



UNFCCC

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Fact sheet: Poznań – COP 14/CMP 4

The negotiating process on climate change revolves around the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP), which meets every year to review the implementation of the Convention. The COP adopts decisions and resolutions, published in reports of the COP. Successive decisions taken by the COP make up a detailed set of rules for practical and effective implementation of the Convention. The COP serves as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), which also adopts decisions and resolutions on the implementation of its provisions. For the sake of simplicity, the COP/CMP is termed “United Nations Climate Conference”. This term covers the entire event, including the many side events and exhibits held parallel to the talks and negotiations.

Why is the UN Climate Change Conference being held in Poland?

Expressions of interest or invitations to host a climate change conference come from the governments of a prospective host country and are decided by the COP. Following the procedural rules of the Conference, the office of President normally rotates among the five UN regional groups. For 2008, it is the turn of Eastern Europe. When a COP is held at the invitation of a host country, it is customary for the COP and CMP to elect as President a Minister from that country, usually the Environment Minister. The last time the Eastern Europe group held the Presidency of the Conference was in 2003 (COP 9). The meeting took place in Milan, Italy and was presided over by the Hungarian Environment Minister. Whilst the Presidency rotates, the actual location of the sessions can vary. Following technical missions to assess the facilities at the venue envisaged by the host country, the Government and the UNFCCC conclude a Host Country Agreement indicating all the facilities and equipment needed.

How many people will attend?

Traditionally, the COP/CMP attracts several thousand participants, including government representatives and observer organizations. The sessions in Bali in 2007 attracted close to 11,000 participants, including some 3,500 government officials, over 5,800 representatives of UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and nearly 1,500 accredited members of the media. The UN Climate Change Conference in Nairobi the year before was slightly more than half that size, with around 6,000 participants. Participation in Poznań is expected to range between these two figures at approximately 9,000.

Who comes to the United Nations Climate Change Conferences?

Participation in COP 14 and CMP 4 is restricted to duly nominated representatives of Parties, observer States, accredited observer organizations and accredited press/media. Those Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to the Protocol may participate as observers in the CMP. Conferences traditionally have a high-level segment attended by anywhere from 70 to 150 ministers and senior officials, usually held during the last three days of the session (due to the



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timing of the religious holiday Eid this year, in Poznań only during the final two days, 11 and 12 December 2008). The high-level segment includes an opening or welcoming event often with head of state participation.

How much is the conference likely to cost?

When a Government offers to host a UNFCCC conference, the secretariat provides a list of requirements, including an appropriate conference centre, equipment, security, logistics and utilities. Some governments have ready-made facilities, and can deliver at relatively low costs. Others need to either rent the facilities or construct temporary structure, at significantly higher costs. The direct cost for the UNFCCC secretariat will be approximately US\$ 2 million. Much of the additional cost to the secretariat is indirect, relating to staff time and other efforts in preparing substantive input, planning for and servicing the conference. The Polish government estimates the total costs of the UN Climate Change Conferences in Poznań to be around US\$ 35 million.

What is expected to happen politically in Poland?

Poznań will be an important half-way mark in the negotiating process leading up to Copenhagen in 2009. Parties have agreed that in Copenhagen, an ambitious climate change deal will be clinched to follow on the first phase of the UN's Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. At Poznań, Parties to the UNFCCC will take stock of progress made in 2008 and map out in detail what needs to happen in 2009 to get to that agreement. In Poland, delegates – including ministers – will discuss their vision for long-term cooperative action on climate change. At the conference, a text will be tabled which could serve as the basis for a first draft of the negotiating text for an agreed outcome at Copenhagen. This text will be fine-tuned in the course of the meeting.

The issue of technology will be high on the agenda and the conference will deal in depth with the issue of risk management and risk reduction strategies. Poznań can also produce concrete progress on several issues which are important in the short run - up to 2012 - particularly for developing countries, including adaptation, finance, technology and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. In the context of adapting to the inevitable effects of climate change, Parties are expected to put the finishing touches to the Kyoto Protocol's Adaptation Fund so that it is ready to roll out concrete projects in 2009 in Poznań. Some governments are likely to make voluntary contributions to provide for initial funding. Finally, the UN Climate Change Conference in Poznań will conduct a review of the Kyoto Protocol and assess to what extent the Protocol's clean development mechanism can be streamlined and its geographical reach extended.



What is worth covering from the perspective of the media?

A UN Climate Change Conference is both a political conference and a climate change “fair”, attracting key members from governments and civil society who professionally deal with climate change on a daily basis. Whilst the opening day and the high-level segment at the end of the conference attract high level government participation, newsworthy events take place on a daily basis. Such events are press briefings (up to fourteen on a single day) for example on the part of governments, environmental organisations and UN bodies. These media briefings give an update on the status of the negotiations are used to launch new studies and to announce key decisions. In addition, several hundred side events are held in the course of every COP (at Poznań, there will be around 200). Side-events, which the potential to generate interesting news stories, are not only given by multilateral organisations, governments and ngos, but for example academia and industry associations. As far as the political proceedings of the COP/CMP are concerned, it should be noted that concluding negotiations usually go well into the night of the final day of the conference.

To what extent is the conference carbon-neutral?

An initial estimation of emissions accruing from the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznań in December 2008, carried out by the Polish government and covering air travel, hotels, meeting rooms and local transport, results in the figure of approximately 13.000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. This estimation is based on 8.000 participants. As COP 14 hosts, the Polish government plans to offset the total emissions resulting from the conference once a final calculation has been made. Individual delegations, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the European Union, have already put measures in place to offset emissions resulting from participation at the meeting. Many individual organizations attending the conference have also drawn up emission reduction and offset schemes.

The UNFCCC secretariat has put in place a comprehensive package of measures to reduce the carbon footprint caused by its participation in the gathering. The choice of transportation to and from the conference is expected to have the greatest impact. Accordingly, travel from the Bonn headquarters to Poznań for the approximately 200 staff assigned for duty in Poland for the duration of the meeting will be by the most carbon-friendly means possible - either by train or bus. This measure alone will result in around six times less greenhouse gas emissions than travel by air, and is estimated to reduce the overall total of emissions by approximately 50 tonnes.