



LIMA COP20 | CMP10

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2014

What was it all about?

The [Lima CoP](#) (Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) was a conference of over 190 countries attempting to negotiate a deal on climate change to limit emissions from developed countries and help developing countries adapt to the impact of climate change and develop low carbon economies.

What did it achieve?

[According to the UN](#) the world is 'on track to new universal climate agreement with Lima Call for Climate Action' and 'governments agree ground rules on contributions to Paris 2015 agreement and boost adaptation'

The [BBC](#) summarised the outcome as follows:

- An "ambitious agreement" in 2015 that reflects "differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" of each nation
- Developed countries to provide financial support to "vulnerable" developing nations
- National pledges to be submitted by the first quarter of 2015 by those states "ready to do so"
- Countries to set targets that go beyond their "current undertaking"
- The UN climate change body to report back on the national pledges in November 2015

The [New York Times](#) was optimistic about the outcome:

'In its structure, the deal represents a breakthrough in the two-decade effort to forge a significant global pact to fight climate change. The Lima Accord, as it is known, is the first time that all nations, rich and poor, have agreed to cut back on the burning oil, gas and coal. But the driving force behind the new deal was not the threat of sanctions or other legal consequences. It was global peer pressure. And over the coming months, it will start to become evident whether the scrutiny of the rest of the world is enough to pressure world leaders to push through new global warming laws from New Delhi to Moscow or if, as a political force, international reproach is impotent.'

[Ed Davey](#), UK Government Minister for Energy and Climate Change argued 'This is an agreement that unites all nations, unlocking the door to the world's first global climate deal in Paris next year. The talks were tough but the Lima Call for Climate Action shows a will and commitment to respond to the public demand to tackle climate change.'

Critics were unimpressed. [WWF](#) claimed that ‘against the backdrop of extreme weather in the Philippines and potentially the hottest year ever recorded, governments at the UN climate talks in Lima opted for a half-baked plan to cut emissions. Governments crucially failed to agree on specific plans to cut emissions before 2020 that would have laid the groundwork for ending the fossil fuel era and accelerated the move toward renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.’

Meanwhile on the margins

Both churches and the Scottish Government were represented at the Lima conference. [“Climate change threatening human rights: challenges and actions”](#) was an official side event held on 10 December at the COP 20 promoted by the World Council of Churches. The event drew attention to concerns of churches in developing countries about the human implications of climate change and the need to promote climate justice.

Scotland was represented at Lima by the Scottish Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Dr Aileen McLeod MSP, who during her stay, met the WCC delegation to discuss climate justice and the Scottish Climate Justice fund.

What next?

The Lima accord is a step towards the 21st climate conference in Paris in 2015. While this conference is being promoted by some as the setting for a global agreement on climate change memories of the failure of the conference at Copenhagen in 2009 still haunt others. The road to reducing global carbon emissions and effective adaptation to climate change remains long and torturous. Bilateral agreements such as that between the USA and China and action at regional or local level all have a growing role in responding to climate change. Action among faith groups is also growing as demonstrated by the [Religions for the Earth Conference](#) held in New York City in September 2014.

So while the UNFCCC process remains vital it is far from being the only way or possibly the most effective way to address climate change in coming years.

*Adrian Shaw, Climate Change Officer, Church of Scotland
ashaw@cofscotland.org.uk*

December 2014