South Africa in climate negotiations: Challenges from Copenhagen via Cancun to Durban 9/12

Godwell Nhamo: Institute for Corporate Citizenship

Abstract

South Africa surprised many when it pledged to reduce emissions by 34 per cent in 2020 and 42 per cent in 2025 a day before the Copenhagen Climate Summit of December 2009 (COP15). The position taken by South Africa was in conflict with that of the Africa Group. South Africa was also involved in crafting the Copenhagen Accord, a political agreement concluded outside the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to address the interests of a few countries, including Brazil, China, India and the USA. Leading to COP16 in Cancun 2010, South Africa forged a tripartite alliance with Denmark and Mexico in order to push for a solid foundation for COP17, that took place in Durban in 2011. To tease out the thinking with regard to expectations for COP17, South Africa called for a wish list from negotiating parties that were meeting in Bonn in June 2011. The views that emerged from the Bonn meeting show that South Africa has a big challenge in bridging the gap between the developed and developing countries. This article analyses South Africa's role in climate negotiations with a view to presenting the challenges -from Copenhagen 2009, via Cancun 2010, to Durban 2011. The work also argues that being the host of COP17 implies that South Africa's role in climate negotiations was more focused on facilitation. The world expected a breakthrough in Durban, especially regarding the second Kyoto Protocol commitment period.

Keywords: Cancún; climate negotiations; Copenhagen; Durban; Kyoto Protocol; South Africa

Introduction

Researching South Africa's role in climate change negotiations requires us to collapse dichotomies such as global/local, local/continental or continental/global which are often associated with traditional mindsets. These divisions eventually become blurred during climate change policy-making processes, especially due to the complexity, uncertainty and contested nature of the negotiations. In addition, we need to deny that purely technical, scientific or social relations are possible in climate change negotiations, as what may be viewed on the surface as social, is likely to be partially technical or scientific, and vice versa. We therefore need to understand that climate change negotiations are simultaneously real and discursive, as well as social and political constructs.

South Africa has a very strong national climate change response agenda that has resulted in the adoption of the 2007 Long-Term Mitigation Scenarios (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism/DEAT 2007). On the African continent, the country has taken the lead in climate change negotiations, particularly the post-Kyoto Protocol regime. Internationally, South Africa is part of a number of formal and informal climate negotiation groupings which include: the G5 (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa), G8, G8+5 (G13), G20, Major Economies Forum, G77, G77+China, Basic (Brazil, India, China and South Africa), Brics (Basic + Russia) and the recently constituted Basic + USA, a group that emerged from Copenhagen 2009. The country also had significant powers through its representation in the 15-member United Nations Security Council that discussed climate change as a major security threat for the first time in its history in 2007. South Africa's climate change engagements can therefore be viewed as a complex web that links national, continental and global players. At each of these levels, there are also a number of actors with political, economic and social power, aspects that make negotiations very complex. In terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, South Africa's emissions are by far the highest in Africa, followed by those of Nigeria; and South Africa's figures compete strongly on the international and emerging economies platforms. South Africa's emissions are large compared to its population and economy, and the coal-based energy economy has enjoyed relatively low energy prices, historically leading to the development of energy-intensive industries.

Being the largest GHG emitter on the continent, South Africa's roles in climate negotiations cannot go unnoticed. South Africa wields a strong political and economic influence, both on the continent and internationally. The following can be cited as key achievements with regard to the country's influence:

- 2000: Highly instrumental in the formation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
- 2001: Highly instrumental in the formation of the African Union (AU)
- 2006: Elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2006, ahead of other African countries
- 2008: The Chair for the Southern African Development Community
- 2008: Elected Chair of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)
- 2008: Successful negotiation of the long-awaited political settlement in Zimbabwe
- 2010: Hosting of the FIFA Soccer World Cup
- 2011: Hosting of the COP17/CMP7 (the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC] and the 7th Session of the

Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol)

- Various other political initiatives in the Kingdom of Lesotho, Angola, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, the Comoros and Sudan.

South Africa also plays a critical role in terms of finance and cooperation in Africa. In April 2008, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country stood at R1.994 billion (equivalent to \$283 billion)¹ and the GDP per capita was R41 120 (equivalent to \$5,815). The population was estimated at 48.5 million people (The Presidency 2008). Real GDP has grown since 1999, accelerating towards the end of 2006. The economy grew by 5.1 per cent in 2007, slightly lower than the 5.4 per cent recorded in 2006. In 2007, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows increased, indicating that sound economic factors and a positive overall investment climate do attract increased FDI. In the 2007/08 financial year the country recorded a budget surplus of 0.8 per cent of the GDP, up from a 0.3 per cent surplus in 2006/07. In the 2006 Doing Business Index, South Africa was ranked 28th out of 178 countries. South African companies have not only moved swiftly into Africa after independence in 1994, but are active and recognised global players too. Mining houses lead the way, followed by manufacturers and financial institutions (The Presidency 2008).

Methodological orientation

This article answers a sole research question: What is South Africa's role in climate negotiations and how has this role been played out from Copenhagen 2009 to Cancún 2010, and how will this role be played out in Durban 2011? The question is addressed by drawing insights from a hybrid methodological framework utilising document analysis (Arksey and Knight 1999; Creswell 2003) and the Actor/Actant Network Theory (AANT) (Nhamo 2006). Such a hybrid methodological underpinning has already been successfully applied by the author in a number of other publications (Nhamo 2008, 2009a, 2009b). The methodology also makes use of internet-based research (Nhamo 2006), a source of valuable information and data sets. The online resources used for this work included the South African Government online sites, the official Copenhagen Climate Summit website, Third World Network, the official UNFCCC website and other authentic online resources. The author also utilised an online subscription to Zunia, a knowledge exchange website that forwards climate policy-related publications on a daily basis. The AANT methodology allows researchers to trace humans (actors or players), non-humans (actants, artefacts) and networks as they push for different viewpoints in the climate space. In so doing, alliances and climate change policy domains are investigated, making it possible to trace how these are made, destroyed, and re-made until consensus positions are reached (or never reached). South Africa is considered a key player in climate negotiations and the article draws

from its involvement as the country relates to other key actors, actants and networks.

Theoretical underpinning and literature survey

In an earlier work entitled 'Copenhagen 18/12: Africa must continue calling for a fair, ambitious and binding climate deal' the author (Nhamo 2011a) presents a detailed account of theories on international environmental policy formulation. Among those discussed are theories relating to conservatism, environmental justice, deep ecology, feminism, post-modernism, socialism and liberalism. The environmental justice theory (EJT) was one adjudicated to best explain developments that surround climate negotiation engagements, especially from a developing country perspective like that of South Africa and the African continent as a whole. Hence, during COP negotiations, many views propelled by developing nations are likely to be embodied in the EJT. For the purposes of this article, a brief summary of the EJT is presented, as this theory also informs this article and readers are referred to the earlier work of the author for further details. The author (Nhamo 2011a) indicates that the EJT focuses on fair processes for the distribution of environmental goods and benefits, as well as costs. This is an aspect that quickly leads us to the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC 1992) and its implementation instrument, the Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC 1997). The provisions of Article 3 of the UNFCCC make it clear that addressing climate change must be done '[o]n the basis of equity and in accordance with a country's common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities' (UNFCCC 1992, 4). This implies that developing countries that are well resourced in terms of finance, technological know-how, expertise etc must do more in terms of addressing the challenges resulting from the negative impacts of global warming and climate change, most of which affect the developing countries. Similarly, developing countries like South Africa should do less when compared to the developed world. In addition, there should be differentials within the blocks of developed and developing countries. What this implies is that South Africa, for example, should do more than any other African country as it is the leading economy on the continent.

Hence, one might discover that whilst African countries could be pushing for a climate change solution centred on adaptation (Naidoo 2011), South Africa might be interested in pushing both the adaptation and mitigation agendas, as it has the huge industrial base that has led to the country being a major GHG emitter. In the same manner, the concept of burden sharing has been applied in the allocation of GHG emissions quotas for the developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol, based on the provisions of Article 3 of the UNFCCC (Ringius, Torvanger and Underdal 2002). Under Article 3 of the Kyoto Protocol, 37² industrialised countries (so-called Annex 1 countries)

are to collectively reduce their GHG emissions by 5.2 per cent from 2008 to 2012, based on their 1990 emissions levels (UNFCCC 1997).

In work analysing the evolution and historical development of the Kyoto Protocol, the author (Nhamo 2011b) maintains that there was a wrong turn from Rio 1992, where the UNFCCC was adopted. The issues of equity were thrown out of the window, as is reflected by the rejection of a proposal by Brazil to have the Kyoto Protocol centred on the 'polluter pays' principle. In 1995 Brazil brought forward a proposal in which the Kyoto Protocol would allocate GHG emissions quotas to the industrialised countries. Those surpassing their GHG emissions quotas would pay \$10 into a Clean Development Fund (CDF) that would be used to clean up the environment in developing countries. This proposal was not passed, having faced opposition from the USA (which has still not ratified the Kyoto Protocol), Australia, New Zealand and Canada. These so-called 'dissident' countries instead questioned the science behind Brazil's methodology in calculating historical GHG emissions and brought amended proposals that propagated the inclusion of three market-based mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol, including the modern-day Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Hence, to date, issues of equity as advocated for in the EJT have not been fully addressed and many from Africa, including South Africa, will continue to call for an equitable, fair and legally binding climate deal post the Kyoto Protocol (Nhamo 2011a).

From the literature, a number of issues that have shaped the modern-day understanding of global warming and climate change can be highlighted, among them: developments in arguments pertaining to climate change and the involvement of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Sir Nicholas Stern's report, and the publication of a book and a movie script by Al Gore entitled *An inconvenient truth: A global warning*. Key issues from the highlighted global landmarks are considered in the next paragraphs.

The IPCC *Third Assessment Report of 2001* (TAR) and *Fourth Assessment Report of 2007* (AR4) are critical when climate change is debated. For the purposes of this work, the focus is directed at the IPCC's AR4. After protracted debates regarding evidence as to whether climate change was happening or not in the late 1980s through to 2006, the IPCC published the AR4. The AR4 concluded that the evidence regarding global warming that leads to climate change was unequivocal (IPCC 2007). The AR4 also highlighted the negative impacts associated with climate change on a continent-by- continent basis and concluded from simulation models and observed trends that Africa would be the hardest hit. Among some of the negative impacts associated with climate change predicted for Africa by the IPCC AR4 was that by 2020, up to 250 million people would face water shortages, with yields from rain-fed agriculture possibly going down by up to 50 per cent; at the end of the 21st century, the cost of climate change adaptation due to sea

levels rising could amount to at least five to ten per cent of gross domestic product (GDP); and by 2080, an increase of five to eight per cent of arid and semi-arid land in Africa was projected (IPCC 2007). Some of the negative impacts related to climate change highlighted here dictate that African governments (including South Africa) take these threats seriously, leading to and from COP17 in Durban.

In his flagship work on the economics of climate change, Sir Stern (2006) concluded that climate change is the greatest and widest-ranging market failure of our time. Hence for the voice of reason to prevail, when we address climate change into the future, market forces have to be checked. Sir Stern also highlighted how the burden of climate change unfairly impacts on those who did not cause it, like countries from the developing south. In addition, the Stern Review indicated that as a global common, the atmosphere is likely to continue suffering from GHG emissions if effective abatement measures are not put in place – something which needed to be done as of yesterday. In his book and documentary film *An inconvenient truth: A global warning*, Al Gore (2006) put across the truth in terms of the negative impacts and evidence of global warming and climate change. Examples across the globe were used to illustrate this point, and the film in particular raised climate change awareness across the world. Al Gore also laid bare the manner in which the USA government addressed the climate change discourse, revealing evidence that facts surrounding the science and effect of climate change could have been manipulated to pursue a certain policy to protect the USA's national interests. The next section considers South Africa and the climate change agenda.

South Africa and the climate change agenda

South Africa ratified the UNFCCC on 29 August 1997 and the related Kyoto Protocol on 31 July 2002. Since then, the country has moved fast to establish institutions and legislation guiding conduct within one of the Kyoto Protocol flexible mechanisms, the Clean Development Mechanism. The key institution put in place as per the dictates of the Kyoto Protocol is the Designated National Authority, housed within the national Department of Energy. The government of South Africa has prepared several policies and strategies to address the impacts of climate change. These include the National Climate Response Strategy of 2004, the South African Country Study on Climate Change of 2000 and the Long-Term Mitigation Scenarios of 2007 (Koketso 2008; Stockholm Environment Institute 2011). Other recent measures and responses to climate change by South Africa are the Biofuels Industrial Strategy of the Republic of South Africa (Department of Minerals and Energy/DME 2007), a draft National Climate Change Response Policy (DEAT 2009), the Green Paper on National Strategic Planning (The

Presidency 2009b), Renewable Energy Feed-in Tariffs (DME 2009a), the National Energy Efficiency Strategy of South Africa (DME 2009b), the Framework for South Africa's Response to the International Economic Crisis (The Presidency 2009a), the Industrial Policy Action Plan II (Department of Trade and Industry/DTI 2010), the Integrated Energy Resources Plan for 2010–2030 (Department of Energy/DoE 2010), The South African Renewables Initiative (Department of Public Enterprise [DoPE] and DTI 2010), the *National Climate Change Response Strategy Green Paper* (DEA 2010) and the *Carbon Tax Option* (National Treasury 2010). For further details regarding the provisions of the aforementioned policies and the manner in which South Africa has applied these in the low-carbon and green economy, the reader is directed to two recent co-published articles by the author of this article, entitled: 'Renewable energy policy landscape in South Africa: Moving towards a low carbon economy' (Nhamo and Sion-Yu Ho 2011) and 'Energy efficiency in South Africa: Policy perspectives and path to low carbon growth' (Nhamo and Bimha 2011). The conclusion from the two articles is that, as a country, South Africa stands ready to engage with the emerging low-carbon and green economy that addresses climate change through the prioritisation of mitigation and adaptation. South Africa considers these to be of an equal weighting. This differs from the rest of the African continent, which prioritises adaptation. Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994, the country has been under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC's climate change position (which is very difficult to separate from the government's position) can be traced as far back as 2005, when the country hosted a National Consultative Conference on Climate Change on 18 October. Writing in the ANC bulletin, an ANC Member of Parliament and then Minister for Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, revealed compelling facts on the ANC and government's position on climate change and future directions for policy at both the national and international levels. With regard to addressing climate change, the minister indicated that what was needed as a next step was global commitment and mechanisms to provide new and additional finance, capacity and technology, sourced primarily from developed countries, to assist the affected countries and populations to cope with the consequences of climate change (Van Schalkwyk 2005). The issues of finance, capacity and technology were re-affirmed four years later in President Jacob Zuma's Copenhagen Climate Summit speech (Zuma 2009).

In line with climate negotiations post the Kyoto Protocol in 2013, Van Schalkwyk pointed out that it was important for developing countries like India, China, Brazil and South Africa to acknowledge that they had a duty to do more to address climate change (Van Schalkwyk 2005). This is the position South Africa held in Copenhagen 2009, resulting in the coalition of Basic + USA, which crafted the Copenhagen Accord (Chamberlain, Harding, Davies and Rice 2009; Oxfam 2009). As a government, South Africa was said to fully support the fundamental

premise of the UNFCCC, which is that all countries must take responsibility (UNFCCC 1992). In doing so, South Africa endorsed the agreement that developed countries, which bear most responsibility for causing climate change and have the resources needed for adaptation and mitigation, must take the lead in implementing solutions. The minister emphasised that their message was that the country was ready to do more to de-carbonise its development, even though it expected developed countries to commit themselves to taking the lead on greater emission reductions, new and additional financial support, improved technology transfer and capacity building.

In terms of the international response, the South African government's first choice was clearly the multilateral approach. This was qualified, as the minister recognised that partnerships can add value, as long as they do not undermine the preferred approach. This qualification came to fruition in Accra 2008 when South Africa was accused of going it alone in terms of spelling out voluntary mitigation targets, contrary to a generally accepted African Group view which sought to promote full adaptation (Climate Action Network 2008). South Africa wishes to work towards building a more inclusive international regime that addresses a broad spectrum of concrete global actions in addition to the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms, which will bring major developed country emitters like the United States and Australia on board (Van Schalkwyk 2005). The South African approach, especially after Accra, was to help bring the USA fully on board. In a way this vision was realised, as the USA became a dominant force during Copenhagen 2009 (Andersen 2009).

Commitments to fighting climate change, especially at the national level, were re-affirmed by the ANC's top management in December 2007, following the election of a new executive in Polokwane. In the *Polokwane Declaration* of the ANC, climate change was one of the key issues (ANC 2007). The *Polokwane Declaration* acknowledged that the bulk of the world's GHG emissions are generated by the developed world. However, as the pace of development increases, developing countries (including China, India and South Africa) are contributing an increasing amount to the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere. The *Polokwane Declaration* noted that South Africa was responsible for about one per cent of the world's GHG emissions, and this placed it as the world's 14th largest producer of GHGs. Along with India and China, this group is seen as one of the 'large' developing country emitters (African National Congress/ANC 2007). From the above discussions it emerges that South Africa's national climate change strategy has been designed to link into happenings involving the Basic + USA group.

South Africa in climate negotiations: The complexity

Probably the most difficult challenge for South Africa is to gain the trust of its African peers that the views it expresses at the international level, when representing the continent, will be in the interest of the African Union member states. The African Union members and regional groupings have not been on good terms (Bond 2009) and until Copenhagen, the AU has always had the weakest voice in climate negotiations (African Union 2009).

Overview of the negotiating environment

Inasmuch as South Africa is part of the Africa Group, its negotiating position is compromised by its being part of several informal networks. Apart from the formal UNFCCC negotiation blocks to which South Africa is a party (i.e. the Africa Group, G77 and G77+China), the country has roots in powerful informal climate negotiating blocks including the Major Economies, G20, G8, G5, Basic, BRICS and the newly formed BRICS + USA and the G13 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: South Africa in climate negotiations

There are also other climate negotiation groups that have an influence on what South Africa does. These include: the least developed countries (LDCs), the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), The Environmental Integrity Group, the European Union (EU) and the Umbrella Group (Shanahan 2007). The AOSIS is a coalition of 43 small islands and low-lying coastal countries which are very vulnerable to the adverse effects of global climate change, including sea-level rise. The Environmental Integrity Group includes Mexico, South Korea and Switzerland, together with Liechtenstein and Monaco, and it sometimes intervenes as a separate negotiating group to ensure the inclusion of these states in last-minute, closed-door negotiations. The EU negotiates as a unified entity and the Umbrella Group brings together non-EU Western nations including Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, the Ukraine and the US. The 13-member Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is not a formal negotiating group, but often creates barriers to progress in the negotiations. The group's interests rest in the fact that they are heavy polluters from fossil-based petroleum resources. Although not a member of OPEC, South Africa consumes and also exports significant amounts of petroleum resources.

In the Africa Group, South Africa has been in the forefront in climate change negotiations. South Africa's strong leadership in climate change negotiations was noted in a report by the Climate Action Network during a Copenhagen 2009 preparatory meeting that took place in Accra, Ghana in August 2008. The Climate Action Network (2008, 2) went to the extent of urging other countries to follow South Africa's good example, and identified Mexico and Norway as 'advancing the negotiations with concrete proposals rather than waiting for others to make the first move'. South Africa's heavy hand during Copenhagen 2009 would not have come as a surprise to many, as the country felt it should do more in terms of the fair sharing of the responsibility to address climate change. This position has left the country with many enemies on the African continent (Bond 2009) and in the G77+China group, as some of them felt that South Africa had dragged them into unnecessary climate compromises and group conflicts.

South Africa and the G5

The G5 significantly contributes to CO₂ emissions and requires special profiling, as what happens in this group influences climate decisions by South Africa. In 2007 alone, the group's combined emissions from energy usage stood at 8 987 billion tonnes. Of the G5, China emitted the most at about 6 283 billion tonnes – a figure that was higher than that of the USA. In terms of percentages, the G5 contributed 30.4 per cent of the global total, with the USA alone contributing 20.08 per cent of the world's total CO₂ from energy consumption. Details of individual countries' CO₂ emissions from energy consumption in 2007 are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: G5+USA's CO2 emissions from energy combustion 2007

Source: (International Energy Agency/IEA 2008)

Of the G5 countries, China probably deserves further discussion, as the country looks set to be the emerging climate change leader. China has been quietly and pro-actively addressing climate change and energy issues (World Resources Institute/WRI 2009b). In 2005 the government made 'saving resources' the 3rd fundamental principle informing national sustainable development. Population control and environmental protection were the other two principles (Teriete 2008; WRI 2009a). Energy efficiency in the Chinese economy reduced 1 800 mega tonnes (Mt) of CO₂ emissions between 1991 and 2005, with the share of renewable energy rising to 7.5 per cent in 2005. The figure equates to avoiding 360 Mt of CO₂ emissions. The country's 11th Five-Year Plan covering the period 2006–2010 set a target to reduce energy intensity by 20 per cent (Findlay and Dimsdale 2009). Energy intensity is a measure of energy use per unit of GDP. This is a target likely to be achieved, given that the country has almost reached its goal of 10 per cent renewable energy by 2011 (WRI 2009a). In 2007, China forced around 1 000 cement manufacturing plants and other polluting factories to close down. Since 2005 China has enacted laws obliging large power plants to use high-efficiency super-critical coal-fired technology (Findlay and Dimsdale 2009). In addition, the country's National Climate Change Programme of 2007 projects that renewables will take up about 15 per cent of the total energy supply by 2020, and minimum vehicle fuel efficiency requirements of 36 mpg (miles per gallon) in 2007 and a 35 mpg standard by 2020 (National Development and Reform Commission 2007). These standards are higher than those set in the USA.

South Africa and the G8+5 (G13)

The manner in which South Africa has been influencing climate negotiations at the national, continental and global levels can be seen in its contributions in the G8+5 (G13). In the G13 meeting that took place in July 2008 in Japan, South Africa was a very active and vocal member. In his media statement of 9 July 2008 following the climate change discussions of the G8 meeting in Japan, Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk acknowledged that his involvement during the G8+5 meeting in Japan provided an opportunity to clarify positions in support of the multilateral negotiations (DEAT 2008).

What emerged from the G8 meeting were two proposals that had to be further discussed in the formal negotiations leading to COP15, namely

1. the G8's proposal for a long-term global goal of emission reductions of 50 per cent by 2050 (commonly referred to as 50/50), without a base year and without mid-term targets; and
2. the G5's more detailed and more ambitious proposal, also supported by many G8 countries, which essentially has three elements, namely
 - a) developed countries taking the lead with ambitious and absolute emission reductions of between 80 and 95 per cent below 1990 levels by mid-century;
 - b) quantified emission targets under the Kyoto Protocol toward the upper end of the range of 25 to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 for all developed countries; and
 - c) deviation from business-as-usual emission trajectories in developing countries, supported and enabled by technology and financing.

Reacting to the *G8 Declaration on Climate Change*, Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk argued that the proposal did not meet the required-by-science criteria (DEAT 2008). The minister claimed that it was based on the lowest common denominator in the G8 grouping. With regard to South Africa, the minister indicated:

It comes as a political package and to be meaningful, a long-term goal must have a base year, it must be underpinned by clear, unambiguous and ambitious mid-term targets for developed countries and it should be based on an equitable burden-sharing paradigm that reflects historical responsibility for the problem. Without a base year and mid-term targets a commitment to '50% by 2050' is an empty slogan without substance. (DEAT 2008). Minister Van Schalkwyk said he was disappointed that some G8 countries continue to reject the ambitious package that South Africa strives for. The USA was certainly one of those countries, as its 2009 emissions reduction pledge of 17 per cent by 2020, based on 2005 levels (Climate Action Tracker 2010), was far below what science demanded. South Africa would have liked to see much more from the G8. The G5 remained committed and convinced that a comprehensive outcome for the negotiations was possible in Copenhagen in 2009. The minister concluded by indicating that the real negotiations had to continue in the UN process, where all the countries meet in a transparent way without excluding others, unlike the G8+5 meeting in Japan. As pointed out above, the minister indicated that the *G8 Declaration on Climate Change* was an empty slogan without substance. He further maintained that there are many countries in the G8 that share South Africa's ambitious expectations, and that it was therefore regrettable that the lowest common denominator in the G8 determined the level of ambition in the *G8 Declaration on Climate Change*. The ambitious package that South Africa was striving for (which was confirmed a day before Copenhagen 2009) had three elements (DEAT 2008):

- Firstly, for the global community to seriously consider a long-term global goal for emission reductions of at least 50 per cent by 2050 compared to 1990 levels; South Africa believes the G8 should resolve to lead with reductions of between 80 and 95 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050;
- Secondly, absolute emission reductions based on mid-term targets toward the upper end of the range of 25 per cent to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 for all developed countries;
- And finally, substantial deviations below business-as-usual baselines in some developing country regions by 2020, and in all regions by 2050.

South Africa in Copenhagen 2009

A number of aspects were due for deliberation during the Copenhagen Climate Summit of 2009. However, five key issues emerged as sticking points for negotiating and reaching consensus. Bülow (2009) highlighted the five issues as: GHG emissions; framework.

In terms of GHG emissions, pressure mounted for developed countries to significantly reduce their levels of emissions whilst major developing countries like China, India and South Africa were pressured to take on targets. Richer nations were called upon to cut back GHG emissions by 40 per cent or more by 2020, based on their 1990 emission levels. Climate aid for poorer countries was another key issue. Annex 1 countries discussed what Bülow (2009) termed a 'prompt-start' package of US\$10 billion each year, starting in 2010 and extending to the end of the Kyoto Protocol regime in 2012, to help developing nations adjust to the impact of climate change. The aid package was also to assist in the transition to low-carbon economies through investments in clean energy. Instituting a global aviation tax could be one such source of stable revenue for climate aid. In terms of forests, a programme for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) would compensate poor countries financially to protect their forests. However, a draft presented during Copenhagen did not provide for the money, nor the budget for REDD. Conflict arose during Copenhagen on how REDD money would be generated and whether this would be done on a national or sub-national scale.

The last two issues were on the monitoring of pledges and a legal framework post-Kyoto Protocol, in 2013. A proposal was made that Annex 1 countries have their emission cuts monitored and face sanctions if they do not observe their quotas. The Annex 1 nations proposed some form of international verification of emissions actions by major emerging economies, although such economies would not face penalties. This proposal faced stiff resistance from the G5 and others, particularly China and India, as they considered such a move as potentially violating their sovereignty (Bülow 2009). In terms of the legal framework, the EU, Japan and other developed nations wanted the 'new, deeper emissions cuts' to be 'an extension of quotas under the Kyoto Protocol'. However, China and India made it clear that they were not interested in any legally binding international treaty to carry out their pledges of emission cuts, as they preferred self-regulation.

Collapse of an anti-emissions pledge regime

Only a few days away from Copenhagen, 'climate political friendship and togetherness' collapsed. The G5 and other developing nations maintained that they would not be forced into targeted emissions reduction pledges. The preferred outcome of Copenhagen was one in which the Kyoto Protocol architecture would be maintained, with Annex 1 countries taking on new targets in 2013. However, developments close to Copenhagen 2009 would have been too hot to handle without any emissions reduction pledges. An anti-emissions reduction pledge had emerged since Rio 1992. This network was supported mainly by the G5, with legal backing from the UNFCCC. However, the climate politics surrounding Copenhagen 2009 brought winds of change. Two cases are most evident in this respect: (1) a pre-emptive announcement of an emissions reduction pledge on 26 November by China, just a day before a scheduled meeting between itself,

Brazil, India and South Africa to map a way forward during Copenhagen; and (2) India and South Africa's pledges to cut emissions on 4 December 2009 and 7 December 2009 respectively.

The second case is classic, especially when one looks at events surrounding South Africa's complete turnaround from its support of the so-called two-track approach (The Presidency 2009c) of September 2009 (Mundy 2009). Whilst reports from Copenhagen on 7 December 2009

proclaimed the new direction to be taken by South Africa, the Presidency in Pretoria issued a statement on 8 December confirming the country's old negotiating position based on the two-track approach. The statement posted on the Presidency's website read thus:

As a developing country with huge developmental challenges, South Africa cannot afford to take on any binding emission reduction targets. South Africa has an energy intensive economy ... South Africa's position is that a 2 track approach is needed: (i) 1 track for the outcome of negotiations under the Kyoto Protocol on further commitments by Annex I Parties for the 2nd and subsequent commitment periods – namely an amendment of Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol; and (ii) a separate instrument, interpreted with the Convention and Kyoto Protocol, for the outcome of the negotiations under the Convention. (The Presidency 2009c).

In an earlier statement on 7 December 2009, the country contradicted itself and pledged to reduce emissions. The Presidency highlighted:

South Africa will undertake mitigation actions which will result in a deviation below the current emissions baseline of around 34% by 2020 and by around 42% by 2025. This level of effort enables South Africa's emissions to peak between 2020 and 2025, plateau for approximately a decade and decline in absolute terms thereafter. This undertaking is conditional on firstly, a fair, ambitious and effective agreement in the international climate change negotiations under the Climate Change Convention and its Kyoto Protocol and secondly, the provision of support, from the international community, and in particular finance, technology and support for capacity building from developed countries, in line with their commitments under both the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Bali Action Plan. (The Presidency 2009d)

South Africa maintained that its CO₂ pledge was based on the fact, that the country is a responsible global citizen. The pledge (The Presidency 2009d) indicated, was in line with the provisions of Article 4.1 of the UNFCCC. Although South Africa set conditions for its pledges to include adequate financial and technological support, the country has already started benefiting from international funding. An application to the Clean Technology Investment Fund, amounting to US\$500 million, 'leveraged to over \$1,6 billion from other multi-lateral sources', has been successful. The finances will be used to support the development and establishment of (i) a 100 MW utility-scale wind power generation facility; (ii) a 100 MW concentrated solar power plant; (iii) conversion from electric water heating to solar water heating for one million households; and (iv) the scaling up of energy efficiency projects as leverage for the commercial and industrial sectors (The Presidency 2009d). Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Climate Change clearly outlined India's position, namely that the country had no intention whatsoever to take on CO₂ emission reduction targets. This position was enhanced and endorsed further in February 2009 (Ministry of External Affairs 2009). Saran had this to say on the government's position towards Copenhagen:

India's stand in international negotiations, as also that of most developing countries, is based on the simple principle – 'The polluter pays'. If we consider the period between 1850 and 2000, cumulative CO₂ emissions will show how the available carbon space is currently occupied. The U.S. leads with 30%, the EU-25 with 27.2%, China with 7.3% and India with only 2%. It is for this reason of historical responsibility that in the UNFCCC, negotiated in 1992, it was agreed by consensus that emission reductions would only be required of the developed countries ... Therefore whatever action we take domestically to pursue sustainable development, let it be clearly understood that there is no legal obligation on the part of India, under existing international instruments, to take on binding emissions reduction obligations, now or in the post 2012 period. (Saran 2008, 3–4)

The bottom line is that less than a week to Copenhagen 2009, India also made a complete U-turn and pledged emission reduction targets. The *Clean Skies News* (2009) reported the Indian environment minister defending the position and painting a picture that the country was going to Copenhagen 'with a unified stance, despite reports of a rift'. Two key Indian negotiators were reported to have threatened to boycott Copenhagen due to the fact that the minister had changed the originally agreed position when he announced a 20 to 25 per cent cut in carbon emission intensity by 2020. There were those in government who saw the move as bowing to USA pressure. The pre-Copenhagen environment witnessed some of the least expected movements towards GHG emission reduction pledges. This was after it became apparent that time had run out to come up with a fully-fledged legally binding arrangement similar to the Kyoto Protocol. Among some of the major Annex 1 economies that presented their pledges were the USA, the EU27, Japan, Canada, Australia, Norway, Russia and New Zealand. On the part of the developing countries, those that pledged GHG emission reduction targets included the G5 and South Korea. Although there had been serious talks regarding the need to move from the 2020 (20% reduction in GHG emissions by 2020) to a 3020 (30% reduction) pledge by the EU, the 3020 option was made conditional. The EU indicated its willingness to move to this higher level of commitment if many other developing countries showed that they would do likewise. This is the position the EU has maintained post-Copenhagen (Miliband 2009).

South Africa's shifting positions

Copenhagen was not an easy event for South Africa, as many countries looked to it and its G5 partners for some of the answers regarding a solid and legally binding climate deal. The fact that South Africa was in a predicament is revealed by the differing views expressed in official statements, as already discussed, and the disagreements that followed within the Africa and G77+China negotiation groups. The changing negotiating position of the South African team was evident in the finalisation of the Copenhagen Accord, whose architecture was crafted by the Basic+USA. Table 1 shows how South Africa battled to engage the climate negotiating space just before, during and immediately after Copenhagen. The conflicting messages of the Presidential statements on 7 and 8 December 2009, as well as the strong language trying to exonerate South Africa from the Copenhagen Accord architecture and fiasco (Table 1) show a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes happenings during Copenhagen. As indicated before, the statement of 7 December 2009 carried a South African emissions pledge message, yet the one for 8 December 2009 carried a different message. The message of the 8th even put across a strong position that South Africa would not be forced to pledge emissions reductions. As many developing countries questioned the role of the Basic+USA in the Copenhagen Accord, South Africa probably felt the heat and called a press conference to clarify its climate negotiating position.

In answering the question: Who killed COP? Oxfam provides a direct answer and says it was the G8+5 (G13). This informal climate negotiating group was said to be interested in protecting its interests, as happened in the collapse of the trade talks (Oxfam 2009). What is of importance is that South Africa is a member of the G13 and part of Africa. Patrick Bond did not have kind words about South Africa's involvement in Copenhagen either. Bond wrote: 'A handful of technocrats must also shoulder blame, including two key South African officials' (Bond 2009). The South African team leaders were reported as having faced resistance and already having been criticised by other G77 negotiators for dividing the group's negotiating position. The two key negotiators, instead, blamed the manner in which the host, Denmark, handled proceedings (Associated Press 2009). From Bond's viewpoint, South Africa looked after itself – a claim that 'has often been made elsewhere on the continent. For example, former president Thabo Mbeki's nickname at the World Economic Forum's mid-2003 meeting in Mozambique was "the George Bush of Africa"' (Bond, 2009). Hence, one might be correct in alleging that South Africa was indeed the missing link to Africa speaking with one united climate voice before and during Copenhagen.

Table 1: South Africa and Copenhagen 2009

Date	Event	Emerging Issues
7 December 2009	Presidential Statement prior to travelling to Copenhagen Climate Summit	South Africa pledged emissions reduction targets in the order of 34% by 2020 and 42% by 2025 based on 1990 levels, conditional on a fair, ambitious and effective climate deal, as well as support from the international community, in particular finance and technology (The Presidency 2009d).
8 December 2009	Another Presidential Statement prior to travelling to Copenhagen Climate Summit	South Africa reiterated that it 'cannot afford to take on any binding emission reduction targets. South Africa has an energy-intensive economy ... South Africa's position is that a two-track approach is needed' (The Presidency 2009c, 1).
18 December 2009	Announcement of the Copenhagen Accord	The Copenhagen Accord announced as a political document for noting, with significant support from Basic + USA, who were involved in its architecture (UNFCCC 2009).
18 December 2009	COP15 addressed by South African President Jacob Zuma	Climate change viewed as a practical matter for Africa and COP15 outcome to 'give effect to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities' (Zuma 2009, 1). Developing countries to commit to nationally appropriate mitigation. South Africa able to reduce emissions by 34% by 2020 and 42% by 2025 if funding and technological support are forthcoming. Maintain the two-track negotiating system.
20 December 2009	Summary of COP15 by the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs	South Africa extremely disappointed with the outcome of Copenhagen (DWEA 2009). The Copenhagen (political) Accord reached by 28 countries out of the 119 present. South Africa wished for a legally binding climate deal that would prioritise both mitigation and adaptation and that would be done under the two-track system.
22 December 2009	Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs' media address on COP15	Strong allegations that the process was violated by 'some ill-restrained interventions combined with poor decisions by those guiding the process, (which) meant that process problems caused the loss of three days – precious time indeed' (Sonjica 2009, 1). The Latin America Bolivarian countries excluded from the critical 'commitment circle' of heads of states and government drawn based on regional groups. The resultant Copenhagen Accord seen as 'weak in that it is partial and political rather than legally binding' (Sonjica 2009, 3).

The Copenhagen Accord and its controversies

After the climate negotiations that took place from 7 to 18 December 2009 in Copenhagen, the Copenhagen Accord emerged. The two and $\frac{3}{4}$ page document was not only inadequate in terms of what many developing nations expected of the final outcome, but was also contested. In the end, after protracted consultation, only 28 countries agreed to the contents of the document (Department of Water and Environmental Affairs [DWEA] 2009). In his speech following the conclusion of the so-called political deal, the United Nations' Secretary General described the document as 'a good starting point', as it did not present all that was expected from the Copenhagen Climate Summit (Black 2009).

The South African negotiating delegation hailed the Copenhagen Accord as having managed to bring consensus 'on many issues preventing progress' (DWEA 2009, 2). This is so because the Latin-American Bolivarian alliance (the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America [ALBA]) was not involved in the final proceedings that produced the Copenhagen Accord. As such, the document could not be passed for adoption, as required within the UNFCCC framework (International Institute for Sustainable Development [IISD] 2009), but was presented only for noting. In the main, the Copenhagen Accord provides for the following (UNFCCC 2009):

- The need to keep global temperatures to within 2°C, as required by science;
- A facility to record binding emission reductions targets by developed nations, including the USA as 'newcomer';
- A facility to monitor record and verify emissions reductions by developing nations, especially the G5 and other major emerging economies;
- The establishment of the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund for developing countries (initially supported by US\$10 billion annually, till 2010; to be increased to US\$100 billion annually by 2020 – probably the greatest achievement of non-Annex 1 countries during Copenhagen 2009; and
- The creation of an institutional framework for technology development and transfer to non-Annex 1 countries.

The DWEA (2009, 2–3) noted that disagreements remained in the following areas (also see Oxfam 2009):

- Disagreement as to whether or not the Kyoto Protocol will continue beyond 2012;
- Disagreement about whether to accept the low level of ambition pledged by developed countries (collectively these pledges add up to between 14–19 per cent below the 1990 level, by 2020);
- The inability to agree on global goals, which would include the equitable sharing of the remaining carbon development space and long-term global targets to cut emissions; and
- Disagreement on a comprehensive international adaptation programme as a priority, and whether it should be an adaptation framework.

In a feature in the *British Guardian* online edition of 20 December 2009, Ed Miliband (Miliband 2009) asked a profound question: 'Where do we go from here – after Copenhagen?' The British minister concurred with the South African government's observations that COP15 was embroiled in chaotic processes, and dogged by procedural games (Sonjica 2009). Miliband also noted that global leaders had failed to reach consensus on a 50 per cent emissions reduction target by 2050, or on 80 per cent reductions by developed countries, because both scenarios were trashed and vetoed by China. Furthermore, the process leading to the thrashing out of a deal ran in informal groupings outside the UNFCCC negotiating process. Miliband raised yet another

profound question with regard to the weak Copenhagen Accord: 'Would it have been better to refuse to sign and walk away?' He answers himself with a 'No! ... [T]o have vetoed the agreement would have meant walking away from the progress made in the last year and the real outcomes that are part of this accord, including finance for poor countries.'

Moving forward, it was going to be a rough road for South Africa and its small circle of allies in 2010, leading to COP16 in Mexico. South Africa needed to build climate negotiation bridges with especially the Africa Group. The country needs Africa and Africa needs South Africa. However, a fragile relationship with the continent could be more detrimental to South Africa than vice versa, especially considering that it was to host COP17 in 2011. Climate negotiations are but one small aspect that the continent is grappling with.

Build-up and deliberations in Cancún 2010

The Copenhagen discord meant that Mexico had to do its best to avoid a repeat of COP15. Major red flags included the need to follow proper procedures, keeping negotiations within the UNFCCC system and maintaining the twin tracks of negotiation, avoiding pushing for pre-determined negotiation positions and texts, recognising the equality of UNFCCC parties, making sure that venues were easily accessible and the movement of delegates flowed smoothly, the need to listen to the voices of smaller countries, and the need to play a facilitator's role. Cancún was praised as a success story following the conclusion of the Cancún Agreements (numbering 25 in total). The success of Cancún was best reflected in the UNFCCC statement of 11 December 2010 (Box 1). Introducing the UNFCCC statement, the Executive Secretary to the UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres, indicated that Cancún had delivered a balanced package of decisions that restored faith in the multilateral process. This was in apparent comparison with the chaos that took place in Copenhagen. However, there were serious set-backs in Cancún, one of which was Japan's announcement that it was not going to be associated with the second Kyoto Protocol commitment period after 2013 (Third World Network 2010). Since Copenhagen, the issue of climate finance has grown big. As seen in Box 1, one of the 25 Cancún Agreements focuses on climate finance. The developing countries view financial contributions from the developed countries as one good indicator of their political commitment to address climate change. Finance will be a hot issue in Durban 2011 too. Discussions on finance leading to Durban 2011 are focusing more on the governance and implementation structures of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Some of the key aspects surrounding the GCF are presented in Figure 3. A Transitional Committee for the GCF has been established and held its first meeting in April 2011 in Mexico.

Elements of the Cancún Agreements

These include:

- Industrialized country targets are officially recognized under the multilateral process and these countries are to develop low-carbon development plans and strategies and assess how best to meet them, including through market mechanisms, and to report their inventories annually.
- Developing country actions to reduce emissions are officially recognized under the multilateral process. A registry is to be set up to record and match developing country mitigation actions to finance and technology support from developed countries. Developing countries are to publish progress reports every two years.
- Parties meeting under the Kyoto Protocol agree to continue negotiations with the aim of completing their work and ensuring there is no gap between the first and second commitment periods of the treaty.
- The Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanisms has been strengthened to drive more major investments and technology into environmentally sound and sustainable emission reduction projects in the developing world.
- Parties launched a set of initiatives and institutions to protect the vulnerable from climate change and to deploy the money and technology that developing countries need to plan and build their own sustainable futures.
- A total of \$30 billion in fast start finance from industrialised countries to support climate action in the developing world up to 2012 and the intention to raise \$100 billion in long-term funds by 2020 is included in the decisions.
- In the field of climate finance, a process to design a Green Climate Fund under the Conference of the Parties, with a board with equal representation from developed and developing countries, is established.
- A new Cancún Adaptation Framework is established to allow better planning and implementation of adaptation projects in developing countries through increased financial and technical support, including a clear process for continuing work on loss and damage.
- Governments agree to boost action to curb emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries with technological and financial support.
- Parties have established a technology mechanism with a Technology Executive Committee and Climate Technology Centre and Network to increase technology cooperation to support action on adaptation and mitigation.

Source: UNFCCC, 2010, Cancún Press Release (11 December 2010)

Figure 3: The Green Climate Fund of Cancún

South Africa's Cancún participation was informed by two pillars: firstly, its role during Copenhagen (Nhamo 2010) and, secondly, its future role during COP17 in Durban. For this reason, it was difficult for South Africa to be outspoken, as this could have created more enemies than friends. South Africa was therefore not as active in Cancún. The creation of the Troika meant that South Africa would benefit as much as possible from the failures of Copenhagen and the success of Cancún. In a Joint Communiqué of the Troika Meeting of Host Countries of COP 15, COP 16 and COP 17 on 24 September 2010, the governments of Denmark, Mexico and South Africa indicated that they had decided to establish a Troika. The Troika's role would be to facilitate close cooperation by the three governments in climate negotiations (UNFCCC 2010). Before Cancún, the Troika called upon all parties to contribute to the achievement of substantive progress. The Troika indicated that fast-start financing from Copenhagen was crucial in building trust between Annex 1 and non-Annex 1 countries. The issue of transparency in climate negotiation was raised, and efforts undertaken by national and local governments, businesses and civil society in the transition to a low-carbon and green economy were acknowledged.

South Africa's position as a country in COP16 was deliberated on the eve of Cancún through the convening of an all-stakeholders meeting organised under the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC). The inputs of the NCCC were accepted by the Cabinet of South Africa (Molewa 2011). First, South Africa called for a comprehensive, fair and legally binding agreement in Cancún. Such an agreement would make reference to agreements reached in Bali, in 2007. Second, the country called for actions to ensure that temperature rises did not reach dangerous levels, and such actions had to be commensurate with the developmental imperatives that are a priority for developing countries such as South Africa. Third, South Africa called for equal prioritisation of adaptation and mitigation (ibid.). An agreement on the Adaptation Framework was one of the Cancún Agreements, and in this regard one can say that South Africa achieved its goal.

A build-up to Durban 2011

The events in Cancún 2010 reflected a global climate negotiation regime with hope. As part of follow-ups to Cancún, as well as preparatory works leading to Durban 2011, a number of issues have materialised. By the time of completing this article, two preparatory events under the UNFCCC had taken place, including the April Bangkok and June Bonn meetings. The common thematic issues in climate negotiations remain adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, capacity building and awareness raising. Durban will not be any different in terms of the key thematic focus of negotiations.

The Bangkok meeting (April 2011)

In Bangkok,³ the USA indicated that it was not interested in top-down rules for GHG emissions targets and compliance. In addition, the USA categorically stated that it was not going to adopt the Kyoto Protocol (Third World Network 2011a). The USA made it clear that the issue of compliance was a domestic matter and that the USA had not yet enacted the Climate Bill of 2008. To this end, the country was working on alternative measures that would apply the cap-and-trade mechanism, clean air standards, renewable energy and energy efficiency. To support its views on self-regulation, the USA mentioned that between 2005 and 2009 it had reduced its emissions to a level eight per cent below that of 2005 and that this model reflected national interests and circumstances. In defending its selection of the year 2005 as base year compared to 1990, as stipulated in the Kyoto Protocol, the USA indicated that 1990 did not work for the country. The developing countries pointed out that the developed countries' Copenhagen

pledges were not enough to lead the world towards a less than two degrees Celsius temperature rise. Drawing from the work of the Stockholm Environment Institute and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on GHG abatement to within two degrees Celsius, Bolivia indicated that the abatement gap ranged between 7.4 to 5.3 Gt of carbon dioxide equivalent (Third World Network 2011a). If nothing was done to increase the pledges, this could result in a global temperature rise of between four and five degrees Celsius by the turn of the century. A sea-level rise of more than one metre by 2100 is a real possibility, according to AOSIS. The developing countries also hinted that they were embarking on significant climate mitigation measures despite the lack of support from the developed nations. Lastly, the developing countries also demanded that there be a political commitment to the institution of a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol (ibid).

The Bonn meeting (June 2011)

In Bonn, in June 2011, South Africa requested a wish list from the key players who were part of the preparatory meeting series. There was general agreement that Durban should bring up a balanced outcome. However, there were disagreements between the developed and developing nations about the meaning of such a balanced outcome (Third World Network 2011b). There were also disagreements on how to address mitigation under the two tracks: the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. The developing countries wished to see the developed countries commit to GHG emissions reductions targets under a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. On the other hand, most developed countries were looking forward to a legally binding agreement that included all 'major emitters' (the Basic included), and this would be drawn under the UNFCCC.

As deliberations continued in Bonn, the developed countries indicated their preference for multilateral rules and their plan to continue applying market mechanisms, especially the CDM, beyond the first Kyoto Protocol commitment period. In response to this, the developing countries insisted that the Kyoto Protocol was a package from which the developed countries could not select the elements they liked, without a second commitment period to the Kyoto Protocol. Discussions continued concerning the funding of forest-related activities, particularly REDD+. Inasmuch as many countries supported both non-market and market-based approaches, some countries expressed caution in relying on the carbon market (Third World Network 2011b).

In Bonn, South Africa's participation was guided by its desire to have an ambitious and comprehensive outcome for COP17. From the government's view, the success of COP17 required that a balance be struck along three negotiation spaces, namely: between operationalising decisions made thus far in the negotiation and pending issues; between the outcomes under both the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol; and a comprehensive and balanced advancement of all elements that will make up the future climate change regime (DEA 2011). The government also noted the emergence of two negotiation paradigms: bottom-up, concrete incremental actions; and the comprehensive, legally binding, top-down paradigm which is proving to be politically difficult to achieve. Unfortunately the list of Annex 1 countries dissociating themselves from the second Kyoto Protocol commitment period is growing, with Russia declaring the same in Bonn (Third World Network 2011b).

South Africa as host

The world has few reservations about South Africa's capabilities to host COP17. This vote of confidence comes against the backdrop of the country having successfully hosted major global events in the past, as discussed earlier, the most recent being the record-breaking FIFA 2010 World Cup, which boosted South Africa's global image. At the national level, the country has increased its accommodation capacity, and improved its transportation infrastructure and networks, security standards and capability to handle huge passenger volumes at various ports of entry. The venue for COP17 also enjoys excellent weather conditions and the infrastructure is world-class. However, there are red flags that still need to be raised. The South African

government is aware of the continent's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and would therefore like to ensure that Durban is a success, particularly for Africa. Hence the journey to COP17 should provide a platform to collect the multitudes of diversified experiences across Africa. To this end, civil society has been singled out as a key partner in ensuring that Africa's voice is heard (Molewa 2011). In addition to the civil society voice, the South African government is promoting the voice of Team South Africa at a national scale. This voice was fairly quiet in the first half of 2011, which was occupied by the local government elections of May 2011. In order to raise awareness and show-case sector-specific climate actions and innovations (including products), and to encourage networking amongst the participants of COP17, the concept of a Climate Change Response EXPO was developed, to be located close to the COP17 venue. The country is hosting COP17 in the context of transitional national, provincial and local government leadership. Since 2008, there have been a number of changes on the political front. President Mbeki was succeeded by interim President Kgalema Motlanthe, who served the country between September 2008 and May 2009 before President Jacob Zuma took over. The succession battles have not left the national departments that are responsible for climate negotiations untouched. The new government has created new departments and appointed new ministers to drive the environment and energy ministries. In less than four years, three ministers have headed the South African climate negotiation team. The former Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and the Department of Minerals and Energy have been split into four. This implies four ministers. The Department of Foreign Affairs has also witnessed changes in leadership and naming. Currently, the Department of Environmental Affairs leads the climate change negotiations. The Department of Environmental Affairs faces challenges in terms of climate change and negotiation expertise. Although part of the COP17 negotiation team, a former lead negotiator and former Deputy Director-General has left the Department to become the CEO of a local business association. To fill the skills gap in climate change and negotiation, the Department of Environmental Affairs has created three directorates to handle climate mitigation, adaptation and negotiation. The three positions of Chief Director were filled in April 2011. The post of Deputy Director-General for Climate Change was also advertised in February 2011 and filled. Recruitment for other lower- grade positions is ongoing.

Issues for Durban and South Africa during COP17

In Durban, South Africa will try its best to host a successful COP/CMP. Key to the success of COP17/CMP7 is the fact that the event must attract key stakeholders to the negotiation table, among them the USA, China and all formal and informal negotiation groups. In Cancún, the event seemed low-key, as major global leaders did not grace the event with their presence. Figure 4 shows a model of the key actors whose interests need to merge in Durban. Careful attention will also have to be paid to procedures, venues, security, transportation, accommodation and other logistics.

Figure 4: Major actors and interests – Durban 2011

The parties to the Bangkok meeting agreed that the Copenhagen GHG emission reduction pledges fell far short of limiting global temperature rise to the two degrees Celsius required by science. Hence COP17 needs to make another call for deeper cuts to GHG emissions, and revisit the Copenhagen pledges. Lessons regarding global transparency in climate negotiations, building confidence, and the creation of mechanisms for finance and environmentally sound technology development, diffusion and deployment are noted as excellent starting points for COP17.

The subject of reference for comparability in terms of GHG emissions cuts still needs to be clarified. The developing countries are of the view that the Kyoto Protocol's 1990 levels should be maintained as the reference for comparability, and not 2005 or any other year, as advocated by some Annex 1 countries like the USA. Failure to maintain 1990 as reference point was viewed by the G77+China as watering down global efforts to fight climate change. The G77+China voiced their reservations about Annex 1 parties mitigating against climate change through the extensive use of carbon offsets. From the G77+China's point of view, this mechanism turns the principle of common but differentiated responsibility (UNFCCC 1992) onto its head and becomes even more problematic in terms of addressing issues of equity (Nhamo 2011a).

The failures of Copenhagen and Cancún in respect of the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period will be the test for the success or failure of Durban. Durban 9/12 (9 December) will be a day of reckoning in terms of the death or re-birth of the Kyoto Protocol. As discussed earlier, the developing nations wish for a fair, ambitious and legally binding second Kyoto Protocol commitment period. In addition, all eyes will be on the implementation of the Green Climate Fund that emerged from Copenhagen and was embedded as one of the Cancún Agreements in 2010. The developing countries have declared that they are ready to play ball, provided that the developed nations honour their financial pledges. India raised its concern about a lack of clarity on the role of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) (Third World Network 2011a). Other points of clarity to be achieved in Durban include carbon accounting and modalities of carbon sinks. Linked to debates surrounding LULUCF are discourses on REDD, as well as the role of conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (which attaches a 'plus' to REDD: REDD+). The REDD+ came up as one of the Cancún Agreements and its architecture includes: REDD+ readiness (capacity building), ongoing emissions reduction costs, REDD+ strategies and technology transfer.

Conclusion

This article has revealed that South Africa's climate negotiating position was contested, especially by the African Group in Copenhagen. South Africa found itself in a position which demanded that it serve two masters: the Africa Group and the G77+China on one hand; and the Basic+USA and the developed countries on the other. The decision by South Africa to pledge emissions reductions, subject to the availability of funding and technology deployment, differed from the approach of the Africa Group. However, what emerged from the involvement of the G5 pre- and post-Copenhagen are a strong climate change leadership and a shift in the climate leadership status quo. The involvement of South Africa in crafting the Copenhagen Accord cannot be overemphasised. This shows that the country has joined a league different from that of Africa. It leaves the African Group's climate negotiations in a quagmire, as the South African voice is needed if Africa is to push for significant compromises leading to a fair, equitable and legally binding climate deal post-Copenhagen. One needs to appreciate the complex situation South Africa is in. Given that the country is a top emitter, doing nothing in terms of targeted emissions reductions could be in violation of the gospel of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities. Climate compensation in the form of significant adaptation funding from the developed countries is the major item on non-Annex 1 countries' climate negotiation agenda. South Africa played a central role in Cancún, first by being part of the Troika and second by leveraging its influence for favourable outcomes that led to the Cancún Agreements. In Durban, South Africa's role will mainly be that of a mid-wife, having to organise and facilitate

negotiations. Hence it is highly unlikely that South Africa will be seen pushing for certain positions, although one realises that the country takes a position which favours an outcome that will witness a fair, legally binding and ambitious second Kyoto Protocol commitment period. With countries like Japan, the USA and Russia declaring their non-participation in a second Kyoto Protocol commitment period, as well as diverging views emerging from the Bangkok and Bonn preparatory sessions, South Africa has a tall order in Durban.

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Notes

1. At an exchange rate of R7.05 to one United States of America Dollar.
2. The countries listed (and their emissions reduction target percentages based on 1990) are: Australia (108), Austria (92), Belgium (92), Bulgaria (92), Canada (94), Croatia (95), Czech Republic (92), Denmark (92), Estonia (92), European Community (92), Finland (92), France (92), Germany (92), Greece (92), Hungary (94), Iceland (110), Ireland (92), Italy (92), Japan (94), Latvia (92), Liechtenstein (92), Lithuania (92), Luxembourg (92), Monaco (92), Netherlands (92), New Zealand (100), Norway (101), Poland (94), Portugal (92), Romania (92), Russian Federation (100), Slovakia (92), Slovenia (92), Spain (92), Sweden (92), Switzerland (92), Ukraine (100), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (92) and United States of America (93).
3. The following groups and countries were the key actors in Bangkok: USDA, EU, G77+China, India, Norway, Australia, France, Switzerland, The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), New Zealand, South Africa, Germany, Russia, Sweden, Japan, Poland, Bolivia, Iceland and UK.

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