

CIGI '10

CLIMATE OF ACTION



TAKING GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE BEYOND 2012: REFLECTIONS ON CIGI '10

SPECIAL REPORT

MANJANA MILKOREIT AND
JASON J. BLACKSTOCK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As policy makers gather in Durban, South Africa, for the 17th Conference of Parties (COP 17) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), success for this round of the global climate negotiations is being defined largely as the avoidance of visible failure. This report reflects on the insights generated during the October 2010 international conference held at The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Waterloo, Ontario, CIGI '10: Climate of Action (CIGI '10), and considers what it would take to establish robust international climate cooperation. Four main recommendations are presented:

- A sustained effort to reframe the climate debate in terms of economic opportunities and co-benefits is needed to unlock domestic support for proactive climate policies. The political commitment necessary to create an effective global climate agreement will only emerge once solid domestic support is established in a critical mass of nations.
- New processes are needed to engage and build trust among the political leaders that must leverage their political clout to convert domestic support into lasting change. Strong relationships between heads of state and key ministers (economy, finance and energy) are essential for eventually resolving the deep-seated tensions between various negotiation blocs that now shape and disrupt the technical negotiations of the UNFCCC process.
- International policy makers should tap into the innovative potential offered by the growing array of ground-up climate initiatives from business, civil society and sub-national governments around the world. The creation of an international framework for networking and supporting these successful initiatives offers near-term political gains, while beginning tangible progress towards low-carbon economies and societies. (This could be a valuable initiative of the June 2012 Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.)
- Emerging issues, such as short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs) and geoengineering require the attention of climate policy makers and stakeholders. Governments and non-governmental organizations should start building their technical and policy capacity with a view to integrating these challenging issues into the climate governance complex.

These messages are relevant for Durban, as immediate steps are needed to make full use of the opportunity presented by Rio+20. Their significance, however, extends far beyond COP 17. Stepping back from the pressures of the annual UNFCCC negotiation rhythm and developing a multi-annual perspective on climate governance would allow policy makers to build domestic support for climate policies, generate increased trust among political leaders and leverage the immense potential of ground-up initiatives for the creation of a much-needed global climate regime.

INTRODUCTION

In the year since CIGI held the conference CIGI '10, the major fault lines of international climate change politics have hardly shifted. While there have been important developments in the political and scientific foundations of international climate politics, there is little expectation of a progressive outcome from the 2011 international climate negotiations being held in December 2011 in Durban, South Africa. In this report we reflect on the insights generated during CIGI '10 to consider how a long-term revitalization of international climate governance might be stimulated in the years ahead.

CIGI '10 brought together a cast of leading international policy makers and scholars with two key objectives: to explore the potential for action on climate change at all levels of government and society, from local civil society organizations to the global community of states; and to translate ideas regarding multi-level action into recommendations for specific actors engaged in ongoing policy and negotiation processes.



Starting from the insights of CIGI '10, this report steps back from the immediate pressures surrounding the international negotiations to consider what the path towards effective climate governance might look like beyond Durban. The report opens with an overview of the core insights that emerged during CIGI '10, followed by a summary of relevant developments in the year that followed. The main analytic discussion then encourages international policy makers to expand their gaze out from the engrossing year-to-year negotiation rhythm of the current UNFCCC COP process, and to take on a multi-annual perspective built around the following strategies:

- **Emphasizing the Opportunities of Climate Policy:** A serious and sustained effort is needed to reframe key domestic climate discussions in positive terms that re-engage key national publics in the climate conversation by emphasizing the near-term economic development and growth opportunities inherent in well-structured climate policies. Policy makers should be cautious about seeking singular global narratives, as nationally and even sub-nationally targeted narratives are more likely to motivate a larger array of stakeholders to action.
- **Reading — and Building Trust — between the Lines:** Deep-seated anger over historic inequities and fears about future economic damage needs a space where it can be discussed honestly and substantively. The current marathon rhythm of technical negotiation sessions leads to these frustrations being expressed through proxy arguments over technical issues (such as national commitments, climate finance and technology transfer), while the fundamental tensions fester unaddressed.
- **Adding Domestic Political Clout to the International Process:** Robust climate cooperation in the future requires direct international engagement between ministers (in particular, finance, energy and trade ministers) with personal responsibility for the domestic finances and policies that need to be mobilized to affect real emission reductions, supported by engagement and trust building between heads of state, who will need to broker difficult trade-offs. Although the current UNFCCC process leaves little room for added capacity and trust-building exercises, expanding climate discussions into other international venues must be done with care to avoid further entrenching historic North-South mistrust.
- **Leveraging Ground-up Initiatives:** By providing coordination, learning and expansion support for the increasing number of social, policy and business climate innovators emerging at the sub-national level, international policy makers can foster valuable examples of beneficial climate action. The private sector dimensions of such a platform could become particularly valuable for mobilizing private sector capital towards climate initiatives.
- **Engaging Emerging Issues:** SLCFs and geoengineering present novel challenges, but also opportunities for the climate governance agenda. Immediate attention needs to be given to informal scientific and policy capacity building, both nationally and internationally, with a perspective towards formal institutional integration within, at most, a few years.

INSIGHTS FROM CIGI '10: CLIMATE OF ACTION

CIGI '10 sought to maximize the lessons from the disheartening experience of COP 15 of the UNFCCC, held in Copenhagen in December 2009, by exploring three major agenda items: the potential value of ground-up initiatives driven by sub-national and non-state actors; the possibility of using alternative governance venues outside the UNFCCC; and the emergence of geoengineering and SLCFs on the global climate governance agenda (Blackstock, 2010). The conference discussions reached far beyond these programmatic pointers, generating a number of key insights regarding persistent obstacles to effective climate governance and possible paths to overcoming these on the road ahead.

REFRAME THE DEBATE: EMPHASIZE OPPORTUNITIES

Over the past decade, publics and policy makers have been confronted with the reality that unabated climate change will severely damage society's future, and costly policies must, therefore, be enacted today to address these long-term risks. Unfortunately, such warnings have, at least on their own, failed to motivate sufficient public and political momentum in key national contexts. Thankfully, increasing understanding that well-designed climate policies can generate tangible near- and medium-term economic and social co-benefits affords new avenues for engaging the climate conversation, particularly given the economic instability and pressures of recent years. The importance of structuring and reframing domestic climate policy discussions to emphasize positive, opportunity-driven narratives was one of the clear collective insights of CIGI '10.

Three incomplete framing proposals emerged at CIGI '10 around the respective linkages between climate policies and development, green growth and energy policy. In each case, the possible value of the proposal for mobilizing tangible action needs to be considered, along with the risks of diffusing the climate discussion into policy arenas with existing goals and institutions.

CLIMATE POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Reframing climate policy as an essential element of the international development agenda could integrate the former with the concepts, institutions and practitioner communities that have evolved around international development over the last 50 years. Focused on developing countries' urgent energy and infrastructure needs for improving the welfare and expanding the economic prospects of their populations, the rationale for this framing incorporates both ethical and practical dimensions. Emphasis on climate strategies with socio-economic co-benefits could both mobilize developing country engagement, and unlock opportunities for climate policy implementation through existing institutions of international development.

However, such framing also risks burdening climate politics with the checkered history of development politics — including developed countries' failure to live up to previous commitments, and the perceived imperialism of Northern countries dictating the development agendas of Southern countries — possibly ingraining further the perceived North-South political divide in climate politics. In addition, while lessons from development funding processes could provide essential foundations for the emerging climate finance regime, over-linkage at an instrumental level might also burden new climate resources with mechanisms unsuited for climate goals. Finally, a development frame carries the risk that populations in developed countries could begin viewing climate change as predominantly an issue for developing countries, rather than an issue of vital international and national interest. This could reinforce the currently insufficient sense of motivation and urgency in key developed countries, leading to the perpetual underfunding of climate action, akin to what has been seen for the past two decades in international development budgets.

CLIMATE POLICY AND GREEN GROWTH

Significant near-term opportunities for transitioning towards low-carbon energy production exist in the least-developed and developing countries, where technological “leapfrogging” to renewable energy sources is not only possible, but would provide tremendous socio-economic benefits in the near and medium term. Emphasizing both the immediate co-benefits of energy access and the future competitive advantages over industrialized countries laden with carbon-heavy infrastructures, a “green” economic growth framing of climate policies might unlock significant domestic support in developing countries. Developing countries, however, also harbour concerns that such green economic policies could become a precursor to trade restrictions punishing economies that do not become green enough quickly enough.

CLIMATE POLICY AND ENERGY POLICY

Framing the climate challenge as fundamentally an issue of energy policy could focus the discussion and design of climate policies on the valuable co-benefits of an energy transition. In industrialized contexts, national energy security and energy market stability provide strong rationales for energy policies that already incorporate the development of some low-carbon energy sources. There are, however, clear political challenges for this framing, as the same goals underpin arguments for exploiting high-carbon energy resources, such as oil sands. Similarly, in developing contexts, enhancing access and affordability for reliable and locally clean (low air pollution) energy sources is already a central objective, around which local support can be mobilized. Nonetheless, the widespread availability and low cost of exploiting coal is a key factor that must be addressed in the integration of climate goals as core objectives of energy policies.

While a range of additional framing opportunities remained unexplored — such as air pollution, water and sanitation, and public health — taken together, these proposals provide two important messages for policy makers. First, these proposals all reflect the underlying conviction that mobilizing national publics requires emphasizing the near-term economic and social benefits in the design and political presentation of climate policies. While climate narratives based on shared global responsibility and even fear of future societal damages still have an important role to play in providing a rationale for the magnitude of necessary action, such narratives clearly lack resonance with the various national and sub-national communities that need to be mobilized today.

Second, although all three proposals share some common themes, the detailed narratives in each are likely to provoke quite divergent supporters and detractors. Attempting a one-size-fits-all global framing and design for climate policy appears unlikely to mobilize more than a limited fraction of the needed stakeholder groups. Thus, an important challenge for climate governance in the future will be to establish processes and conversations that enable multiple, sometimes contradictory, framings of climate policies and their near-term benefits to cooperatively co-exist.

RE-EXAMINE THE PROCESS: TRUST AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The rhythm and structure of international climate negotiations have evolved under the UNFCCC for almost two decades. These negotiations have expanded from a narrow focus on climate mitigation to encompass the diversity of entangled issues, spanning emission targets and carbon markets through climate finance and forest management. Over the past decade, the UNFCCC process has developed into a marathon of intense Ad Hoc Working Group and Subsidiary Body meetings throughout the year, culminating in the intense two-week negotiations of the annual COP. But has the increased technical diversity and intensity of interactions actually empowered negotiators' ability to tackle the fundamental issues that are preventing agreement on climate action? Discussions at CIGI '10 highlighted key challenges for climate progress that the current process is not adequately addressing.

Understanding and trust are the currencies of successful diplomacy, yet both remain elusive in the highly contentious arena of global climate politics. Historically rooted tensions between North and South, rising tensions between emerging powers and developing countries (fuelled in part by the circumstances of the Copenhagen Accord), and general mistrust between those who stand to suffer from climate change and those who believe they will lose by taking climate action, have raised major emotional barriers to finding common ground. Yet, these fundamental tensions are seldom engaged directly. They are, rather, played out in proxy through debates over technical issues, such as climate finance or national mitigation commitments.

Participants at CIGI '10 expressed views that open conversations about a desirable future in which the burden of climatic change is equitably shared among the rich and poor are essential for building mutual understanding and trust. First steps towards this include a re-energized commitment to process transparency and inclusivity, along with the creation of forums where perspectives and grievances can be directly discussed. At least initially, such forums need to begin informally, with the aim of creating "safe harbours," away from the negotiations, which will enable discussions to move beyond formal national positions and establish the foundations of dialogue and understanding that can translate into the public negotiations.

The expertise and authority of national climate delegations also needs to be expanded in order to effectively manage the diversity of issues now interlaced with climate policy, and the expanded framings discussed above. With climate negotiations now directly impinging on national policies for energy, infrastructure, development, security, finance and trade, environment ministers have neither the breadth of expertise nor the political clout to effectively manage the array of domestic and international issues and interests at play. Ministers responsible for these various portfolios have to become directly engaged in climate policy processes. Moreover, once such ministerial engagements are in place, brokering trade-offs both across domestic portfolios and between governments will demand the direct engagement and political authority of heads of state. Building capacity and relationships through broader, sustained engagement of national political leaders on climate issues — in particular, by creating opportunities for candid exchanges in intimate settings — must therefore be one of the key goals for climate negotiations in the future.

EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE VENUES: POSSIBILITIES AND PITFALLS

If identifying the gaps in the current process is the first step, then developing ways to fill those gaps is the second. This proved more contentious in discussions at CIGI '10, however, as proposals for formally expanding climate talks into new venues (particularly multilateral "clubs," such as the G20 and the Major Economies Forum) met with widely mixed opinions.

Proponents of additional venues suggested that their benefits — narrowed agendas, smaller number of parties and more intimate ministerial and heads-of-state discussions — could enable substantive progress on targeted subsets of the currently overloaded UNFCCC agenda. Ideally, this could reduce tensions, engender cooperation and create momentum towards a future holistic global climate agreement under the UNFCCC.



Conversely, dissenters argued that narrower, more exclusive venues inherently lack the legitimacy and representativeness of the broader UNFCCC process, and could too easily marginalize the voices and concerns of lesser-developed countries. Agreements from such venues might selectively address issues relevant to large-economy club members, while postponing discussions of urgent developing-country issues, such as technology sharing, adaptation and climate finance. The closed-door, ad hoc meeting that generated the Copenhagen Accord in 2009 was referred to several times as an example of such an undesirable process and outcome.

While the value of expanding direct and intimate heads-of-state and ministerial engagement was broadly acknowledged, the divergence at CIGI '10 over how to achieve this revealed a key challenge ahead for the global climate framework. Efforts to diversify the institutional venues of climate politics and governance are inevitably constrained by institutional path-dependence. To be perceived as broadly legitimate, new processes — whether formal or informal — will need to articulate their relationship to the UNFCCC process, and acknowledge the principles established in previous climate agreements, such as the Kyoto Protocol. Thus, while diversification of negotiating venues needs to be explored as a strategic pathway through which expanded dialogue and deeper expertise can be achieved, such venues cannot avoid the underlying political tensions currently stymieing progress towards an effective global climate regime.

ENABLE GROUND-UP ACTION: FACILITATE LEARNING AND SUPPORT EXPANSION

Emerging recognition of the economic and social opportunities afforded by climate policies, along with increased recognition of the costs of inaction and exasperation with global negotiations, have generated the rapid expansion of entrepreneurial “ground-up” initiatives by business, civil society and sub-national government innovators. There was broad agreement among CIGI '10 participants that the near-term success and effectiveness of such initiatives should not be measured in terms of carbon emission reductions, but rather in terms of how well they promote and catalyze innovative experiments with low-carbon social programs and technologies. As incubators and test beds for new ideas, current ground-up initiatives are essential for demonstrating the economic and social benefits inherent in larger-scale action.

The full innovative potential of ongoing ground-up initiatives is, however, far from being realized. Currently, there are only a few, generally disconnected, transnational networks in place aimed at enabling collective learning, synergistic collaboration or comparative analysis of climate initiatives being conducted in different locations. There is not yet a comprehensive international database of such initiatives that prospective social, policy or business entrepreneurs can explore to identify potential collaborators or case studies. Consequently, there are also no effective processes through which national governments or international organizations can identify and provide support for scaling up initiatives that demonstrate tangible success. A robust mechanism for enabling such expansions would focus not just on funding (though financing would obviously be an important catalytic aspect), but would also provide managerial support for the proliferation of successful models, including explicit focus on translating lessons across jurisdictional and cultural boundaries.

The creation of an effective, international framework for networking and supporting successful ground-up climate initiatives could be a valuable contribution of the June 2012 Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. If designed with the aim of creating a mutually reinforcing interface between ground-up climate action and the UNFCCC process, such a framework might even help generate a more positive, opportunity- and action-oriented framing surrounding the global climate negotiations.

ENGAGE EMERGING ISSUES EARLY: WHAT ROLE FOR SLCFS AND GEOENGINEERING?

The emerging climate governance challenges presented by SLCF management (particularly black carbon and sulphate aerosols) and geoengineering (also known as climate engineering, and defined as the intentional modification of the climate to ameliorate climate change) were also discussed at CIGI '10. Both SLCFs and geoengineering introduce the prospect of individual nations enacting unilateral policies that could alter the climate on regional through global scales (Blackstock and Long, 2010). The potential for such unilateral national action creates new international cooperation challenges for the climate regime, along with the risk of attention being diverted away from the collective mitigation of carbon emissions.

Driven by the rapid scientific progress on SLCFs and geoengineering over the past half-decade, discussions at CIGI '10 explored how governments could build their technical and policy capacity to engage these issues. Such capacity building should include international policy discussions (along with scientific collaborations) as early as possible, in order to establish strong foundations for future cooperation — rather than competition — on these issues. With its already overcrowded agenda, however, it was felt the UNFCCC is currently not the appropriate venue for such capacity building. Given the political challenges and risks of pressing for formal governmental discussions through non-UNFCCC channels, emphasis was instead placed on driving the early stages of capacity building through transnational non-governmental forums.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE CIGI '10

In the year since CIGI '10 took place, the global climate regime's political and scientific foundations have continued to evolve. This section highlights key developments from the past year that relate back to the insights from the conference.

POLITICAL PREOCCUPATION

The COP 16 climate negotiations in December 2010 at Cancun, Mexico, partially stabilized the volatile situation surrounding the UNFCCC after the political and emotional rollercoaster in Copenhagen. The progress made in Mexico, however, was broadly technical, adding important details to adaptation governance, climate finance and technology transfer mechanisms. In order to enable even this limited progress, the Cancun negotiations carefully avoided contentious issues, such as greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets and the future of the Kyoto Protocol, which stir entrenched tensions and mistrust.

Most of the analysis in the run-up to Durban has focused on the fate of the Kyoto Protocol (Bodansky, 2011) and the implications of a potential (even likely) failure to agree on a second commitment period (*Financial Times*). The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty without an expiry date, is legally binding for all parties who have ratified it and will remain in effect on paper beyond 2012. However, the Protocol's most important stipulation — Article 3 (1) on GHG emission reduction commitments by Annex I parties — is linked to (consecutive) "commitment periods," the first of which is set to expire at the end of 2012. While failure to agree on a second commitment period would not legally end the Kyoto Protocol, the political and climate implications of the failure would be significant.

Although the Kyoto Protocol remains popular with developing and emerging nations, it has fallen out of favour with many developed countries. The most vocal opponents of renewal have been Japan and Canada; from their perspective, new commitments from Annex I parties must be coupled to parallel, albeit lower, emission reduction commitments of rapidly growing economies, especially China and India. Disagreement over the second commitment period has become, in large part, a proxy fight over divergent perspectives on the importance of



historic versus current and future GHG emissions, and how the “common by differentiated responsibility” principle should be interpreted.

Statements made over the last few months in Washington (Harvey, 2011), Brussels, Beijing and Delhi suggest that the divergent visions for a post-2012 agreement will not be resolved at Durban (BASIC, 2011; International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, 2011; and *The New York Times*, 2011). Instead, current divisions and mistrust are likely to be deepened by failure to resolve the proxy debate over Kyoto Protocol obligations. While collapse of the international climate negotiations would be an exceptional event, the prospect of increased disillusionment with and disengagement from the UNFCCC process in 2012 is quite real.

At the same time, an astounding number of global political events have diverted attention, time and resources away from climate governance. From the peaceful revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East, to the subsequent crises in Libya and Syria, and more recently increased tensions with Iran, the past year has presented world leaders with serious challenges to peace and stability. Meanwhile, the sagas of the US and European debt crises continue to preoccupy Western leaders and media, and other key climate actors have faced their own domestic political challenges.

In combination, these dynamics only serve to re-emphasize the insights from CIGI '10 regarding the process of climate negotiations. The focus on technical issues at Cancun, while valuable for renewing a sense of progress and cooperation after Copenhagen, still pushed the opening of honest conversations about the underlying political divides and mistrust further down the road. Though heads-of-state and ministerial meetings were abundant in 2011, opportunities to begin trust-building conversations around climate governance were not leveraged. Given the limited likelihood of progressive agreements coming out of Durban, increased attention should be given to creating such trust and capacity-building conversations throughout 2012 — or another year may go by in which the fundamental barriers to climate progress remain untouched.

MOUNTING EVIDENCE AND URGENCY

Over the past year, despite political and economic upheavals around the world, climate-related news has still captured a surprising number of media headlines. Although these messages are not yet mobilizing sufficient public attention, they reinforce the reality that our globally interconnected climate system is already under strain:

- The year 2010, as well as the decade spanning 2001–2010, marked the warmest on record (World Meteorological Association [WMO], 2011).
- The 2010 drought in the Amazon was the second “100-year drought” within a five-year period, and has raised the possibility that a major sink of carbon dioxide could turn into a source of carbon dioxide emissions (Black, 2011; Joyce, 2011).
- In the fall of 2010, a heat wave and related fires in Russia, floods in Pakistan and China, and droughts in China and the Sahel all converged to produce major stress on the global food system, contributing to the food price spikes that helped trigger the Tunisian revolution at the start of the Arab Spring (Romm, 2011; Gjelten, 2011).
- According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, 2011 has been among the most extreme weather years in US history, with eight weather-related disasters that caused more than \$1 billion in damage occurring in the first six months (Morello, 2011).
- The minimum extent of Arctic sea ice, which has become a significant measure for the progress of climatic change, reached its second-lowest point since recording, coming close to the 2007 historical minimum.
- Populations of small island states are now relocating (Reed, 2011; Stephen, 2011), because rising sea levels, changing weather patterns and extreme weather events force them to abandon their agricultural practices, cause drinking water shortages (BBC.com, 2011), or make the islands otherwise uninhabitable.

Publications and discussions within the climate science community over the past year are of even greater concern than the headlines, suggesting that current impacts are only a foretaste of what could follow. According to recent scientific analysis and discussion, the goal of limiting the global average temperature increase to 2°C may already be unachievable, even with aggressive mitigation measures (Arora et al., 2011; Ramanathan and Xu, 2010). Though driven in part by the continued increase in carbon emissions, growing attention to the role of aerosols in the climate system has generated concern that our “committed warming” — the amount of warming past emissions have already committed us to achieve — could already be well above 2°C (Ramanathan and Feng, 2008). This concern stems from uncertainty over the cooling that aerosol emissions (a subset of SLCFs) currently provide, which is masking some of the warming past carbon emissions would otherwise already have caused. New evidence also suggests that aerosols might be increasing the ability of the planet’s biogeochemical systems to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (Mahowald, 2011), providing an additional source of cooling. These aerosol effects imply that poorly considered air pollution controls and climate change policies could lead to increased and accelerated warming in the short and medium term (Armour and Roe, 2011).

These scientific arguments highlight the unfortunate reality that the stated political consensus regarding 2°C as an appropriate and achievable climate goal remains disconnected from the evolving scientific understanding of our complex climate system. Even disregarding emerging understanding of the role of aerosols in our climate system, scientific analyses demonstrate that current mitigation pledges made by UNFCCC members in response to the Copenhagen Accord fall far short of keeping warming below 2°C.

A handful of scientific publications have also presented new evidence linking climate change to violent conflict and large-scale human crisis (Hsiang, Meng and Cane, 2011; Zhang et al., 2011; Arezki and Brüeckner, 2011; Swain et al., 2011). In short, the year 2011 has continued to generate further scientific evidence demonstrating the urgency of climate action.

LESSONS FOR CLIMATE GOVERNANCE BEYOND 2012

Durban holds little promise of a comprehensive and effective climate agreement. The political commitment to achieve more than a reaffirmation of the 2°C target is not yet there, making it likely states will do little more than reiterate demonstrably insufficient GHG emission reduction pledges. More concerning is the prospect that divergent positions on the Kyoto Protocol could exacerbate tensions and mistrust enough to prevent even this nominal achievement which, in turn, casts doubt on the future of the UNFCCC process. Following the trend since Copenhagen in 2009, success for the international climate negotiations in 2011 has been defined largely as the absence of visible failure.

To begin breaking this trend, policy makers at Durban and beyond must directly grapple with the reality that global climate progress will remain paltry so long as key domestic publics remain unmotivated to take effective climate action. If domestic political momentum in a critical mass of countries was aligned, the UNFCCC process could generate an effective international climate agreement and implementation framework. Pursuing the optimistic, context-specific reframing of key domestic climate conversations — alongside a reinvigoration of the message that climate change itself presents serious risks for the stability of our national and global economies — is, however, essential for sparking such momentum.

A valuable conversation for the sidelines of the formal UNFCCC negotiations would explore the value and limits of specific framings and narratives. The three proposals discussed in this report are only a narrow subset of the possibilities, and effective assessment of the potential of any framing must be grounded in deep experience with targeted national political arenas. Capitalizing on the advantages of “leapfrogging” the deployment of low-carbon energy technologies into lesser-developed countries — where legacy high-carbon infrastructure and interest



groups are non-existent, and socio-economic co-benefits are profound — should be one priority around which political narratives are aligned.

Converting the potential advantages from intriguing storyline to economic reality at the speed and scale necessary for tangible long-term impacts will require mobilizing large amounts of both public and, in particular, private capital. The current rethinking of financial policy brought on by the recent Western economic crises affords a critical opportunity for establishing such new economic frameworks. Moreover, freeing up much needed capital from unsustainable fossil fuel subsidies, and even generating new revenue through a price on carbon, should both be considered in these discussions. But the limits of such narratives, particularly in currently unsteady industrialized economies, need to be carefully identified, and national discussions must be focused first on practical initial steps towards implementation. At their core, these conversations need to pragmatically assess key domestic environments and identify sets of narratives that are synergistic wherever possible.

Despite the current lack of domestic political momentum, constructive steps toward effective, long-term climate governance can still be taken at and following Durban. But they must stem from the recognition that debates about legal form and demands for the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol are only symptoms of deeper, underlying tensions, derived from developing country frustration over inequity and a record of unfulfilled commitments (on both climate and development targets) by developed countries, and industrialized country fears about the future economic and political consequences of today's unbalanced climate policies. The shift of political and economic power from the developed to the emerging economies, coupled with increasing responsibility of the emerging economies for future carbon emissions, exacerbates these tensions.

Though the technical agreements at COP 16 laid important foundations for the architecture of a future global climate agreement, Cancun's real success was the renewed — albeit fragile — sense of progress and cooperation within the UNFCCC process that those agreements engendered. Unfortunately, debates over the Kyoto Protocol during the 2011 series of pre-COP preparatory meetings leading into Durban have already eroded a good portion of those gains.

Success at and after Durban requires a different tack to the one taken at Cancun. An excessive focus on technical agreements will channel too much energy towards the deeper tensions manifesting around the Kyoto Protocol. Attention should be focused instead on creating space for, and if possible even initiating the start of, the tough and expanded high-level political conversations that must evolve over the next several years. On the road towards an effective global climate framework, Durban's success will not be measured by the formal agreements it generates, but by whether it is able to establish the foundations for future political — rather than simply technical — cooperation.

Even as the pressures of the formal process are eased, however, investments in the trust building measures and leadership capacity emphasized in discussions at CIGI '10 can still take place. The initial expansion of the cabinet level expertise and authority engaged in climate negotiations would in fact be better initiated in intimate, low-pressure settings where relationships can be established around relaxed but candid conversations. Clearly, this will not be the environment in Durban immediately prior to the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol.

The leadership summit at Rio+20 affords one opportunity to start building the trust and capacity needed to underpin lasting climate cooperation, but this requires more than simply a one-off heads-of-state meeting in Rio. To be effective, conversations between financial, trade and energy ministers should take place ahead of Rio, feeding into the summit ideas for how discussions and coordination can be improved alongside the UNFCCC process. Such conversations would ideally happen in person, and, where possible, scheduled ministerial meetings in early 2012 (such as meetings of the G20 and OECD finance ministers) should be leveraged to enable a few of these. It should be recognized going in that discussing climate at such meetings will aggravate some of the tensions surrounding the international negotiations — in particular, concerns about inclusivity of developing country perspectives. Given the short lead-time now left for Rio+20, policy makers should not let ideal be the enemy of the good. At the

very least, national delegations to Rio+20 should be pressured to include key cabinet ministers, initiating parallel conversations that can evolve post-Rio. To be effective and gain traction, this conversation needs to be initiated by small subset of the UNFCCC countries. But extreme care must be exercised in selecting an initial group of countries that acknowledges, and does not attempt to sidestep, fundamental tensions.

There is one essential requirement for enabling both domestic political movement and expanded high-level international political cooperation: the perpetual pressure and negotiator exhaustion endemic to the current UNFCCC marathon process must be eased. Reducing the intensity of the international climate negotiations even as the scientific evidence demonstrates the insufficiency of current action may seem counterintuitive, but if the current dynamic does not relax sufficiently to allow for the deeper tensions to be discussed, and sufficient time is not given for new positive climate framings to be developed and take hold in key countries, then the current stagnation will only continue — and that outcome would increase the likelihood of the entire process collapsing.

Finally, the complex realities of global climate politics cannot be an excuse for either not supporting innovative ground-up initiatives, or not developing the foundational scientific and policy capacities for engaging emerging climate issues. The insights and recommendations that emerged from discussions of CIGI '10 in regards to both — stimulate international networking between, and support for successful ground-up climate initiatives and encourage transnational non-governmental forums to lead initial capacity-building exercises around the emerging issues of SLCFs and geoengineering — have become even more relevant in the last year. Examples of initiatives on both fronts have emerged, including the Waterloo Global Science Initiative's Equinox Summit (www.wgsi.org), the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) reports on black carbon and tropospheric ozone (UNEP and WMO, 2011) and the Solar Radiation Management Governance Initiative coordinated jointly by the UK Royal Society, the Academies of Science of the Developing World and the Environmental Defense Fund (www.srmgi.org). A formal institutional home for the international coordination of ground-up activities within the international climate regime could be a valuable topic for discussion at Rio+20, particularly as such an initiative could contribute to mobilizing political momentum in targeted countries.

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AUTHOR BIOS

MANJANA MILKOREIT

Manjana Milkoreit is a Ph.D. candidate in global governance at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo, Ontario, and recipient of the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship. Manjana received a law degree from the University of Heidelberg (Germany) and graduated with a master's of public policy as a McCloy Scholar from the Harvard Kennedy School. Her research at Harvard focused on international relations, security studies (in particular nuclear non-proliferation), and leadership. Manjana's current research interests concern the nexus between climate change, energy and security. Her professional experience includes international organizations (UN, European Commission), the public and non-profit sectors (German Embassy in New Delhi, Leuphana University Lüneburg) and the private sector (McKinsey and Company, Freshfields).

JASON J. BLACKSTOCK

Jason J. Blackstock is a CIGI senior fellow for Energy and the Environment. With a unique background in physics, technology and international affairs, Jason is a leading international policy adviser and scholar on geoengineering and the interface between science and global governance institutions. A professional physicist by trade and graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School, he leads several international research projects that evaluate the scientific, political and global governance implications of climate change.

At CIGI, Jason leads research on a range of energy and environment issues, including: the potential climatic, political and social impact of geoengineering, the global implications of Arctic climate change and international research coordination and governance for sustainable energy systems. Jason is a frequent commentator on a broad range of energy, environment and security issues, and was the program co-chair of CIGI's 2010 fall conference, CIGI '10: Climate of Action, and lead organizer of a CIGI-sponsored event series at COP 15 in Copenhagen, International Governance of Geoengineering Research. He has also provided oral and written testimony to national inquiries and commissions, including the UK Parliamentary Committee on Science and Technology (January 2010) and the US National Commission on Energy Policy (February 2010).

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