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What to expect from this week of negotiations in Bonn?

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With fewer than 100 days to go until the start of COP21, a series of negotiations began on 31 August in Bonn (Germany) and will continue until 4 September. Although negotiations have been ongoing throughout this year, little time is left before Paris, as the French President François Hollande and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon recently stressed. There will only be one more series of negotiations, in October, before the start of COP21, which must result in a historic agreement, containing the commitments of all countries of the world.

Although we have never been closer to reaching a global climate agreement of this kind, some points of disagreement still remain and must be resolved and translated into the negotiating text in order to do so. Time is therefore of the essence if an agreement is to be reached in Paris. The Co-Chairs are calling on the different countries to [“accelerate their negotiations”](#), and the agenda for the week in Bonn is very busy, with thematic discussions organised in small parallel groups. These five days will not be enough to resolve all outstanding issues, but certain progress can nevertheless be expected.

The first challenge is that of the appropriation of the Co-Chairs' text by the countries, since for the time being, the only “official” document of the negotiations is the [Geneva Negotiating Text](#). In July, the Co-Chairs proposed a [“tool”](#) that outlines for the first time the potential content of the Paris agreement and provides more clarity regarding its structure and the identification of areas of agreement and areas where key differences still exist, which must be discussed and resolved by December. The Parties need to exchange and move forward with this text immediately, to avoid leaving too much work for the short session in October and the last days of negotiations in Paris. Although discussions and disagreements will undoubtedly emerge regarding certain elements of this text, it is to be hoped that the transparent, consultative methodology adopted by the Co-Chairs to develop this new tool (consisting in reorganising the different elements without omitting any of the options put forward by the Parties), along with the broad consultations they conducted, will contribute to constructive work on this text. However, there are fears that certain deadlocks will arise regarding the method chosen for the organisation of the text, especially the relegation to the third part of numerous elements for which the Co-Chairs were unable to achieve a consensus. Valuable time could be lost criticising these choices or discussing the placement of these elements once again.

Fundamentally, the work on the text must help to clarify and consolidate the first part of the Co-Chairs' document relating to the Paris agreement in order to reduce the number of options and to clearly identify the remaining differences to be resolved, especially concerning the [strategic review](#) and the regular review of national contributions and of progress made (whether for mitigation, adaptation or implementation). The issue of [finance](#) is still central to discussions and divides. Although little progress is expected to be made on this matter in Bonn, the Addis Ababa conference held in July 2014, which [reconfirmed the importance of climate issues for financing for development](#), and a number of upcoming events in autumn in New York (the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit), Ankara (the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting), Paris (informal ministerial consultations) and Lima (meeting of finance ministers) will be key to moving forward with this complex issue.

This work on the “agreement” section should not however result in problem areas being relegated to the second part of the text (on COP decisions), or in the creation of new deadlocks concerning the placement of the different elements in the two parts. In this respect, the reaction of the Parties to the organisation of the tool and, in particular, to the third part, will be decisive. In order to make headway on these subjects, a spirit of compromise and a real will to negotiate will be particularly important. Finally, it is essential that before leaving Bonn, the negotiators reach an agreement on a working method to guarantee effective progress on the text in the limited time remaining before Paris. For all of these subjects, regarding form and process on the one hand and substantive issues on the other, it is to be hoped that these five days of negotiations will help to accelerate the talks underway, to eliminate certain options and to move towards a clearer and more concise negotiating text for October, and then for Paris.

At this stage, 57 countries (including the 28 European Union countries) have presented their [national contributions](#). We have analysed a certain number of these, including those of [Mexico](#), the [United States](#), [Canada](#), the EU, [China](#) and Japan. These countries account for almost 60% of global emissions, and other contributions are expected in the next few weeks. The publication of a large number of contributions, as well as announcements of national or bilateral action (such as between Germany and Brazil recently), are a very important, unprecedented indicator of mobilisation, which must now be accompanied and reinforced by an ambitious text in Paris.

It is essential that the provisions of the text adopted in Paris accelerate and accompany the transformational change represented by this growing mobilisation of countries, within the UNFCCC through the INDCs, but also within a diverse body of other forums, institutions, and non-states actors, especially the [local authorities](#), which are more committed than ever to building a sustainable future. This is a historic effort, aimed at putting all nations and actors on track towards a low-carbon, resilient development. It is therefore crucial that Paris creates the conditions (and appropriate mechanisms) for accelerating this transition.

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