.

It follows from Tables 1 and 2 that China is the greatest consumer of coal and its consumption over the years has taken an average of more than 50 percent of the world coal consumption. Following China are India and the United States, switching their places occasionally to take the second and third spots in their obsession of coal. Reasons contributing to the countries dependence on coal over the century include a step up in gross domestic product numbers, amplified energy demand, and a liberal attitude in coal production by major economies, like China, themselves. The pattern in coal consumption from 2016 to 2017 is quite interesting. While for China coal consumption increased by 14 metric tons in 2017 vis-à-vis 2016, India saw an increase by almost double of that of China. India's coal consumption swelled by 28 metric tons in 2017 vis-à-vis 2016. Contrary to China and India, the United States displayed a great show of decline in its coal usage and thus reducing carbon emissions. Table 3 displays the trends in carbon emissions by coal usage over the years.

The carbon dioxide emission data spill beans on the why and wherefore of climate change. Repeated pronouncements by world leaders on the control of fossil fuel consumption coupled with the exploration of alternatives to carbon exhaustive energy come in line of this alarming amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In isolation to other GHGs, carbon dioxide content in the global atmosphere has reached a hazardous point. China, being an extensive user of coal, has infused a great deal of carbon. The rank in

| Country     | 2015  | 2014  | 2013  | 2012  | 2011  |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| China       | 4,376,326 | 4,537,257 | 4,678,490 | 4,538,507 | 4,287,557 |
| India       | 879,608  | 917,731 | 837,899 | 841,320 | 770,315 |
| United States | 79,815  | 875,891 | 924,442 | 889,185 | 1,002,948 |
| Germany     | 262,922  | 263,008 | 270,152 | 271,234 | 258,751 |
| Russia      | 228,176  | 219,360 | 229,820 | 256,226 | 244,615 |
| Japan       | 210,734  | 210,608 | 209,934 | 197,483 | 189,619 |
| South Africa | 169,607 | 201,392 | 203,601 | 204,801 | 194,735 |
| Australia   | 130,585  | 130,458 | 130,711 | 139,312 | 145,301 |
| Indonesia   | 95,901   | 83,776  | 79,366  | 73,855  | 72,752  |
| Canada      | 46,297   | 45,545  | 46,447  | 47,395  | 51,471  |
| Vietnam     | 41,650   | 35,423  | 33,934  | 31,277  | 30,546  |
| U.K.        | 41,195   | 53,192  | 66,154  | 70,593  | 56,776  |
| Thailand    | 37,443   | 39,683  | 41,484  | 39,691  | 40,474  |
| Malaysia    | 24,472   | 26,852  | 26,344  | 27,770  | 25,829  |
| Philippines | 24,258   | 22,877  | 20,891  | 17,817  | 15,690  |
| Mexico      | 24,251   | 24,529  | 25,580  | 25,278  | 28,430  |

Source: EIA (International Energy Statistics); EIA, 2011; EIA, 2012; EIA, 2013; EIA, 2014; EIA, 2015.
carbon content diffusion shows the same pattern as reflected in coal consumption. The United States and India garner the second and third spots. However, there has been a decline in the United States’ carbon diffusion consistently but political rendezvous tells a different story for coming years. In Asia, China alone was responsible for 61 percent of total carbon dioxide diffusion in 2017, displaying no shift from its 2016 mark, whereas India made sure to extract a share of 15 percent and 14 percent in 2017 and 2016. For the whole of North America, the United States’ share of carbon emission was an astounding 89 percent, dropping by one percentage point in 2017 vis-à-vis 2016. The drop in coal consumption by the United States as evident in Table 1 and thereby a reduction in carbon diffusion is reflected on account of an increase in use of renewable sources of power generation. Table 4 explains this phenomenon.

From Table 4, only Canada displays a shoot-up in renewable sources of power generation over the time frame. Out of Canada’s total energy consumption, renewable sources make up for a promising 65 percent while

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**Table 2. Total Coal Consumption (in Metric Tons).**

| Country     | 2017  | 2016  |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| China       | 3,607 | 3,593 |
| India       | 953   | 925   |
| United States | 649  | 661   |
| Russia      | 232   | 224   |
| Germany     | 222   | 230   |
| Japan       | 196   | 191   |
| South Africa | 192  | 197   |
| Australia   | 119   | 123   |
| Indonesia   | 100   | 94    |
| Canada      | 39    | 39    |

**Source:** Global Energy Statistical Year Book 2018, Ener Data.

**Table 3. Carbon Dioxide Emissions from Fuel Combustion (in Metric Tons).**

| Country     | 2017   | 2016   | 2015   | 2014   | 2013   | 2012   |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| China       | 9,297  | 9,086  | 9,095  | 9,070  | 9,026  | 8,613  |
| United States | 5,073 | 5,071  | 5,099  | 5,258  | 5,191  | 5,125  |
| India       | 2,234  | 2,151  | 2,052  | 2,003  | 1,840  | 1,786  |
| Russia      | 1,697  | 1,622  | 1,608  | 1,598  | 1,610  | 1,666  |
| Japan       | 1,118  | 1,107  | 1,122  | 1,159  | 1,209  | 1,193  |
| Germany     | 782    | 764    | 754    | 749    | 787    | 766    |
| Canada      | 624    | 590    | 569    | 572    | 574    | 561    |
| Indonesia   | 485    | 464    | 454    | 446    | –      | –      |
| South Africa | 440   | 446    | 436    | 443    | 430    | 420    |
| Australia   | 408    | 407    | 388    | 384    | 393    | 398    |

**Source:** Global Energy Statistical Year Book 2018, Ener Data.
the nonrenewable sources only account for 35 percent. The United States however is a laggard when compared to Canada in the renewables’ share of power consumption but is a step forward from its previous state. China’s position is also improving in renewable energy from its previous standpoints. This boost can be attributed to the role of multilateral arrangements and their climate policies and a multitude of committees over shaping energy strategies in a way that reduces environment threats. Several multilateral organizations are put in place since the early signs of planet heating started. Though the world is endowed with numerous multilateral arrangements specifically for climate change policy formulation, there exist in the vicinity of bilateral and regional trade agreements consistent efforts to mitigate climate catastrophe triggered by extensive fossil fuel deployment.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Article 1(2) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.” Human activity has increased extraordinarily with the upgradation in technology. The astounding use of fossil fuels has brought about a tidal change in the natural composition of atmosphere. Rise in sea levels, melting down of glaciers, depletion of ozone, rising temperatures, droughts, and floods are all a result of climate change. Carbon emissions are believed to be the single-most contributing element in global warming. The UNFCCC article 1(2) goes on to define emissions as “the release of greenhouse gases and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time.” These GHGs are those gaseous substances that traps the heat in the atmosphere and do not provide an outlet, thus absorbing and rejecting into the atmosphere infrared radiations. With gradual advancement in the understanding of the scope of climate change, several GHGs came to be acknowledged, like methane, nitrous oxide, and chlorofluorocarbons, apart from the leading GHG, carbon dioxide.

Multilateral arrangements or organizations mean the coming together of three or more countries for certain objectives or causes. Keohane (1990) defines multilateralism in a similar vein as “the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions.” In layman lexicon, it is a state of international cooperation where some core issues and concerns are at the center. These multilateral arrangements act as the key movers of national objectives at the international stage. For instance, the UNFCCC is a multilateral arrangement in that it is a conglomeration of more than three countries and it revolves around a central idea of tackling global climate change. The multilateral framework of creating international bonds is the product of the aftermath of the Second World War. The relevance of multilateral arrangements is visible in its affluence, which has shifted many economies onto the path of growth.
3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Climate change has been a cause of concern for the developed as well as developing world since the 19th century. The lookout for climate change mitigation has evolved in varying degrees and form. The entry of multilateral organizations in dealing with climate change is not a new thing to ponder. Climate change and multilateral arrangements go hand in hand. Over the course of history, the shift of climate change policy from a unilateral perspective to bilateral, quadrilateral, multilateral, and eventually minilateral ones has been searched upon in detail by a great number of literati. Many have discussed this transition in negotiations regarding climate change since the start of 19th century. Gupta (2010) studied the transition over a broad spectrum of time. While analyzing the shift in perspectives over climate change policies, Gupta clubbed those showcasing an environmental case and those marking a development case distinctly. Thus, identifying five major periods over which the climate change agenda took twists and turns, Gupta surmised for a total period of 30 years the gradual development in conventions, committees, and policies. Pre-1990 policies and commitments were marked by an understanding of different responsibilities by developed and developing countries, as the contribution to climate change was believed to be forged differently by the first world and the third world. The transition over 30 years witnessed the establishment of IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) in 1988 under the auspices of the United Nations. Prior to this, a plethora of reports, like the Brundtland report, and the Toronto conference equated climate change to be as dangerous as a nuclear war. Further declarations and commitments focused on attaching limits to carbon emissions. By 1990, the world saw the second world climate conference, where the potential of limiting carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2005 was discussed. The goals however widened as climate change erupted more voraciously than the mitigation efforts could ever. The 1990 era proved the most promising. Represented as an era of political upheavals, the 1990s witnessed the coming into action of the Rio declaration on Environment and Development, biodiversity convention, and UNFCCC. This phase concentrated on mitigation efforts and activities implemented jointly (AJJ). As the coming together of countries went on expanding with the climate change in shambles, the leadership on climate change underwent a change. Post 1996, the Kyoto Protocol emerged as the mighty effort in climate change. Until now, the IPCC brought into fore a chain of reports on technologies that could help mitigate climate wreck. The major advancement in the mitigation efforts was the recognition of six GHGs and their targets of bringing them down. The 2002-2007 period recorded profligacy in GHG emissions brought into public domain by the fourth assessment report of the IPCC. The leadership dynamics was shaken to the core by the United States walking out of the Kyoto Protocol. However, this time frame also registered relevant agreements in Montreal and Bali, respectively. With more and more countries joining the cause of climate change, it became tougher to arrive at consensus over policies and targets, which was reflected in this phase particularly because of an extended EU and umbrella countries. This period pressed over nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs), biofuels, and clean development mechanisms (CDMs). The period beyond 2008, represented by global financial turmoil, saw the climate change leadership also in shambles. The highlights of this period included the Copenhagen Accord, which confined parties to set rules on emissions. This period acknowledged the human rights chapter of climate change, which remained at a zilch in previous discussions. The unfolding of global climate change governance became the tipping point of the study by Bodansky (2001). The phases were demarcated by a change in stance and the role of governmental and nongovernmental advocates of climate change. The five phases identified were foundational period, agenda setting phase, prenegotiation phase, formal intergovernmental negotiation phase, and post agreement phase. These phases were in operation until the coming of Kyoto Protocol in 1997. From the first phase to the final phase, the roles of governmental and nongovernmental players witnessed a huge shift. In the agenda setting phase, the demarcation between governmental and nongovernmental players was near to zero. The only players who set out differently were a scant group of entrepreneurs. Till the formal intergovernmental phase, the equation however turned around reckoning government officials for greater roles than any nongovernmental actor.

A deeper and more pressing shift widely searched is the journey from multilateralism in climate change to minilateralism. Multilateralism appears to have surrendered to the loopholes in its make. The reasons of its submergence in guiding climate change and the evolution of alternatives form the subject matter of the debate between multilateralism and minilateralism. The two terms defining the conglomery of countries is such that one contains the other to certain extent. While multilateralism is the coming together of three or more
countries for an agreed cause or concern, minilateralism cuts short the number of parties on an agreement and is quick in building consensus. This is the point that adds to the positive of minilateralism. The debate on multilateralism versus minilateralism revolves around each of their efficiency in nearing consensus among parties involved and providing a solution to blockade and deadlock in negotiations. The presence of a number of parties brings disadvantage to the actualization of objectives, as it has been the case numerous times. This is the situation because of the ever-widening scope of multilateral organizations in bringing under its umbrella countries heterogeneous in character. However, minilateralism has with it many negatives too. Minilateralism is seen as all gain only if it complements multilateralism and adds another feather in the cap if it reinforces multilateralism (Brandi, 2015). The proposal to the establishment of climate council under the aegis of the UNFCCC seems to push minilateralism in the front when the UNFCCC as the multilateral institution appears to be weakening in passing further recommendations (Eckersely, 2012). However, it is in the fitness of things to not let, in the follow up of minilateral arrangement the greater motive of multilateral arrangements to wander. Engelbrekt (2015) reckons minilateralism to be the final word in pulling off locked negotiations. In his words, minilateralism appears more “feasible” when past trajectory reflects inability of multilateralism.

The movement from multilateralism to minilateralism appears plausible to many commentators. Falkner (2015) analyzes the need of alternatives for climate change mitigation outside of the state-led multilateral institutions. However, his final stance reflects that although the UNFCCC negotiations haven’t offered a unified action yet and have failed in many of its negotiations, there is yet to emerge a minilateral arrangement that could garner enough support from the masses (governmental and nongovernmental actors) to establish itself as a complete alternative to multilateralism. Similar views are echoed in Hjerpe and Nasiritousi’s (2015) survey of climate change advocates over multilateralism or minilateralism. Through their survey of 922 respondents over 2013 and 2014 in consecutive conferences of parties (COPs), they find a difference of opinions. While government officials favor more of multilateralism, nongovernmental players prefer institutions that are not state led, and minilateralism finds support in European and North American actors. The lack of unanimity in response yet again reflects no promising alternative yet in sight that could replace the UNFCCC. A progress in UNFCCC negotiations can put the minds wandering for alternative options back onto multilateralism, and conversely further disturbance in negotiations can push actors to venture for alternatives like minilateralism. This dripping support for minilateralism or “climate clubs” could see a correction mechanism in resetting the design of the agreement, including provision of club goods to members and propelling sanctions against nonmembers (Gampfer, 2016). In the same vein, Weischer, Morgan, and Patel (2012) have identified incentives to propel countries to join and commit to climate clubs. In short, for climate clubs to emerge feasible, they should reconsider their current configuration and attach greater importance to economic incentives like trade, investment, financial support, and labor transfer to drive players to commit. Minilateralism is prospective of, according to commentators and policy makers, strengthening even more and is believed to shape the entire global climate change governance (McGee, 2011). Multilateralism has spread its wings to the entire globe and has included almost every country in the process. A delay in its negotiations has placed it in a fray with minilateralism. However proficient minilateralism may seem on the out, it still befits for the world to be in the direction of multilateralism, as it has grown consistently over time and minilateralism might take another decade or so to come up with a design feasible for its players.

4. MULTILATERAL ARRANGEMENT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE

International governance on climate change has been at the front of environmentalists, policy makers, and governmental and nongovernmental players since the 1970s. The realization of thinkers about the threat of climate change to earth came as scientists, through their climatic models, predicted a rise in earth’s temperature in the coming decades. Many climatic jolts also drove the world community to ponder over and take the scientists’ prediction to be true. For instance, the detection of ozone hole in 1987 sent chills to the international community, thereby making the climate change movement more pronounced in the public sphere. Another encounter that fueled public and government’s attention toward climate change threat was the heat wave and drought of 1988. These events moved policy makers to converge over an action plan. In vein of these developments in climatic behavior, a major multilevel coming of parties happened at Rio de Janeiro.
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate change (UNFCCC)
The UNFCCC adopted in May 1992 is by far the largest legally binding framework on climate change. The framework saw ratification by 154 parties in June, 1992, at Rio De Janeiro under the functioning of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The main objective of the convention being to stabilize the GHG emissions to reduce anthropogenic substance in the atmosphere, there has been a series of annual COPs since the UNFCCC came into force. The first conference of parties was concluded at Berlin in 1995 and several mandates were thought over. The mandates went on magnifying with successive COPs. The UNFCCC offers varied benefits for climate change mitigation only if the negotiations are timely put into action.

Berlin Mandate (COP-1)
The Berlin mandate marked the first venturing together of parties signatory to the UNFCCC, and apart from a plethora of discussions, the mandate revisited one of its objective as noted in article 4.2 (d). The article stated that parties signing to the UNFCCC will decide over the criteria for carrying out AIJ as described in article 4.2 (a). The COP-1 thus decided the following in the context of AIJ:

(i) To set up a pilot phase for AIJ amid Annex I parties and with nonannex parties, which remains as per their willing
(ii) The activities jointly adhered to must comply with the national and global interests, national in the context of being complacent with environment and development concerns and international in the context of being cost impressive.
(iii) A prerequisite for the carrying out of AIJ is approval and advocacy on the part of governments partaking
(iv) AIJ should accompany long-term environmental favors in line of climate change mitigation
(v) No brownie points in the event of any party meeting emission reduction targets during the pilot phase. (United Nations, 1995)

Kyoto Protocol (COP-3)
The third COP of the UNFCCC was given substance at Kyoto during December 1-11, 1997. In addition to talks over future course of action taking into purview the emission levels on the rise, the major takeaway from the conference was the commitment of developed countries to lower down GHG emissions to specific levels. A consensus was reached over curtailing down GHG emissions to 5.2 percent below the levels established in 1990. This target was set for a period of 2008-2012. However, the United States walked out of the Kyoto Protocol in 2001, referring to Kyoto not binding on India and China, which, according to the United States, will lead to carbon emission profligacy.

Marrakesh Accord (COP-7)
The Marrakesh Accord of the parties signatory to the UNFCCC was held in October 2001 as a mechanism to push ahead the deadlocked Kyoto Protocol. With the United States already out of the deal, there required support by other major emitters in succession to the United States. Japan, Russia, and Canada converged over objected to the proceedings over their nonconformity with market mechanism. The obstruction was finally ruled over by a proposal on carbon sinks. The catching point of the Marrakesh Accord thus emerged out to be the smooth sail of the Kyoto Protocol, wherein 40 countries abided by cutting down their emissions by 5.2 percent below 1990 levels.

Bali Roadmap (COP-13)
The COP-13 mapped out a path of action beyond 2009. Under its talks, key points that made rounds were pulling bottomward emissions resulting from deforestation. The Bali Roadmap is built on four blocks: mitigation, adaptation, technology, and financing. The different roles for developing and developed countries in battling climate change came out as the lead in the COP-13 at Bali. As for the developed countries, climate change mitigation came in through reducing emissions; developing countries were mandated to follow a bottom-up approach, limiting their emissions from the minimum degree assorted. Also, developing countries were mandated to garner technology support and financial cushion to their dealings.
Copenhagen Accord (COP-15)
The Copenhagen Accord setting into action the fifteenth session of the COP was a mixed deal for many. Those not content over its working were parties that were not involved in talks. However, the Copenhagen accord created ripples on the United States involvement in climate treaty. The annual conference reaffirmed previous accords in the context of technology transfer, carbon sinks, etc. The key getaways of the accord were its setting of emission reduction agenda and mitigation rulebook for developed and developing countries for 2020. On the global temperature front, a ceiling of below 2 degrees Celsius was decided upon. Short-term and long-term financing of $30 billion and $100 billion were sought to be achieved by 2012 and 2020, respectively.

Cancun Climate conference (COP-16)
The 16th annual conference of parties of the UNFCCC in 2010 came into bright picture as against its predecessor, the Copenhagen Accord, which received scathing attack on being all gong and no dinner. At Cancun, the glitter to eyes was the decision of structuring a green fund for climate action with a balanced representation from both developed and developing countries. Also, the developing and developed countries under this agreement agreed to comply with GHG emission clampdown.

Paris Climate Accord (COP-21)
Forged into action in December 2015, the twenty-first annual conference of parties of the UNFCCC is both a happy juncture and a locked point. Its major provisions for climate change include confining temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels and achieving net zero emissions as its far-extending goals. The strong point of this conference was the conjoining of more than 100 countries called as the "high ambition coalition." The agreement proved historical in its acknowledgment of different starting points of countries party to the agreement. The agreement this time pledged to carry out implementation in conformity with the “principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.” This is in a way reflected in its doing away of emission reduction targets demarcation, while this time reclining on voluntary mitigation contribution (Climate Focus, 2015).

5. CONCLUSION
Climate change is a top-tier matter now and has involved advocates and supporters from every walk of life. The extension of members involved in the UNFCCC from 154 to 194 is an astounding achievement in itself. Apart from the collective goals devised under the UNFCCC, there are a plethora of other agreements and the clubbing together of economies for the objective of tackling climate change. For instance, the G-8 and G-20 are groups of leading economies working at the front of economic issues, but off late they have placed their foot forward in mitigating climate change. Similarly, the European Union, whose 28 members are part of the UNFCCC, has increased its participation in dealing with global climate change through arranging and concluding individual level events in line with the issue. In the Asia Pacific, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum has contributed measly but still has pulled off its operation on climate change. BRICS, in consecutive annual meetings, goes on establishing and reinforcing its pledge toward tackling climate change. However, all these regional groupings are not formal as against the UNFCCC because these regional groupings are non-legal in nature.

It is widely believed and proved at the hand of scientists that the trigger to global climate change was let loose at the onset of industrial revolution. Since then, the earth's temperature has risen and gained pace with the increase in economic activity. It was, given weightage by developed countries, like the United States, and since 1990s the developing economies have partaken generously due to the development path they have embarked upon. The descriptive lookout suggests that to this day it is China that is at the top of carbon emissions and the United States for the greater part takes the second spot with India often displacing it. Even the now pronounced as imperative use of renewable sources of energy for achieving sustainable development reflects a long way to go so as to reach GHG emissions in conformity with regulating earth's temperature. Nevertheless, many economies have shown a remarkable progress in mobilizing renewable energy, like Canada, China, and Germany. For other economies, it reckons there is a long way to go. Norway stands first.
in galvanizing renewable energy. However, a lot of these developments in the case of climate change owe to one all-binding multilateral arrangement, i.e., the UNFCCC. The mere act of clubbing together a number of countries as huge as 197 for consecutive annual meetings is in itself laudable. Apart from the members, the proceedings draw nonofficials too, which make it a figure outranging 200 participants. Notwithstanding numbers, the on-ground activity has been perturbed several times and came in for criticism at several occasions. The Copenhagen Accord, for instance, was a strict letdown in the eyes of developing nations, as they felt devoid of any say in the binding talks. In reality, the talks were dragged onto the next summit, where they surrendered to many people’s hopes and were eventually brought into work with the adoption of agreements. Earlier in the Copenhagen Accord, the parties only took notice of the agreement and nothing formal could emerge out from the COP. Cancun provided a formal translation of agreements into workable actions. The latest COP-21 in Paris was all eyes by spectators and policy makers, commentators, and pundits all across the globe hailed it as a “milestone.” Undoubtedly, the promise to abide by emission levels that will regulate earth’s temperature rise between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius is a great development to relish but this appears to be more of an emotional success than an actual ground movement. The Paris Climate Treaty is expected to pitch in not before 2020 and this is a huge disappointment in the way that the global warming limits set by the treaty may become a mere promise when actually the emissions will be something beyond control in and around 2020. The rate at which global GHG emissions have taken a toll speaks volume on the uncertainty of the actualization of global warming limits by 2020. Also, the nonabidance of some economies that emit a substantial amount of GHGs in the atmosphere to national emission targets is a negative in the multilateral arrangement. The United States’ recent pulling out of the Paris Climate Accord is a strong sign of irresponsibility toward a goal whose maturity is integral to the entire world. However, the United States’ rebuttal has not deterred other parties and the unison is stronger than ever on climate change. The only part sour about the UNFCCC is its inclusion of a vast array of countries. The heterogeneity impedes the progress of agreements to translate into action. Overall, the multilateral structure of the UNFCCC is both a celebrating characteristic and much ado about nothing. The conglomeration is nevertheless worth something relative to doing nothing at all. A revamp in the procedures can be reached at by abiding countries sticking to the targets and taking a step forward in reducing emissions, consuming more from renewables and clean energy, and not letting the action held back until 2020. The action is to be taken now. Strike while the iron is hot. In this context, Barack Obama’s standpoint is apt: “Climate change is no longer some far-off problem. It is happening here; it is happening now (The White House, 2015).”

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