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Bangkok climate negotiations: the urgent need to define rules for implementing the Paris Agreement

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The climate negotiations session that has just ended in Bangkok (Thailand) was convened in addition to the traditional biannual sessions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in an attempt to address the slow progress made over the last two years in the definition of rules for implementing the Paris Agreement. Has this made any difference?

The Paris Agreement's rulebook must be adopted during the **24th Conference of the Parties (COP24)**, to be held in Katowice (Poland) in December this year. They include the way in which the countries must communicate their actions on mitigation, adaptation and support (especially financial) for developing countries, the related accounting rules, and how these actions will be reviewed at both the individual and collective levels. They also include, in particular, the definition of new mechanisms for international carbon trading, as well as the dates at which all of these rules must apply. This is a complex task, which the negotiators have taken too long to tackle.

Succeeding in adopting these rules implies finding a delicate balance on several issues: what is it useful to ask in a report, how much flexibility should the developing countries be given, and how can we ensure the new mechanisms produce net reductions at the global level, etc. Behind these discussions, the challenge is to enable the countries to trust one another regarding compliance with their respective commitments.

These negotiations were based on a clear determination to get to work right from the start of the session, whether through the introductory appeal by Patricia Espinosa (Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC), or when delegates unanimously chose to not read their official declarations in order to begin discussions without delay. Prior to the session, the diplomats responsible for making progress on each element to be negotiated conscientiously summarised the options open, producing a monstrous "tool" running to 307 pages.

However, beyond this apparently technical work, the Bangkok negotiations were inevitably swayed by political considerations. The result of the delays in the negotiation of these rules is that the other elements of an agreement between the Parties at COP24, such as more ambitious contributions and new climate finance, are struggling to emerge. The governance crisis surrounding the Green Climate Fund¹ and the lack of progress on its replenishment are particularly worrying signs for the developing countries. Moreover, the negotiations have once again suffered from the lack of leadership by the Polish presidency of COP24,² which has not yet set out its vision of an agreement at Katowice, or fully played its role as a catalyst.

During this studious week, the [UNFCCC secretariat decided to prolong COP24 by one day](#), recognising the delay in negotiations, and the ["tool" clarifying the options on the table was modified](#) (PDF), but is still just as long-winded. Nevertheless, we should welcome the fact that [the countries agreed](#) to leave the diplomats in charge of the discussions (the "subsidiary body co-chairs" in UN-speak) to prepare draft texts by mid-October. This is a major responsibility, with a view to negotiating and adopting these rules two months later at COP24 in Katowice. This is the price of making the Paris Agreement operational.

Photo Source [Le Figaro](#)

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-climatechange-gcf/green-climate-fund-meeting-disappointing-chief-quits-idUSKBN1JU2GR>

² <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/blog-post/implementing-paris-agreement-challenges-bonn-negotiation-session>