

# NEGOTIATING EQUITY

ESSENTIAL? YES.  
POSSIBLE? MAYBE.



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# EARLY DAYS OF EQUITY

- Equity has always been central to international climate negotiations
  - UNFCCC including principles of equity and CBDR+RC
  - Agarwal and Narain (1991) Global Warming in an Unequal World: a case of environmental colonialism
  - 1997 initial submission of Brazilian proposal
- Kyoto
  - Binary annexes and commitments
  - First step trust-building approach
  - US domestic push-back, Byrd-Hegal resolution
- Bali
  - Adaptation, technology, financial support
  - NAMAs

# EQUITY PHASE TWO

- Range of proposals leading-up to Copenhagen
  - Global carbon taxes/trading schemes + variants
  - Contraction and convergence + variants
  - Brazilian proposal revisited
  - Global triptych
  - Greenhouse Development Rights
  - Large emitters only processes + variants
- Copenhagen fallout
  - Some financing
  - Loose mitigation pledges
  - Domestic public questioning of the UNFCCC process

# EQUITY PHASE THREE

- Geopolitical Lead-up to Durban
  - Economic crises
    - Shifting perceptions of global wealth
  - Global emissions increase, shifting projected future emissions
  - Fukushima
  - Just after Durban: Canada officially withdraws from Kyoto
  - BASIC
- Durban Platform
  - BASIC expert papers released
  - No explicit reference to equity in platform
  - CBDR+RC and applicable to all
- ADP negotiations
  - Equity and ambition
  - Adaptation and mitigation

# EQUITY ESSENTIAL IN 2015 AGREEMENT BUT WHAT SHOULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

“We need to consider the past in addressing the future”

*BASIC experts, 2011*

“I don’t understand what the past has to do with it, we all need to reduce emissions to avoid catastrophic losses”

*AOSIS Delegate*

“We want ambition to be framed in terms of self-interest.”

*AILAC Delegate*

# CURRENT EQUITY DISCUSSION

- New equity proposals for 2015 agreement
  - Ongoing 'pledge and review' bottom-up strategy
  - BASIC carbon budget/ EASD frameworks
    - Burden sharing adaptation goal framework
  - Equity reference framework + variants
    - Include mitigation, adaptation, support
  - ALLAC and others positive sum ambition + equity framework
    - Include mitigation, adaptation/climate impacts
  - Green growth options, positive-sum frameworks

# EQUITY TRENDS

- Shift from mitigation focus, to mitigation, adaptation, finance/support, loss and damage
- Key issues remain through time
  - Historical responsibility
  - “collective” burden sharing
  - Acknowledgement of needs and rights based approaches, although inconsistent traction
  - Underlying geopolitical concerns centred on economic growth
- Several new attempts at
  - Finding middle ground (ERF)
  - Paradigm changes (ie. positive sum frameworks)

# POSSIBLE? MAYBE....

- International treaty making depends on domestic politics
  - Final package must be “fair enough” for domestic ratification and implementation
- Under the majority of current equity proposals, major developed countries face profound emission reductions and financial payments
- What would be needed for these countries to be able to sign, ratify, and implement the required domestic policies?

# CANADIAN DOMESTIC CLIMATE EQUITY EXPERIENCES

- Canada's short CDM history
  - KP compliance plan centred on CDM credits
  - Public backlash against buying international credits
  - In Canada and US public largely overestimates amounts of overseas assistance
- BC Carbon tax
  - Adopted 2008
  - Comprehensive revenue-neutral carbon tax
  - Tax based on fuel carbon content, taxed at end-use
  - Deep divides about equity
    - Regional disputes, multiple concessions
    - Narrowly avoided being scrapped in 2013 review

# US CLIMATE EQUITY EXPERIENCES

- WCI
  - Regional bottom-up cap and trade
  - Diverse actors – potential losses to some, regional rifts
  - Stringent limitations on international offsets
  - Limitations on uses of revenue (domestic mitigation only)
  - Disintegrated for political, ideological and equity reasons
- California
  - EJ community resisted cap and trade
  - Protested use of trading mechanism
    - Concerned about local air pollutants
    - Unconvinced by effectiveness and equity of market mechanisms

# ESSENTIAL? YES. POSSIBLE?

- Equity at heart of international negotiations
  - Without “fair enough” deal, will not be an agreement
- But, international treaty making depends on domestic politics
- Key geopolitically powerful nations face:
  - Profoundly steep mitigation curves
  - Large costs for adaptation, support, (loss and damage)
  - Internally limited appetite for international speaking
  - Ongoing internal rifts regarding goals and approaches to climate policy

# BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

- Extremely strong claims to equity internationally
- Equity is an essential part of a 2015 deal
  - Must include mitigation, adaptation, support (probably also loss and damage)
  - Must be “fair enough” for all parties to accept
- Profound challenges for domestic politics within key developed countries
- How do we reconcile global and domestic requirements for functioning climate policy without eroding ambition?