

# **The Role of Civil Society at the COP 21 Climate Negotiations**

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## Outline

1. Outcomes of the Paris Climate Negotiations from a Civil Society Perspective
2. The Role of Civil Society during the Climate Negotiations
3. Evaluation of the Paris Outcomes with a focus on the Role for Civil Society Organizations in the years to come

# 1. Outcomes of the Paris Climate Negotiations from a Civil Society Perspective



<http://cdn.theatlantic.com>

- first time in history, that all parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change agreed on a new text to protect the world's climate
- agreement universal by nature and legally binding in international law → designed to be durable for next decades to come

## Key components of the Paris Agreement

- 1) **long-term goal:** temperature goal, climate resilience goal, shift of finances
- 2) **mitigation commitment:** goal of greenhouse gas neutrality by 2050
- 3) **ambition mechanism:** 5 year cycle to adapt national climate plans
- 4) **transparency & accountability:** unified approach agreed on, but need for improvement
- 5) **loss & damage:** recognized in agreement, but no liability and no compensation

## Comparison CSO demands vs. achievements of Paris

Demands of Civil Society	Achievements
legally binding and durable agreement	<b>achieved</b>
long-term goal of decarbonization by mid-century	<b>achieved partially</b> no written official signal, but through demand for greenhouse gas neutrality in 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of century linked to temperature goal and shift in financial investments interpretation as signal for full decarbonization
mechanism of periodic review with progression in ambition	<b>achieved</b> 5-year cycle
robust transparency and accountability rules similar for all	<b>achieved partially</b> agreed in principle, but no concrete design/arrangements yet
secured climate finance of at least \$ 100 bn per year	<b>achieved</b> (BUT: further adjustments to climate finance must be made)
climate resilience and loss & damage anchored in agreement	<b>achieved</b> (BUT: no liability and no compensation)

## 2. The Role of Civil Society during the climate negotiations

- Civil Society not an active part in negotiations itself (like negotiators), but pulled a lot of strings behind the scenes, mainly in the area of giving policy advise
- Due to attacks of Paris who took place right before the climate negotiations started, big demonstrations were cancelled and some activities had to be cancelled as well, but no general climate that was hostile towards NGOs
- Roles that CSO played differ from background to background: trade unions, for example, lobbied for workers rights and to keep just transition and decent work in the agenda, environmental NGOs lobbied for REDD+ and other environment related issues, a lot of NGOs gave policy advise to most vulnerable and small states, helped them formulate speeches etc.
- No real actions of civil disobedience (due to security situation and restrictions imposed by French security forces)

### 3. Evaluation of the Paris Outcomes with a focus on the Role for Civil Society Organizations in the years to come

- Paris Agreement marks a milestone, but can be just the beginning
- Through Paris Agreement, CSO now have a legally binding international agreement they can refer to when they push for more ambition in their respective national climate plans (NDCs)
- CSO need to keep pressure on politicians and governments, need to form allies also between groups with different interests
- CSO need to keep governments accountable for climate commitments made in Paris; can create pressure for governments to act on what they said in Paris
- “We would not be where we are today here in Paris, with 196 Parties poised to adopt a global climate change agreement, without the leadership and vision of civil society,” Mr. Ban insisted, adding that after Paris is over, their voices will be needed more than ever. (Ban Ki-moon, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52781#.Vp1GwVLlduk>)

**Any questions?**  
**Thank you for your attention!**