

A stylized world map composed of a grid of grey dots, with several dots highlighted in red to represent specific countries or regions.

The Role of Alliances in International Climate Policy after Paris

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July 2016

- The High Ambition Coalition, comprising over 90 countries, which came to public attention shortly before the end of the Paris climate conference, made a substantial contribution to the successful adoption of the Paris Agreement. Besides its astute conduct of the negotiations and skilfully stage-managed media performance the Alliance owed its success above all to its broad composition, made up of industrialised, emerging and developing countries. Thus alliance formation once again proved to be an effective instrument for achieving climate-policy aims in difficult negotiating situations.
- While the climate-policy focus up until Paris was mainly on the negotiation process, the focus post-Paris has shifted to implementation of the Agreement. A number of new challenges are tied in with this, coping with which will require the participation of a broad spectrum of actors from politics, business, finance and civil society. Alliances will also have to become more diversified.
- The future belongs not only to the existing alliances, whose further development remains open, but above all to multi-stakeholder alliances of various kinds. As pioneers of change they can make a decisive contribution to advancing the transformation process at national, regional and international levels, to the extent they are able to mobilise the necessary popular and political support.

1. Introduction

The Paris Agreement concluded on 12 December 2015 is a milestone of international climate policy. The Agreement provides for a long-term framework of action with the aim of limiting the average global temperature increase to below 2, if possible 1.5 °C. In order to achieve this long-term target states have committed themselves to reaching the global peak of greenhouse gas emissions as rapidly as possible and thereafter reducing emissions to such an extent that, in the second half of the century, greenhouse gas neutrality is achieved in the atmosphere. The transformative nature of the Agreement, which goes beyond climate protection in the narrow sense, is illustrated by the qualitative climate resilience target and the stipulation that global financial flows be diverted in the direction of low-carbon and climate-resilient economic development.

This was facilitated by a masterly display of international diplomacy. The nuanced combination of national commitments and procedural and transparency regulations codified in international law, combined with a balanced differentiation of converging obligations on the part of industrialised and developing countries and a comprehensive solidarity pact in favour of the poorest and most vulnerable managed to bring every state on board in the end.

A great deal of media coverage was given to the significance of alliances between very different states in order to pull off the Paris Agreement. Particularly highlighted in this context was the High Ambition Coalition. The present discussion paper analyses the role of alliances in climate policy. Particular attention will be paid to the agenda-setting power of alliances in the course of the forthcoming development and implementation of the Paris Agreement at national and international level.

2. Alliances in International Climate Policy

Alliances are more or less formalised groupings of convenience formed to achieve collective change or to defend a status quo.

The majority of previous alliances in the UNFCCC process did not become formalised as one of the, at present, 15 negotiating groups.¹ The identity of formal negotiating groups derives mainly from regional, socio-economic or even ideological characteristics. They pool and articulate their interests in the negotiations. By far the largest formal group is the G77 and China, with 133 members, followed by the African Group (54 members), the Least Developed Countries (LDC – 48 members) and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS – 43 members). Besides them there are a whole series of other groups, including BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), ALBA (left-wing governments from Latin America), AILAC (Latin American states with a progressive climate policy orientation), the Arab Group and the group of OPEC states. These groups, all of which organise developing countries, have overlapping memberships. The industrialised countries, for their part, are divided mainly into two groups: the EU (28 members) and the Umbrella Group (United States, Japan, Australia, Canada and so on). Most formal negotiating groups are too heterogeneous to be able to reach joint positions on everything. On top of that, virtually none of the listed groups is constantly able to assert important negotiating positions without allies. Thus alliances can complement the negotiating groups by boosting the viability of interests.

Before the Paris Climate Conference three alliances had wielded particular influence since the Copenhagen Climate Conference in 2009. Transitions between alliances and formal country groups have sometimes been fluid and no consistent distinctions can be drawn.²

1. Negotiating groups: G-77 and China, Arab Group, African Group, Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China), CACAM (Armenia, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan for Central Asia, Caucasus and Moldavia), Group of Mountainous Landlocked Developing Countries, Least Developed Countries (LDC), LMDC, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA) and the European Union (EU), the Environmental Integrity Group and the Umbrella Group.

2. The CVF, the High Ambition Coalition and the Durban Alliance have or had no express mandate as a negotiating group, while the LMDC, by contrast, does. However, this group is characterised as an alliance here because its membership fluctuates and decision-making procedures are informal.

The CVF was founded in 2009 as a platform and mouthpiece for vulnerable states particularly hard hit by climate change. The CVF has a formal structure – secretariat, rotating presidency – and operates on the basis of joint statements and conferences. The organisation's main foci are the 1.5 °C temperature limit, climate financing, climate adaptation and climate-related loss and damage. The – at present – 43 members³ work quite closely with NGOs at CVF level.

The Durban Alliance, an ad hoc alliance formed at the COP 17 in Durban, South Africa, in 2011, argued for replacing the negotiating structure that failed in Copenhagen with a new process in order to conclude a new long-term climate agreement by 2015 at the latest and, at the same time, to raise the level of climate-policy ambition substantially before 2020. The informal alliance was initiated by key actors from the three negotiating groups LDC, AOSIS and the EU and also found support in parts of the African Group and individual Latin American countries. Against the at times considerable resistance of other countries the alliance achieved its aim because it was able for the first time – to the surprise of many – to bring together climate-policy ambition and process-related innovation in an alliance comprising developing and industrialised countries from different blocs. By organising a majority of states and the joint leadership of charismatic personalities from both the poorest countries and the EU its opponents in Durban were deprived of their most effective argument, the preservation of bloc discipline. The Durban Alliance, however – contrary to what many had expected – did not come together again in the same constellation after Durban.

The LMDC was brought into being as a climate-policy grouping in October 2012, initially as a counter-movement to the Durban Alliance with the aim of restoring the unity of the G77 and China (UN block voting). In substantive terms it had a structurally conservative orientation and aimed at maintaining the status quo with regard to the international-law interpretation of the UNFCCC and in particular to prevent an interpretative further development of the principle of common, but

differentiated responsibility in relation to the Paris Agreement. The intention was to maintain the static division of the world into industrialised countries (Annex 1 countries) and developing countries (Non-Annex 1 countries), each with locked-in rights and obligations, also for the Paris Agreement. Ultimately, this was not achieved. Although the Paris Agreement retained the division into industrialised and developing countries, but it is much more nuanced.

The LMDC is a loose association with fluid membership, unclear and changing leadership (initially China, later increasingly India and finally Saudi Arabia), semi-formalisation (on one hand, joint conferences, press statements and negotiating mandates, on the other hand, however, scarcely regulated and thus often opaque decision-making processes) and a hard core of around 15 members, with another 10 to 15 countries sometimes participating.⁴ The alliance finds most favour in South(-east) Asia and among OPEC states and left-wing governments in Latin America. The LMDC also enjoys strong support from the think tank South Center and the Third World Network. The latter enjoy high strategic influence in many developing countries beyond the LMDC circle because in many places they have a near monopoly as opinion formers.

3. The High Ambition Coalition in Paris

On 9 December 2015, three days before the conclusion of the Paris Climate Agreement, the then Foreign Minister of the Marshall Islands, Tony de Brum, the German Minister of the Environment Barbara Hendricks, the EU Commissioner for Climate Protection and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete, the chief negotiator of the Least Developed Countries Giza Gaspar-Martins (Angola), the then Special Envoy for Climate Change of the U.S., Todd Stern, as well as four other ministers and state secretaries – Pablo Vieira Samper (Columbia), Pa Ousman Jarju (Gambia), Rafael Pacchiano Alamán (Mexico) and

3. Members: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, the Comoros, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Malawi, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Palau, Papua-New Guinea, Philippines, Ruanda, Saint Lucia, Senegal, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, East Timor, Tunisia, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Vietnam and Yemen. For further information, see: <http://www.thecvf.org>.

4. At the time of the previous height of the LMDC's influence in 2013/2014 the core comprised: China, India, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Egypt, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Sudan, Thailand and Venezuela; the wider circle included, among others, Dominica, El Salvador, Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Syria, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. The exclusion of the Philippines in 2014 and the partial withdrawal of, among others, China, led to a loss of significance, which accelerated in 2015 because of the increasing dominance of Saudi Arabia, criticised by the other members. The LMDC was acting as a group in other development-related UN forums – such as the WTO, the Rio and the MDG (later the SDG) Process – long before the UNFCCC negotiations.

Tine Sundtoft (Norway) – appeared before the press to announce that an informal High Ambition Coalition of over 90 states from all continents would be campaigning for the conclusion of an ambitious climate agreement.⁵

In this way after Durban for the second time a broad alliance spanning different blocks came to public attention in a decisive phase of the negotiations, preparations and soundings for which had taken place behind the scenes in the course of 2015.⁶ The Coalition, around a hard core of the Marshall Islands, Germany and active members of the Cartagena Dialogue⁷ convenes a constellation of countries basically similar to the one in Durban (including the EU, the LDC, small island states, middle-income Latin American countries), although expanded to include additional members, especially from the Umbrella Group (United States, Australia, Canada) and from among the emerging economies (among others, Brazil). What bound the coalition together internally and rendered it credible and strong externally, despite its heterogeneity and lack of formalisation, besides the good and trust-based personal relationships of the key actors, were coherent policy demands with regard to the Paris Agreement, which well reflected the main interests of the alliance members: first, the reference to the 1.5 °C temperature limit in the agreement; second, an ambitious and operationalisable emission reduction target derived from the long-term goal; third, a balance between climate protection and climate adaptation; fourth, a mechanism to heighten ambition; and fifth, five-yearly monitoring cycles.⁸ What was also clear to the Coalition from the outset was that an ambitious agreement was achievable only via a joint effort of the industrialised and developing countries; that to this end the one-sided distribution of environmental burdens of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol in industrialised countries must be

further developed with and in developing countries without binding obligations; and that, at the same time, a comprehensive support package – financing, science and technology transfer – is needed in order to help those who need it.

Based on these common interests the Coalition, by means of mobilisation that was coordinated precisely both temporally and substantively, exerted a decisive influence on the negotiations and achieved its aim of embedding the abovementioned core demands in the Paris Agreement. Its particular strength lay in its broad-based composition: it united a majority of states from every region of the world, rich and poor, large-scale emitters and particularly vulnerable states behind a positive political vision for a common future. With its informal ad hoc character it did not substitute for negotiating groups, but exerted influence them.⁹

Due to its open character – »everyone who shares our goals can participate« – its positive message (»united for ambition«) and its cleverly orchestrated and media-savvy presentation as a »white knight«, entirely devoted to a good cause and committed to meeting the full weight of public expectations about achieving a breakthrough in Paris for climate protection, it was able to persuade other countries to support its concerns, including Australia, Brazil and Canada. Sceptics and opponents, on the other hand, were ultimately unable to stand in the way: the joint participation of the members of the High Ambition Coalition in the closing plenary session of the Paris Climate Conference and the congratulations of the UN Secretary General were staged like a triumphal march at a point in the negotiation process at which the agreement had by no means been accepted by all parties. The images of joy and success that went around the world made it almost impossible for potential naysayers to oppose it and at the last minute raise objections without looking like obstructionists and enemies of climate protection.

The High Ambition Coalition, both because of its performance in Paris and the skilful manoeuvring of key actors in the run-up to it – for example, at the Pre-COP in early November 2015 – helped to create a positive

5. <http://www.climatechangenews.com/2015/12/09/cop21-live-climatetalks-intensify-in-paris/>.

6. Among others EU Commissioner for Climate Protection and Energy Cañete referred to this in his statement at the abovementioned press conference.

7. A group of around 30 countries from the global North and South plus the EU has been meeting since 2010 in the Cartagena Dialogue with the aim of leading and driving forward the UNFCCC process in a progressive and ambitious manner.

8. »I will support the goals of this coalition in the nights and days to come. What unites us is our fight for an ambitious climate agreement with a strong long-term goal and strong reference to 1.5. This agreement must lead us towards five-yearly political moments to raise ambition« (German Minister of the Environment Barbara Hendricks at the High Ambition Coalition's press conference on 9.12.2015 in Paris).

9. »This is not a negotiating group, it is rather about joining the voices of all of those who are committed to joining an ambitious agreement and a safe climate future, big and small, rich and poor« (Pablo Vieira Samper, Colombian Deputy Minister for the Environment and Sustainable Development, *ibid.*).

atmosphere for negotiations, described by many as the »spirit of Paris«. Its success in setting the agenda, combined with the high pressure of public expectations concerning political success, made an ambitious agreement possible. Nevertheless, the High Ambition Coalition was not the only alliance of states to whom this success is attributable. The CVF, too, also contributed to achieving a Paris Agreement that was both exacting and struck a balance between climate protection and climate adaptation by calling, as a credible voice of the victims of climate change, for more solidarity, more support from the rich countries and intensified emissions reductions from all large emitters. This stepped up the pressure both on the donor countries, to ensure climate financing in the agreement, and on all large emitters, including the emerging countries, to embed the 1.5 °C temperature limit and climate-related damages and losses in the agreement and to operationalize the climate protection targets.

Both alliances stood for climate-policy progress and put common interests not confined to particular groups of countries at the centre of their arguments as the motor of their ambition. Thus they were able, for the time being, to overcome the block-oriented thinking – especially developing countries versus industrialised countries – that had hindered the climate negotiations for decades by taking joint responsibility and joint action.¹⁰

4. Motivations for Alliance Formation

The leitmotivs for the formation of the CVF, the Durban Alliance and the High Ambition Coalition were increasing climate-policy ambition and paying closer attention to the concerns of vulnerable states. The main motive for the formation of the structurally conservative LMDC, by contrast, was fear of loss of influence (block voting by the G77 and China) and climate-policy change.

Since, especially in the case of China, the second motive has been at least partly dropped the LMDC faces a period of re-orientation.

¹⁰ The G7 resolution on decarbonisation of June 2015 also exerted a positive influence on the Paris Agreement.

4.1 Conditions for Successful Alliances

Alliances differ in terms of the degree of formalisation. The more formal a grouping is, the more permanent it is likely to be. The great success of both the Durban Alliance and the High Ambition Coalition indicates, however, that selective, short-term and ad hoc alliances can be every bit as successful as formalised ones. Both hard and soft factors can be distinguished among the conditions of success.

Hard factors:

- common goals in tune with the core interests of the members;
- conviction of the partners that their aims can be better achieved in an alliance;
- political relevance (sufficient and/or politically important members);
- good coordination, balanced representation;
- adequate resources, expertise, intelligent division of labour and effective strategies;
- public perception: actions and messages with strong political and media resonance;
- good balance between exclusivity and openness to third parties;
- impact orientation: flexibility and ability to change.

Soft factors:

- Integrity: transparency and accountability;
- good personal relations between key personalities;
- strong mutual understanding among partners;
- contextualisation and anticipatory assessment of the opposing side;
- positive image as a motor of climate-policy progress (enabling, not hindering).

Alliances can be divided into groupings »among equals« and groupings »of different partners«. The CVF and, with some reservations, the LMDC are in the first category, while the Durban Alliance and the High Ambition Coalition are in the second. Experts from the developing countries, when asked about it, tend to prefer alliances between equals, arguing that mutual understanding, trust and cooperation on an equal footing are more likely and make it easier to work together. Experts from industrialised countries prefer the second category because of its effectiveness and presumably also because in industrialised countries it is more usual to forge cooperative groupings between different stakeholders (for example, NGOs and companies) in order to pursue common goals. To that extent they have more experience of looking beyond their own horizons. Internationally, such alliances require intercultural sensitivity and trust-building measures. The High Ambition Coalition proves their potential for success.

4.2 Limits and Risks of Coalition Formation

The agenda-setting power of alliances has its limits, especially in multilateral negotiation processes, which ultimately require unanimity. Where these limits lie is largely dependent on context and situation, so that general rules cannot really be formulated. That also means that alliances in conjunction with formal groups of countries to enhance the pursuit of interests must constantly be reforged in changing formations.

On one hand, a certain exclusivity can make an alliance attractive and viable. On the other hand, it can arouse resentment among non-members and, in the worst case, deepen lines of conflict instead of overcoming them. On top of that, there is an internal balancing act of good management of expectations; in other words, arousing high, but not excessive expectations to maximise mobilisation, on one hand, while avoiding disappointment that would weaken the alliance, on the other. Also in external communications a balance must be maintained between determination and openness, so that a positive image emerges: credible and decisive, but not obstinate; flexible, but not arbitrary. Ultimately, alliances in climate policy remain an instrument supplementing, not replacing established multilateral processes.

5. Alliances 2.0 as Drivers of Ambition in the Post-Paris Phase

With the successful conclusion of the Paris Agreement climate-policy priorities and thus also demands on alliances changed fundamentally. Previously the negotiation of the agreement was the focus; now the main issue is its rapid coming into force with robust compliance structures, on one hand, and ambitious implementation by states on the other. These priorities characterise a new phase of international climate policy, namely the post-Paris phase.

What role will alliances play in this? Are alliances, which set the pace in the triumph in Paris, also suited to giving momentum to negotiations after Paris? Or are other coalitions needed now? In any case, a two-track strategy within and outside the UNFCCC process appears necessary, each with different requirements: within the process, in working out the agreement, the emphasis is on an ambitious technical and procedural implementation of the framework laid down in Paris, with a particular eye on transparency, accountability and compliance; the effect of the agreement will be determined above all beyond the international negotiating process, in other words, in climate-policy implementation at national level, via the steering of investment flows and the transformation of the real economy.

5.1 The Contribution of Alliances to the Rapid Coming into Force of and Robust Compliance with the Paris Agreement

Looking at the years leading up to 2020 there are two main demands within the UNFCCC process that ambition alliances could help to address.

First, states must rapidly accede to the agreement because it only comes into force if at least 55 per cent of all states, which together cause at least 55 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions have signed up.

The CVF is mobilising its members for rapid accession to avoid a situation similar to the one that afflicted the Kyoto Protocol, when seven years passed before it came into force. Three members of the CVF – Palau, Fiji and the Marshall Islands – are the first states to ratify the Paris Agreement. Because, for example, Canada and the United States among the major emitters from the ranks

of the High Ambition Coalition are aiming at speedy accession, non-members, too, will fall in line with these ambition alliances in order to avoid the impression that they have less ambition. However, this push and pull strategy is not a foregone conclusion. For example, the Third World Network, which is closely associated with the South Centre, recommended in March 2016 that developing countries not sign the Paris Agreement for the time being, on the highly questionable grounds that they would thus lose crucial leverage with the industrialised countries.¹¹

However, even among some members of the High Ambition Coalition there are reasons preventing rapid accession. For example, for the EU ratification before 2017 is impossible because of its complex and protracted internal procedures.

On the other hand, the specific technical and procedural design of the agreement, as well as the outcomes expected in 2018, such as

- the IPCC special report on the 1.5 °C temperature limit,
- the first global survey looking at the expected impact of national climate protection plans (nationally determined contributions – NDCs),
- proposed procedures concerning public climate financing, and
- proposed transparency regulations,

will be a litmus test for the ambition and the viability of alliances. These issues will set the agenda of climate conferences until 2020.

On this basis and depending on whether it proves possible to achieve global peak emissions by means of rapidly effective emissions reduction measures even before 2020 – which is virtually a precondition of achieving the 1.5 °C temperature limit – we shall see how ambitiously states are implementing the Paris Agreement, which on many points offers scope for interpretation.

11. <https://de.scribd.com/doc/306273316/Note-on-the-Signing-Ceremony-in-New-York>.

Are existing alliances ready for this?

The High Ambition Coalition and the CVF were founded as negotiation-focused, not implementation alliances, which initially suggests that they will also in future campaign for an ambitious interpretation and design of the Agreement.

The CVF is built for the long haul. There is a question mark, however, against the operational strength of the secretariat, its leadership after the transfer of the presidency from the Philippines to Ethiopia in mid-2016 and the real willingness of a significant number of its members to provide support. Because the CVF lacks political heavyweights, maintaining cohesion among such a large number of members is important for political viability. The central role of the leadership in the effectiveness of the CVF is evident from its eventful history: although under the presidency of the Maldives, Kiribati and Bangladesh (2009–2013) the CVF was relatively visible, albeit not active in the negotiations, under the leadership of Costa Rica (2013–2014) it initially suffered a loss of profile. Only under the Philippine presidency did the CVF develop a clear negotiations-related strategy, focussing on a few core policy concerns (1.5 °C temperature limit, ambition mechanism, climate financing, climate-related loss and damage) and succeeded in Paris accordingly. It remains to be seen how well the handover to Ethiopia and ultimately also the cooperation between the Ethiopian presidency and the secretariat (to date based in the Philippines) will work out. Reinforcement and longer-term financial underpinning of the secretariat is very important, with regard not only to the CVF's position in the design of the Paris Agreement, but also to closer involvement of the members. For the, at present, 17 African members this is more likely to succeed under an Ethiopian presidency than hitherto.

The CVF enjoys strong moral legitimacy as mouthpiece of particularly vulnerable countries: members Fiji, Vanuatu and the Philippines have suffered – relatively – the heaviest damage from storms in recent years. The Central American members have been afflicted with massive crop failures during the same period due to drought and Ethiopia is currently suffering from a severe drought. Accordingly, the CVF could leverage its risk exposure as political capital at climate policy-relevant conferences (for example, at the World Humanitarian Summit) in order to time things right at the highest political level

to work towards an ambitious implementation of the agreement based on solidarity and a permanent dialogue on resilience.

The so-called Vulnerable Twenty Group (V20), to date with 20 finance ministers from the circle of the CVF,¹² represents an interesting feature, which adds another string to its bow: as finance ministers of these countries they have other opportunities to exert influence in international politics well beyond the sphere of climate and environmental ministers. This could be used for the political mainstreaming of the Paris Agreement as a broad-based transformation task for the global economy and international investment. This is indispensable if the promise of Paris is to be honoured and could be taken up in order to launch a corresponding dialogue of the V20 with the G20 under Germany's G20 presidency.

The design of the future transparency rules and accountability obligations, in particular in the areas of emissions reduction and climate financing, is a technically very demanding area and crucial for the effectiveness of the Agreement, in which criteria, deadlines and procedures must be worked out by 2020. The CVF seems less appropriate here as a driver of ambition, on one hand, because the alliance lacks members from among the large emitters and donors and thus is not broad enough based to achieve compromises and on the other hand because it lacks expertise in depth.

The future role of the High Ambition Coalition is still uncertain: the Coalition, like the Durban Alliance in 2011, was strongly oriented towards the COP 21 in Paris and tailored its entire political and media campaign to it. Concerning its future, it lacks any institutional structure, programme, secretariat and (as yet) uniform line of communication. As an alliance that operates largely behind the scenes personal relations are key to ensuring the necessary cohesion despite its fluidity. Although the key figure in the High Ambition Coalition, Tony de Brum, has been appointed his country's climate ambassador after ceasing to be foreign minister and, according to a press release, will continue to lead the Coalition from March 2016, it remains to be seen how far he

will really be able to retain his old role in his new office. Much will depend on whether the Coalition's political heavyweights – Germany, the EU and the United States – continue to regard maintaining the alliance as the right strategic option for coping with the challenges of the next UNFCCC negotiating rounds. Criteria for successful continuation of the alliance would include, according to insiders, above all leadership, a minimal governance structure, clear aims and a coordinated strategy. It must initially remain open whether the High Ambition Coalition will take the formalisation steps that this entails.

But would the basis of trust between North and South that made the Paris Agreement possible and is indispensable for its successful implementation be eroded if the alliance were discontinued? Could the negotiations relapse into the old block thinking, with the G77 and China lining up against the OECD? Not necessarily if it proves possible to maintain cooperation between ambitious countries spanning different blocks in other formats and, at the same time, to raise cooperation to another level (see below) when it comes to implementation of the Paris resolutions at national level. Thus a division of labour could occur within the framework of the negotiations: while the Cartagena Dialogue, with its rather technical orientation focuses on transparency rules and accountability obligations, the EU and the CVF could work out a joint »V20/G20 initiative« on climate financing. In this way not only would it be possible on a collaborative basis to retain the bridges built in Paris, but also to build new cooperative bridges with the large emerging countries represented in the G20, without any need for accession to the High Ambition Coalition. It is strategically important to understand that, ultimately, Paris can be implemented successfully only with and not against the large emerging countries. Such an integration strategy, to be sure, does not exclude that in the future ambition alliances among pioneers will again be needed if important decisions loom in the negotiation process and political capital has to be mustered and momentum created. That is likely to be the case in 2018 and 2020, as already mentioned.

12. The V20, with its growing self-conception as counterweight and main contact for the G20 – as expressed, for example, by World Bank membership in April 2016 – is drawing more attention to itself. The finance ministers of the other members of the CVF are now considering accession to the V20.

6. The Possible Role of Alliances in the National Implementation of the Paris Agreement

Whether Paris was really a success will ultimately turn out at national level, in the financial markets and in the real economy: there and nowhere else will climate protection, climate adaptation and a transformative reorientation of investment flows from carbon intensive to low carbon infrastructure and products be implemented.

In climate policy that requires, first, a massive shift of emphasis from the international negotiation level to the level of national implementation or international support for it. Second, when it comes to implementation of the Paris Agreement, in contrast to its negotiation, climate and foreign policy no longer have primacy, but finance, economic and infrastructure policy. That means not only that the responsible ministries and the climate-policy community will have to reorient themselves, but also that alliances require new actors in order to be successful here.

What is to be done?

First, transformation partnerships are indispensable to support developing and emerging countries in the implementation of their NDCs and in the elaboration of long-term (2050) decarbonisation and resilience strategies, together with the building up of the requisite social, technological, financial, knowledge and regulatory capacities. Such alliances should be in place at the latest by COP 22 in Morocco.

Secondly, in the case of countries and country groups such as the EU, which fall short of a level of ambition in keeping with their responsibility (and in the case of the EU also short of the goals it has set itself), both public and political pressure from partner countries are needed. The message sent to the EU by the CVF in March 2015, whose substance was clear, although it was phrased diplomatically, was important: the EU must review whether its climate goals are compatible with what was agreed in Paris.¹³

13. <http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2016-03/klimaschutz-paris-gipfelziele-erderwaermung-klimapolitik>.

Thirdly, platforms such as the G7 and the G20 are indispensable in order to boost a sense of responsibility, cohesion and cooperation among the major emitters and to counteract free-riding, bringing issues to the table, establishing anchors and, finally, agreeing on forms of collaboration. Alliances such as the CVF can build up the appropriate pressure of expectations with regard to the G7 and the G20 from outside, and members of the High Ambition Coalition could contribute by means of a well-coordinated inside/outside strategy to influence the G7 and G20 agendas.

Fourthly, in order to conduct the implementation of the Paris Agreement out of the climate-policy niche and integrate it in a broader development agenda the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) suggest themselves. But that, too, is by no means a sure thing and will pay dividends only if actors from the development and climate realm come together and work in tandem to implement Agenda 2030 proactively, paying attention to the Paris Agreement. That would involve pushing an approach that makes NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and long-term national low carbon development strategies (LCDs) a permanent component of national development planning, including a coherent economic, regional and finance policy.

7. Summary and Outlook: Does the Future Belong to Multi-stakeholder Alliances?

In order to bring about far-reaching transformation processes in the real economy with correspondingly profound social and political consequences strong driving forces beyond climate policy must be brought to bear. In order to shape this process innovatively and ambitiously new ambition alliances 2.0 are needed that, in contrast to the negotiation-focused alliances that we have seen so far, are multi-stakeholder alliances and have a solid foothold outside the UNFCCC process: actors from the economy and the financial sector, cities, municipalities and regions, as well as academia, trade unions, churches, NGOs and social movements are essential here. The numerous initiatives launched from these groups in Paris give a first impression of the potential of such ambition alliances 2.0. The decisive question will be whether it proves possible to ground Paris in as many countries as possible by means of »citizens' alliances« and with a tailwind from business; whether there are sufficient

pioneers of change and they are able to mobilise broad-based social support; and finally whether in a globally networked world collective intelligence is able to do enough to give the transformation process a clear direction.

Even if it does not prove possible to govern transformation centrally it still requires support:

- Especially in developing countries multi-stakeholder ambition alliances need staff and financial support.
- Exchange platforms must be created to promote networking and accelerate the diffusion of learning experiences.

Government consultations and other channels have to be used to counteract the – in many places alarming – tendency to restrict civil society open spaces and civil rights. This is because transformation, which the Paris Agreement urgently invokes, can never be imposed by decree, but needs innovation and actors who can promote change freely.

This will bring about a significant shift in the spectrum of actors that have to be reached via alliances. Alliances have to adapt to this by opening themselves up or re-establishing themselves. Besides the G20 and G7 processes, primarily multilateral development banks, financial markets and investors and multinational companies, as well as national governments, the EU and significant interest representing organisations and companies have to get involved in the transformation process. In order to be viable and effective here multi-stakeholder alliances from business, civil society and politics will be needed in future.

This process is furthest advanced in energy policy, which is key to low carbon development. This was accelerated in Paris (among other things, Mission Innovation, Breakthrough Energy Coalition, Global Solar Alliance, African Renewable Energy Initiative). Other policy areas will follow, above all finance and insurance, infrastructure development and transport, urban development, agriculture, services and industry.

Understanding the relevance of multi-stakeholder partnerships for transformation processes in the direction of sustainability is far from new. The Agenda 21 approach

of the Rio Earth Summit (1992) and the promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships for development at the Johannesburg follow-up summit (2002) testify to this. Impact assessments indicate, however, that the track record of such alliances has been indifferent. They have often proved to be too fragile to break through political blockades on their own.¹⁴ These lessons have to be heeded.

An example of a climate-policy multi-stakeholder alliance of the 2.0 kind is the Alliance for Higher Ambition that the EU institutions and the governmental heads of the member states called for publically in March 2016 in order to raise their level of ambition to do justice to the requirements arising from the Paris Agreement.¹⁵ The alliance that thus made its debut has, to date, attracted around 60 companies and business associations, suppliers and municipalities, foundations, environmental and development associations, church networks, trade union federations and think tanks.¹⁶


7.1 The Role of Civil Society in Multi-stakeholder Alliances

Civil society is assuming an indispensable role in multi-stakeholder alliances all over the world: non-governmental organisations, trade unions, churches, social movements and academic institutions operate catalytically as transformative and forward-thinking

14. International Civil Society Center (2014): Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships. Building Blocks for Success.

15. <http://www.env-health.org/resources/letters/article/statement-fromthe-coalition-for>.

16. Acciona Agua en Portugal, ACT Alliance EU, Anglian Water, Bond Beter Leefmilieu Vlaanderen, British Energy Efficiency Federation, BT, Carbon Market Watch, CARE International, CDP, Centre for Transport and Energy (CDE) – Czech Republic, Change Partnership, Climate Action Network (CAN), Climate Alliance of European Cities with Indigenous Rainforest Peoples, Dong Energy, Doosan Babcock, DSM, Entidad Nacional de Auditores y Certificadores, E.ON SE, EuroACE, Euroheat & Power, European Alliance to Save Energy (EU-ASE), European Copper Institute, European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ECEEE), European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Geothermal Energy Council (EGEC), European Industrial Insulation Foundation (EIIF), European Insulation Manufacturers Association, European Solar Thermal Industry Federation (ESTIF), European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), E3G, Ferrovial, GEN Europe, Gorenje Surovina d.o.o., Greenpeace, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Health Care Without Harm Europe, Heathrow, Iberdrola, IEA, DSM, Task 24, Inter-Environnement Wallonie (IEW), Interface International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Kingfisher, Klima-Allianz Deutschland, Koalicja Klimatyczna Poland, Legambiente Italy, Milieudéfense Nederland, Mouvement Ecologique Luxembourg, National Energy Conservation Agency (NAPE) Poland, Naturefriends International (NFI), Philips, Plan B za Slovenijo, Quercus Portugal, Réseau Action Climat-France (RAC-F), Rockwool, Sandbag, SEO BirdLife Spain, Skanska, Sky.



change agents, function as watch dogs, serve as transmission belts for a wide range of social groups and represent the interests of the socially disadvantaged and concerns that otherwise do not benefit from political representation. In particular, churches, trade unions and social organisations sometimes find it somewhat hard to take sides openly in favour of transformation and climate-policy ambition. They fear, not without reason, that some of their clientele may face social hardships and challenges. The special task of these actors lies in taking up these challenges, the opportunity-oriented shaping of the future, not in clinging on to the past.

The long-term success of the Paris Agreement will be determined by its implementation. To this end actors and policy areas beyond the initial climate policy have to be brought on board. **Multi-stakeholder alliances** of various kinds can contribute a lot to advancing this process at national, regional and international level. As pioneers of change they must be innovative, counter the resistance of those likely to lose out from transformation with conviction and, finally, mobilise the requisite social and political support by means of credible leadership.

8. Policy Recommendations

Alliances have proved to be effective drivers of ambition in climate policy. In the upcoming phase of the technical design and, above all, implementation of the Paris Agreement they will continue to be necessary. Even more than in the past it will be decisive for success that, depending on the task and the level of action, different coalitions of actors, increasingly going beyond the sphere of climate policy, will come together. Ambitious transformation processes require not one, but many complementary alliances:

A broad **High Ambition Coalition**, whether with its existing composition or a different one, is needed if important international climate-policy decisions are to be made and a lot of political capital has to be mobilised for that purpose. That will again be the case in 2018 and 2020.

The **Cartagena Dialogue** can offer an important platform for an ambitious technical elaboration of the Paris Agreement. It would make sense to extend its membership base, insofar as credibility and willingness to engage in dialogue on an equal footing are retained.

The **Climate Vulnerable Forum** and the **V20** as its extended arm can, as a mouthpiece of vulnerable states, keep up the moral and political pressure especially on the major emitters, as well as take action and negotiate at an ambitious level. The V20 as an organ of finance ministers can provide strategic leverage to bring the transformation debate into forums outside climate policy. A G20/V20 dialogue format suggests itself.



About the author

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For the purpose of this publication interviews were carried out in March 2016 with 12 experts – half of them members of negotiating delegations – from France, China, Germany, India, Kenya, Lebanon and Malawi in accordance with the Chatham House Rule.

Imprint

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This publication appears within the framework of the working line »International Climate and Energy Policy«, responsible: Manuela Mattheß, Manuela.Matthess@fes.de.

The views expressed in the present publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

This publication is printed on paper from sustainable forests.



ISBN
978-3-95861-541-0