

Institutions for International Climate Governance

Hosted by

The Harvard Project on Climate Agreements

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Sixteenth Conference of the Parties

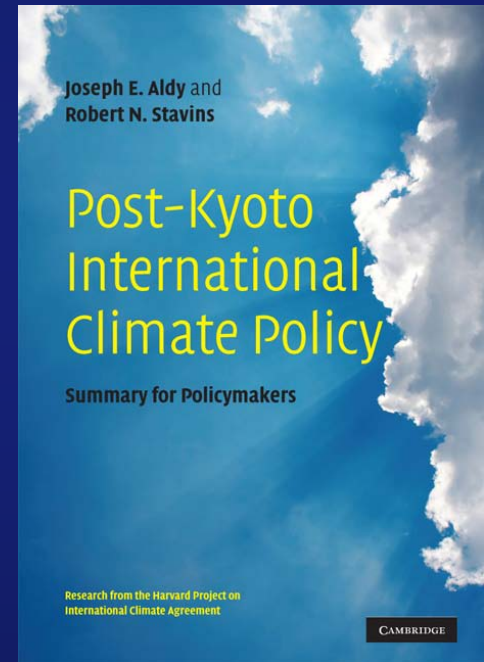
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Cancún, Mexico

December 8, 2010

Developing and Advancing Ideas for Climate Policy

- The Harvard Project on Climate Agreements
 - Mission: To help identify and advance scientifically sound, economically rational, and politically pragmatic public policy options for addressing global climate change
- Drawing upon research & ideas from leading thinkers around the world from:
 - Academia
 - Private industry
 - NGOs
 - Governments
- 45 research initiatives in Australia, China, Europe, India, Japan, and the United States

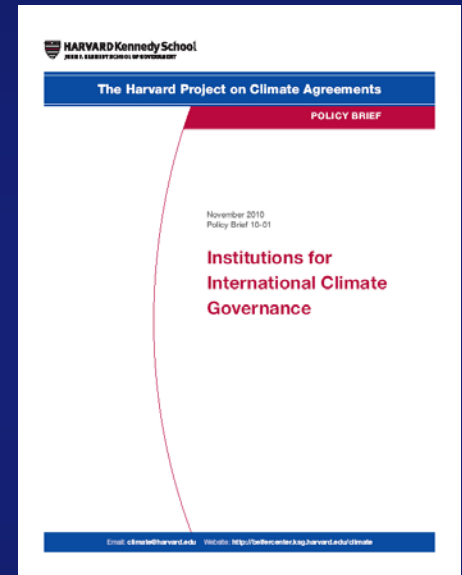


Potential Global Climate Policy Architectures

- **Harvard Project does not endorse a single approach**
 - Decision to adopt particular architecture is ultimately political, and must be reached by nations of the world, taking into account complex factors
- **Promising policy architectures under three categories**
 - Targets & Timetables (as in Kyoto Protocol)
 - *Example: Formulas for Evolving Emission Targets for All Countries*
 - Harmonized National Policies
 - *Examples: Harmonized Carbon Taxes, Cap-and-Trade, or Other Regulations*
 - Independent National Policies
 - *Example: Linkage of National & Regional Tradable Permit Systems*

Institutions for International Climate Governance: The UNFCCC

- The UNFCCC has both advantages and challenges as a venue for international climate negotiations
- Advantages
 - International *legitimacy*
 - Administrative resources for *implementation*
- Challenges
 - *Number* (190+) and extreme *diversity* of parties
 - Decision-making process gives each country same standing *regardless* of its emission rate or its vulnerability to climate change
 - Decisions require *consensus* among parties
 - Politicized *divergence* between developed & developing countries



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Other Institutions

- Other institutions could potentially *supplement* UNFCCC process
- Among those frequently proposed are:
 - *Major Economies Forum* – 80% of global emissions; initiated & led by U.S.
 - *G20* – finance ministers; since 1999; have met on climate change
 - Other *multilateral* (C30)
 - Various *bilaterals*, including – but not limited to – China-U.S.
- *Lessons* can be learned by examining international regimes in *other policy areas*, including international trade, nuclear nonproliferation, and others

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Key Findings

- MEF and G-20 have been effective venues for *discussion*
 - Combine developed & developing worlds, and so carry some *international legitimacy*
 - Neither is a forum for *negotiation* on climate change
 - *Moving* negotiations from UNFCCC to MEF or G-20 might simply *transfer* conflicts apparent in UNFCCC to these new venues
 - Both lack *administrative & technical* resources for implementation
- “*Bridging states*” combine interests of *both* developing and developed countries
 - May therefore *help facilitate* climate negotiations
 - Candidates include: *Mexico, Republic of Korea, and Turkey*

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Key Findings (continued)

- Some climate policy aspects may best be addressed in separate institutional venues
 - Loosely coupled set of *regimes*
 - *Portfolio* of international sectoral agreements
 - Separate institutions/agreements for *mitigation, adaptation, and geoengineering*

- Negotiations can benefit from *trust built through institutional learning*
 - Learning decreases *uncertainty*, which countries often use as argument for *inaction*
 - One positive *example*: International Energy Agency
 - Could *assess mitigation* performance, and
 - Develop techniques for *accurately and fairly* comparing national policies

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Conclusions

- Most promising institutional options *all involve some combination* of UNFCCC and a diverse set of *other organizations* for negotiation and implementation
- UNFCCC may *increasingly* play role *functionally similar* to G-20 and MEF:
 - Forum for *discussing* concepts and *exploring* approaches
 - *Resolving* conflicting values, *particularly* between developing & developed countries
- UNFCCC may *increasingly specialize* in data gathering and implementation of policy (as it does now with the CDM, for example)
- Unlike G-20 and MEF, UNFCCC has *authority* to serve as forum for negotiation,
 - But whether it is *capable* of using that authority *effectively* only time will tell.

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For More Information

Harvard Project on Climate Agreements

www.belfercenter.org/climate

Harvard Environmental Economics Program

www.hks.harvard.edu/m-rcbg/heep/

www.stavins.com