

# The Effectiveness of Global Climate Agreements

## Outline:

### 1. Introduction:

Although, the global climate agreements have shown some progress in tackling climate change, these ~~these~~ agreements have at large remained ineffective due to their non-binding nature.

### 2. Expediating Climate Change amidst large number of Climate agreements

### 3. The ineffectiveness of global climate agreements:

#### i. Stockholm agreement's failure in implementing its declaration:

Weapons of mass destruction proliferating, poverty rising, and biodiversity losing habitat

#### ii. Brundtland report and Sustainable development:

Incessant exploitation and overconsumption of resources.

#### iii. Rio declaration and transfer of technologies to global South:

Rather, green-colonialism and extraction of resources from global South.

iv. Agenda 21: global action plan.  
no proper framework for implementation  
of agenda-21.

v. UNFCCC and common but differential  
responsibility:

Global South affected disproportionately  
and global North's in-co-operation.

vi. Kyoto Protocols and Carbon flexible markets:  
Commodifying Climate Change rather  
mitigating its causes.

vii. Paris Agreement and voluntary cooperation  
The United States' aversion to any  
contribution.

viii. REDD+ and loss of forest reserves:

4 million net loss of forests annually.

4. Some positive impacts of global climate  
agreements:

i. Montreal Protocol and decline of  
Ozone-depleting substances

ii. Millineal development goals' <sup>positive</sup> impacts  
on the world.

## 5. ~~Ways forward for action against Climate Change~~

relevancy is key to success

- i. Making ~~global~~ agreements binding
- ii. Increase North-South cooperation for the only Earth humans have
- iii. Investment in Climate adaptation and resilience building.

## 6. Conclusion

In 1910, a United States' scientist presented objective evidence on climate change and its expectation due to human activities. Humans have since become concerned regarding climate change; these concerns, in 1972, led to the first conference on the relation between humans and their environment. Since then, various numbers of climate conferences and global agreements have taken place to mitigate the impacts of climate change. These vast numbers of global agreements institutionalised environmental governance, but what it did not systemise, was how to implement these agreements, and make sure that effectiveness of climate agreements. Climate agreements have remained ineffective in implementing their own declarations because of their voluntary nature and absence of global environmental governance. One reason for their ineffectiveness is the global divide between the North and the South; another is man's dilemma between economic growth and environmental conservation. These reasons have led to perpetual exploitation of precious resources and decline in environment's quality. In addition, inequality has risen, nuclear race has taken unprecedented pace, and biodiversity is losing its habitat. Unfortunately, climate agreements have done little in comparison to what they were intended for.

Nonetheless, some effective measures have been implemented to certain climate problem such as Ozone depletion. Although, the global climate agreements have shown some progress in tackling climate change, these agreements have at large remained in-effective due to their non-binding nature.

Since 1972, vast numbers of climate agreements have taken place, yet climate change has also expediated. The world is troubling with increased floods, erratic monsoons, and rising sea levels, but these climate agreements have done little impact on the changing climate. According to World Meteorological organisation's report on climate incidents in the same period 1970- 2024, there have been 9700+ climate incidents, 2 million deaths related to climate change, and approximately 4.5 Trillion dollars loss in economy. This shows that despite climate agreements and conferences, the incidents of climate related damage have not halted. Thus, it proves the ineffectiveness of climate agreements in tackling climate change in the contemporary period.

From Stockholm conference to Rio + in 2012, most agreements were voluntary and non-binding in nature that led to their ineffectiveness and decreased capacity in ~~lating~~ climate change.

The ~~very~~ first climate agreement has failed in thwarting the increased climate change. The Stockholm conference in 1972 was the first ~~climate~~ conference which adopted a 21-point declaration to deal with ~~climate~~ change and its impacts. Among the provisions mentioned in the declaration, decreasing poverty, reducing biodiversity loss, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction were prominent. Yet all these have occurred on an increased level. Social inequality has risen, weapons of ~~mass~~ destruction are increasing in number threatening the global peace, and biodiversity is losing its habitat ~~to~~ human activities. These events have dis-balanced the delicate environment that humans live in. Thus, climate agreements such as Stockholm declaration have done little to curb climate change and have proven ineffective.

~~Since~~ 1987, the Brundtland commission's ~~the~~ Sustainable development motto has

remained ineffective in the economic development. The current era is in overconsumption phase and has remained since the industrial revolution. Man has disturbed the balance between consumption and renewal of resources. Currently, the resources are being consumed at a higher pace than they are replenishing. This incessant consumption and overexploitation of resources is in contrary of what the Brundtland commission proposed. The concept of sustainable development has not been fully institutionalised, reflecting the ineffectiveness of the Brundtland commission. Therefore, the global climate agreement such as Brundtland report has been ineffective in implementing its directives and curtailing the on-going climate change.

The Rio declaration's transfer of technology to global South from north has largely remained ineffective, rather it leads to green colonisation of northern states over southern resources. The Rio declaration proposed the transfer of climate friendly technology to global South so that it can develop in an efficient and climate friendly manner. However, at first place, it did not happen.

on the other, the northern states exploited the mineral resources of southern countries for their transition to renewables. This green colonisation has affected the global south's capacity to transform and adapt to climate change. The Democratic Republic of Congo supplies Cobalt for renewable infrastructure to many western states such as Europe and the U.S. However, the country is significantly impacted by climate change itself. This green colonisation has reversed the proportion of Rio declaration making it ineffective. Therefore, climate agreements such as Rio have largely remained ineffective.

In addition, the agenda-21 proposed in the Rio declaration has not been implemented in the letter and spirit because of the absence of a comprehensive framework. Agenda 21 was a global action plan for the 21st century transformation to climate sustainable future. However, it lacked a proper framework for its implementation on to the local levels from the global levels. It proposed poverty eradication and declared poverty as a primary cause of environmental degradation, however, it lacked a comprehensive action plan and proposal on the elevation of poverty and reducing social inequality, which

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ultimately was affecting resources in a disproportionate manner. In addition, ~~Agenda 21~~ also proposed transition to renewables, but did not promulgated the due steps for this transition. Thus, ~~Agenda-21~~ remained largely ineffective in mitigating the causes of climate change.

~~United Nations' framework~~

convention on Climate change proposed common but differentiated responsibilities, which was ~~not~~ implemented due to ~~global north's~~ incooperation. The UNFCCC was a multilateral framework agreement on climate change, and it proposed "CBDR". However, the global north was reluctant in cooperating with global south. "CBDR" ensured that historical emitters have a larger responsibility on climate action, but global ~~south~~ did not take any measurable actions for this purpose, and the global south remained affected by the climate change disproportionately. According to ~~World Meteorological Organisation~~, the global south particularly Asia and Africa are facing  ~~harsh~~ climate patterns at a double pace than the European countries. Thus, the UNFCCC's principle of ~~CBDR~~ remained ineffective largely.

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The Kyoto protocol's carbon flexible mechanism commodified climate change, rather than preventing it, showing its ineffectiveness in mitigating climate causes. The Kyoto protocol came into effect in 2005 and during its first phase it suggested a 5.2% decline of carbon emission on member states, and proposed carbon flexible mechanisms to help achieve this target. This carbon flexible mechanism largely became a green washing of carbon emissions, rather than decreasing it. Moreover, at the end of first commitment period, it was found that the global emissions have risen 32% more than the 1990 levels. This demonstrates that ~~on one end~~ Kyoto protocol green washed carbon emission which directly led to increase in carbon dioxide levels. Hence, Kyoto protocol likely other global climate agreements remained largely ineffective in mitigating climate change.

3. The United States' voluntary ~~exit~~ of the Paris agreement made the agreement ineffective. The Paris agreement implemented at COP 21 in 2015 proposed to reduce the global temperature 2°C below the industrial levels. For this purpose, it established voluntary national contributions and carbon trading mechanisms. However,

the reluctance of the United States in fulfilling the Paris agreement's commitments made it ineffective. The United States contributes 28% of annual global carbon emissions; with this significant emissions, its exit from the Paris agreement made it ineffective. Moreover, it also rendered other states uncooperative with the commitments made in Paris agreement. Thus, the United States' exit of the Paris agreement and the agreement's voluntary exit clause made it ineffective.

The REDD+ plan was implemented to reduce global deforestation, however, it has been ineffective in such endeavour. Deforestation is a major global issue. Countries use their forest resources for economic development, however, this indiscriminate with the environment because of forest's importance and services to environment's maintenance. The framework, reduction reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation, was adopted to decrease deforestation and increase reforestation. However, even after a decade of its implementation, it has been ineffective in doing so. ~~For instance~~ According to the World Forest Assessment report 2025, the net deforestation rate globally is 4 million

hectares that mean that only 6 million hectare reforestation is being done and 10 million hectare deforestation is currently taking place. Forests support 80% of territorial biodiversity and this much deforestation will eventually destroy them and cause significant impact on biodiversity. Hence, the REDD+ has also been ineffective in climate mitigation.

The global climate agreements have had certain positive impacts on the environment which must be discussed to signify their role which is, however, not fully ineffective in mitigating climate change causes.

Montreal protocol has led to a significant decline in Ozone depleting substances, showing its effectiveness in climate mitigation. In 1985 a significant discovery was done, which showed that the great ozone patch causing significant Ultra Violet rays reaching the Earth. These UV rays caused gene mutation, cancer, and cataracts, implying the vital role of Ozone layer in protecting the Earth from these harmful substances.

In 1987, Montreal protocol was implemented to phase out Ozone depleting substances, and it has made significant success in this endeavour. For instance, more than 99% of ozone depleting substances, chlorofluorcarbons,

have been phased out, and the ozone patch is on a recovery, with fully recovered in 2066. This has also led to decline in cases of skin cancer and cataracts, especially in Australia, where the patch did. Thus, the Montreal protocol is one example of effective global climate agreement.

Another example are the Millennium development goals which had a positive impact on the development throughout the world. The MDGs were adopted in 1997 to harmonise global development on certain key aspects such as clean water, maternal mortality rate, and disease burden. In 2012, during the Rio+ declaration, it was declared that MDGs had a vital impact on the world, with a success rate of about 70%. These goals had significantly increased literacy and decreased maternal and infant mortality rates, and the disease burden. Because of its implementation across the globe in a true spirit, these goals were highly successful in harmonising global ascend on certain key aspects of human development. Therefore, MDGs are one other example of a successful global climate agreement that

uplifted the society amidst the looming climate threat.

This discussion ~~ascertains that although global climate agreements had some positive impacts, they were largely ineffective because of the lack of cooperation between the global south and north, and their voluntary nature.~~ The following measures can ~~can~~ enhance the effectiveness of global climate agreements if implemented with a true spirit.

The primary measure to make climate agreements effective for climate change mitigation is ~~making the agreements binding on the member states. When the agreements will become obligatory in nature, member states will surely take~~ follow them, and will cooperate with other states at an unprecedented scale. The overall binding of agreements equally on all the states will ensure that no state goes against the commitments it has made. Humans can ~~break the laws of that they have self-made such as those agreements, however they can not restrict the laws of nature which demonstrate themselves in forms of extreme weathers, floods, and rainfalls. So it is crucial that all the member states abide~~

by climate laws and agreements equally to have a sustainable future. Thus, equally binding laws will enhance cooperation and climate action.

In Conclusion, the climate agreements have largely remained symbolic, with little effect on mitigating the causes of climate change and implementing the commitments which these agreements committed. However, because of the interconnectedness of human and environment, and man's excessive dependence on the services that the nature provide, it is essential that significant steps should be taken to make these climate commitments effective and fully implemented in true spirit and letter. Man has only one Earth to live, and if the latter is healthy and prosperous, the former can thrive and live peacefully. So, crucial measures such as enhanced global cooperation, mandatory climate agreements, and investment in adaptation building and resilient infrastructure should be implemented. The technosphere, where man thrive, and the biosphere, where man live, must come in balance for the prosperity of both.