

# Climate negotiators face an uphill task at Katowice

Development of rulebook to operationalise the Paris Agreement will be in focus at COP24 meet

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Under the dark clouds of carbon dioxide emissions and the prospect of two key countries – the US and Brazil – pulling out of the hard-won Paris Agreement, climate negotiators who are gathering yet again, at Katowice, in Poland, have an onerous task on their hands.

Beginning Monday and over the next two weeks, negotiators from 200-odd countries who are participating in the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) will primarily try to come up with guidelines to implement the promises that the countries made in Paris in 2015, which underpinned the Paris Agreement. Though the talks will cover many issues, the biggest one will be the development of a rulebook to operationalise the Paris Agreement.

One of the issues for the rulebook is that of common timeframes to implement the 'nationally determined contributions' (NDCs), a term used to refer to the promises that each country made in Paris, to fight climate change. The guidelines should mention, for instance, the method-

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ologies to measure emissions and timelines to meet targets.

Another issue is that of measuring and reporting the progress on NDCs in a transparent manner that will enable each country to compare its own progress with those of other countries and instill confidence that each country is doing its bit. There will also be rules for peer review. COP24 will also discuss other issues such

as finance for climate action and 'enhancements' in the NDCs (under the initiative that goes by the name 'Talanoa dialogue'), and take stock of where the world is with respect to emissions every five years beginning 2023 (called 'global stocktake').

All these issues have been under discussion and negotiation since the Paris Agreement – at the COP meetings at Marrakech (2016) and Bonn (2017), as well as in the 'inter-sessions' in between. The negotiators seek a culmination of these talks in Katowice.

### Global warming

COP24 is happening against the backdrop of repeated warnings by various studies by different parties that the world is not doing enough to slow down global warming to a manageable level – which is an average of 2° Celsius over the mean temperatures that obtained in the pre-industrial era (roughly, 1800-1900). The latest such warning came from the United Nations Environment Programme through its latest Emissions Gap Report, which said that even if all the countries met their NDCs, the world would grow warmer by more than 3°C, by 2100.

Predictions for the outcome of the Katowice COP are divided, with sceptics noting that the positions of some countries are irreconcilable, and optimists hoping that the threat of impending doom will impel some forward movement.

Also read p18