

## Relazione sintetica

### Oltre Copenaghen

#### Istruzioni

**Si elabori una sintesi, in italiano, del testo allegato, evidenziando:**

- 1) la questione centrale affrontata nell'articolo;
- 2) le lezioni da trarre, a giudizio dell'autore, dalla Conferenza di Copenaghen;
- 3) il ruolo degli altri fori internazionali.

**La sintesi va elaborata esclusivamente sulla base della documentazione fornita.**

**L'elaborato non deve superare le 20 righe.**

**Il tempo a disposizione è di 60 minuti.**

**Buon Lavoro!**

*I diritti d'autore sull'articolo appartengono al Council on Foreign Relations, Inc.*

## Beyond Copenhagen Michael A. Levi (tratto da: *Foreign Affairs*, febbraio 2010)

Before last December's Copenhagen climate conference, expectations for an agreement went from sky high to rock bottom, eventually settling at some perplexing place in between. Last fall, I wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that the world should narrow its expectations for the conference and focus on three basic aims: setting a long-term global goal for emissions reductions; getting agreement on assistance to the poorest countries for adaptation to climate change; and establishing the foundations of a system for subjecting countries' domestic climate efforts to international monitoring, reporting, and verification.

If one uses this standard to judge Copenhagen, then the conference was a genuine, if limited and fragile, success. But the process that produced these achievements is broken. To fix it -- and to achieve real progress at the next climate summit, in Cancún, Mexico, at the end of the year -- countries should give up on the idea of a comprehensive and binding global deal in the near term and, at the same time, begin to look beyond the scope of the sprawling UN process.

In the accord that emerged in the final hours of the Copenhagen negotiations, participating countries agreed to a target of holding the rise of global temperatures to two degrees Celsius. Although a target for actual emissions cuts would, of course, have been more useful, this consensus does provide an important base on which to build future international efforts.

Countries pledged to devote \$30 billion over the next three years to helping the world's poorest countries deal with climate change. They also set a goal of raising \$100 billion annually for climate assistance by 2020; that, however, is far more aspirational, and these funds would likely be tilted toward mitigation. Countries should give up on the idea of a comprehensive and binding deal in the near term and, at the same time, begin to look beyond the scope of the sprawling UN process. And all countries agreed to report their domestic emissions targets and mitigation actions in an international schedule, with each state's efforts subject to review. This review process is to be defined, but if it involves analytical heft and mandatory cooperation, then such a system may provide the kind of verification that countries need in order to trust the process.

But the Copenhagen accord contained no country-by-country goals for reducing emissions; these, instead, would be worked out by January 31. Although many feared that the deal would collapse in the meantime, every major country ultimately delivered concrete political commitments by the deadline. Taken collectively, as many have pointed out, these pledges are insufficient to keep global temperatures under the two-degree target. But it is equally important to recognize that they do not rule it out, either: whether temperatures are held to a safe level depends not on what countries promise but on what they do.

Still, many of these promised targets, particularly those from most major developed countries, came with worrying preconditions. In particular, Australia, the European Union, and Japan submitted pledges that are entirely or in part contingent on the achievement of a sufficiently strong global climate deal -- their exact positions before Copenhagen. This is a bit ridiculous. Copenhagen, for all its flaws, already represents a global climate deal. If it is not sufficient to trigger these countries' commitments, what would be? By not answering this question, these states are suggesting that Copenhagen is not actually a deal of any sort. China and India, meanwhile, have submitted goals but have not formally "associated" themselves with the Copenhagen Accord, which means that the whole agreement may still collapse.

Regardless of how this is resolved, Copenhagen did make several fundamental points clear. First, progress on climate change depends on leaders. Copenhagen would have been a complete bust if national leaders such as U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao had not stepped in on the last day of talks to make compromises that their own negotiators were unwilling to consider. Second, any global summit with nearly 200 countries requiring near unanimity is inherently unwieldy. As a result, relying on the United Nations as the only forum for serious climate decisions will ensure that few actual decisions are taken.

But most countries retain a strong attachment to the UN process, whether for substantive reasons (China, which uses it to hold on to its "developing nation" status to avoid obligations) or political ones (the EU, which has made public commitments to the UN process that would be hard to reverse). In addition, the UN mechanism does have one advantage that policymakers should remember: it amplifies the voices of vulnerable developing nations, which makes it difficult for countries such as China to resist taking action in the name of defending the interests of those states. Instead of moving to fully replace the UN process, therefore, countries should instead supplement it with more streamlined forums.

Copenhagen also revealed that sharply focused issues such as deforestation are easier to manage. At the conference, countries agreed on a detailed set of rules to avoid deforestation, although they were ultimately shelved at the last minute for technical reasons.

Lastly, and perhaps most important, China and India seem unlikely to agree to internationally binding commitments to emissions-cutting actions any time soon. Both countries appear to believe that they are unlikely to receive substantial benefits -- large financial assistance, for instance -- that would, for them, justify adopting such

measures, and developed countries do not seem willing to change that calculus. At the same time, the United States would be unwise to push for a deal that requires legally binding commitments while its own domestic efforts remain embroiled in political uncertainty.

All this suggests a modest agenda for the next round of climate talks in Cancún. Negotiations should focus on a small set of important areas where substantive conclusions are not only possible but likely. Countries should work out the rules and parameters for the so-called Copenhagen Green Climate Fund, which was established in the Copenhagen Accord to support adaptation and mitigation efforts in the developing world. This will be particularly appealing to Mexico, which has been a prominent backer of such a fund.

The participants in Cancún should also elaborate on how developing countries will submit their activities under the Copenhagen Accord to international review. To improve the odds of reaching agreement on such a scheme, developed countries should submit to precisely the same sorts of reviews in order to make clear that developing countries are not being subjected to extraordinary intrusions on their sovereignty. Lastly, a system should be hammered out for creating incentives to avoid deforestation, a mechanism that Copenhagen came close to establishing. Although countries may find one or two other areas where progress is possible -- small-bore reforms to offset markets might be a viable candidate -- they should be careful not to overload the agenda. The Cancún meeting is not the time for detailed discussions of individual countries' emissions-cutting efforts or broader arrangements for financing emissions cuts. In particular, a push to make emissions curbs internationally binding would probably backfire. Many countries are likely to resist measures to monitor their emissions and emissions-cutting efforts as long as they fear that such measures would be used to enforce a legal deal. By backing off the push for a comprehensive legal agreement, the world may have greater success in moving ahead on actual substance.

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But such an agenda, of course, is not enough to strengthen and coordinate the necessary international effort on climate change. Since Copenhagen, two other forums have been most discussed: the G20 and the Major Economies Forum, each of which brings together senior officials from the biggest emitters in the world. (The MEF is a three-year-old process by which ministers and heads of state from the world's 16 largest emitters discuss energy and climate policy.)

The G20 has much going for it: it includes all the biggest emitters, it already brings together leaders, and it has real credibility on economic issues. But it also has a heavy agenda and is not yet firmly established. Forcing it to take on the full set of climate issues against the wishes of its developing country members could backfire. Instead, the G20 should focus on climate and energy when these issues line up with its central priorities of finance and trade. It should continue its push to phase out inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies and might consider tackling barriers to the trade in and diffusion of clean-energy technologies.

Much like the G20, the MEF has been able to bring together heads of state, though unlike the G20, this is not guaranteed in the future. The United States and others need to commit to continuing the MEF as a leader-level forum. Unlike the UN process, which has a strong bias toward legally binding outcomes, the MEF is agnostic toward the legal form of what it produces and is therefore better suited to the sort of pledge-and-review approach that Copenhagen has put in place. Compared with the G20, the MEF would have an easier time establishing a more formal relationship with the UN process; this, in turn, would help the MEF exploit the positive aspect of the UN process -- namely, wealthier developing countries have more difficulty claiming to be poor when genuinely poor countries are at the table attacking them.

The MEF has also been able to spin off more focused efforts. It should now lead the charge on the new clean energy ministerial process, which was launched at Copenhagen and holds enormous promise for transforming global markets in clean technology. If necessary, the MEF could be reformed to include a small number of representative developing countries, likely as observers, that are not major emitters -- much like the UN Security Council mixes a regular set of great powers and a representative group of others. States would need to be careful, however, not to distract the focus from the biggest emitters.

There is, however, a potential paradox to this strategy: if a turbocharged and reformed MEF is presented as an alternative to the UN process, it will die quickly. But if it is entirely subordinated to the UN negotiations, as it has been in the past, it will also produce nothing of its own. Therefore, a new balance and new relationship between the two must be negotiated over the coming year. The MEF should report to the United Nations on its progress, in some cases formally, but it should be willing to forge agreements on its own. The easy choice for the Mexican hosts of this year's negotiations would be to repeat Denmark's almost disastrous attempt to pressure countries into a maximalist UN agreement. The outcome, however, will almost certainly be no better than it was in Copenhagen. A more modest approach might not bring immediate glory to Mexico, but it will do far more good for the planet in the long term.