## India's Engagement in Global Climate Negotiations from Rio to Paris\*

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Global efforts to address climate change through intergovernmental negotiations have been underway for nearly three decades. India has been an active player in this process. This chapter aims to provide an overview of India's engagement in these negotiations, what its principal motivations have been, and how its climate foreign policy behaviour over this entire period might best be explained.

The first section of the chapter charts the role that India played in the creation and defence of the international climate regime set up in the late 1980s and 1990s, characterized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol (KP). The second section covers the period following the entry into force of the KP in 2005 until the Durban Platform negotiations in 2011, including the 2009 Copenhagen Summit, when this regime came under considerable contestation and underwent

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significant transition. The third section covers India's engagement in the negotiations from 2011 up to the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015 and its entry into force thereafter, when, for many, the existing climate regime was dramatically altered and set on a new course. The final section attempts to explain some of the continuities and changes seen in India's engagement over these different periods.

# India's Role in Shaping the UNFCCC and KP: A Period of Regime Creation and Defence

The fact that India intended to play an active role in the international debate on climate change was clear from very early on. Following the passing of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 44/207 in 1989, that called on member states to urgently prepare a 'framework convention' to address this global problem, India wasted little time in articulating its views on the topic and building an effective Southern coalition on it.

At the 'Conference of Select Developing Countries on Global Environmental Issues' convened in New Delhi in April 1990—the first of its kind for developing countries—India succeeded in securing the general support of the developing world for its basic international positions on climate change. These were: first, the primary responsibility for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions causing the problem of climate change rested with the developed world since they were the ones responsible for producing the bulk of these emissions. Second, the emissions of developing countries were still very low and needed to grow to meet their future development and poverty reduction needs, and hence no GHG reduction targets could be prescribed for them. Third, any formal agreement on climate change needed to provide for technology transfer and funds for developing countries to help them address this challenge (Ministry of Environment and Forests [MoEF] 1990).

India also played a vital role in shaping the background conditions against which the convention negotiations were held. For example, the original draft of the *First Assessment Report* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had noted that both developed and developing countries had 'common responsibilities' on climate change. However, recognizing that what got agreed to here could

significantly impact the future commitments that countries would have to accept, India worked closely with other developing nations to ensure that this was amended to become the 'common but differentiated responsibilities' (CBDR) of industrialized and developing countries (Rajan 1997: 108). India also played a key role in ensuring that the convention negotiations were undertaken through an 'Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee' operating under the direct authority of the UNGA—to allow for 'openness, transparency, universality and legitimacy' and the 'full participation' of all states (World Meteorological Organization [WMO]/United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP] 1990: 10)—rather than through other specialized forums, such as UNEP or IPCC, which were being advocated by developed countries at that time.

Having helped create a level playing field, India then went on to play a major role in shaping the substance of the convention itself (see Chapter 8 in this volume). During the entire convention negotiations, India continued to emphasize, more specifically, that: (i) it had 'no legal responsibility' for addressing climate change; (ii) any voluntary mitigation measures that it took needed to be consistent with its national development plans and priorities; (iii) the 'full incremental costs involved' for the same would need to be provided through 'new and additional financial resources' from the developed world; and (iv) the latter would also need to provide developing countries with 'assured access to technology on preferential terms'. Making 'equity' and 'per capita convergence' a central plank of its negotiating stance, it asserted that '[a]n equitable solution can only be found on the basis of significant reductions in levels of per capita emissions of developed countries, so that over a period of years these converge with rising per capita emissions in developing countries' (Dasgupta 1994: 133).

Through a mix of strong Southern coalition building and the presence of significant divisions within the developed world, India was largely successful in securing its core positions in the convention negotiations. Although it was not able to get everything that it wanted (such as agreement on 'per capita convergence'; concrete emission reduction commitments from developed countries; and technology transfer on 'preferential' terms), it was nevertheless able to get its preferences on specific principles and provisions successfully

embedded within the core text of UNFCCC. Thus, the final text of the UNFCCC adopted at Rio in 1992 clearly acknowledged that 'the largest share of historical and current global emissions' originated in developed countries; that per capita emissions in developing countries were 'still relatively low' and their future share of global emissions would need to 'grow to meet their social and development needs'; that 'Parties should protect the climate system ... on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities' (CBDR&RC); and that '[a]ccordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change' (UNFCCC 1992: Preamble, Article 3.1). It also specifically called on developed countries to aim to return their GHG emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000 (Article 4.2a and b) and to provide developing countries with 'new and additional financial resources' to meet not only the 'agreed full incremental costs' of implementing climate mitigation and adaptation measures, including for technology transfer, but also the 'agreed full costs' of preparing their national communications and other reporting requirements (Article 4.3).

On India's insistence, the UNFCCC also confined its review function to conducting individual reviews of only the developed country commitments, while assessing the commitments and communications of developing countries in 'aggregated' terms (Article 10.2). Most importantly, from India's perspective, the UNFCCC explicitly recognized that 'economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of the developing country Parties' and that the extent to which developing countries would be able to effectively implement their commitments under the Convention would depend on the extent to which developed countries fulfilled their own commitments with regard to finance and technology transfer (Article 4.7). The Convention, moreover, created two clearly distinct categories of parties-Annex I and non-Annex I-within the basic architecture of the regime itself to recognize the differential obligations and treatment of developed and developing countries.

As the head of India's delegation in these negotiations, Ambassador Chandrashekhar Dasgupta later acknowledged, India's main objective was to ensure that the obligations imposed on developing countries

like itself were 'minimal' and that 'differentiation' was maintained between developed and developing countries 'in all areas'. Overall, his assessment was that the outcome of the convention negotiations was 'entirely satisfactory' from India's point of view (cited in Rajan 1997: 151–2).

Following the entry into force of the UNFCCC in 1994, the discussions quickly turned to reviewing the adequacy of the central commitment made under the Convention by Annex I parties (that is, developed countries) to stabilize their emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. At the first Conference of the Parties (COP 1) held in Berlin in 1995, a number of developed countries, however, attempted to shift the focus of this review by calling on the 'more advanced' developing countries to also take on mitigation commitments, and for the establishment of 'new categories' in the UNFCCC beyond the 'developed/developing' (Annex I/non-Annex I) divide (Oberthür and Ott 1999). This was one of the first manifestations of the concerted effort that developed countries would make over the next two decades to revise the fundamental structure of the UNFCCC regime that had been agreed to by all at Rio.

At COP 1, India used its coalition-building skills to considerable effect to ward off this Northern demand. At this point, both the European Union (EU), led by Germany, and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) were strongly in favour of developing a new protocol to the UNFCCC that would give greater teeth to the Convention by prescribing specific legally binding mitigation 'targets and timetables' for countries. This was, however, opposed by a US-led coalition that included Japan, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (JUSCANZ) and by members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Exploiting these differences, India convened a 'Green Group' of 72 like-minded developing states—including AOSIS but excluding OPEC—that jointly called for the development of a strong legally binding protocol but *without* any additional commitments for developing countries (Paterson 1996).

Leveraging the support of international climate non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who also advocated a strong protocol and were sympathetic to developing country concerns, India then impressed upon Germany and the EU that they had to choose

between either having a strong protocol or additional commitments for 'more advanced' developing states. Ultimately, the India-led coalition succeeded in winning over the EU to its side and in persuading the JUSCANZ group to drop its insistence on additional developing country commitments. Consequently, the 'Berlin Mandate', adopted at the end of COP 1, called for the development of a protocol with quantified emission reduction targets *only* for developed countries and explicitly noted that the process should 'not introduce any new commitments' for developing countries (UNFCCC 1995). This was a striking example of India's ability to engineer creative alliances and shape the climate negotiations to protect its own narrowly defined interests on this issue, which were to avoid any new obligations for developing countries and maintain the sharply differentiated architecture of the UNFCCC.

Following two years of intense negotiations, the KP to the UNFCCC was formally adopted at COP 3 in December 1997. Under this treaty, developed countries agreed to take on individual, quantified, legally binding emission reduction targets to reduce their collective emissions by 5 per cent below 1990 levels over the first commitment period of 2008–12 (UNFCCC 1997: Article 3.1). Although repeated attempts were made even during this phase to introduce the concept of 'voluntary commitments' for developing countries, India, in concert with other members of the G77 and especially China, managed to successfully fend these off. Its environment minister, for instance, highlighted at Kyoto that: 'India categorically rejects ideas suggesting any new commitments for developing countries. Any idea that seeks further to deprive us of our equitable entitlement to grow can never be allowed to take root' (cited in Agarwal, Narain, and Sharma 1999: 59).

The period between 1997 and 2001 largely focused on developing the various modalities and rules for operationalizing the KP, including for the flexible market-based mechanisms that had been negotiated within the treaty to assist developed countries to meet their mitigation targets.

One of these flexible mechanisms, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which allowed for developed countries to invest in specific emission reduction projects in developing countries and use the credits so generated to meet their own mitigation targets, was of particular interest to India. This was something that India had originally opposed, and accepted only very reluctantly at the end of COP 3, out of concerns that it was a Northern ploy to shift emission reduction obligations to the South on the cheap (Agarwal, Narain, and Sharma 1999). However, this was also one of the few issues on which India changed its mind during the post-Kyoto phase, sensing that the CDM offered a valuable opportunity for it to gain foreign investment and clean technology from the West. Indeed, India not only played an active role in designing the principles, rules, and institutions governing the CDM during this period but, together with China, also became a global leader in hosting CDM projects in the years that followed, with its private sector capturing a significant share of the global market on them (Newell and Bumpus 2012: 54).

This period of regime building came to an end when all the rules for implementing the KP were formally adopted in the form of the 'Marrakesh Accords' at COP 7 in 2001—and when the Protocol formally entered into force in 2005, just prior to COP 11 in Montreal.

#### From Montreal (2005) to Cancun (2010): A Period of **Regime Contestation and Transition**

Following the successful entry into force of the KP, discussions immediately turned to what would happen to the climate regime, post-2012, once the 'first commitment period' of the KP ended.

The ability of the KP to deliver meaningful change on the ground had already been called into question by the US decision not to ratify it in 2001 and the continually growing emissions of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries between 1990 and 2004—with most of them remaining far 'off track' their agreed mitigation targets (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] 2007: 54).

Developed countries, on their part, however, forcefully raised the issue of developing country participation again. Noting, for example, that China was projected to surpass the US as the world's largest GHG emitter in 2007 and India was projected to become the world's third-largest GHG emitter by 2015 (International Energy

Agency [IEA] 2007: 11), they argued that no long-term solution could be found without the active engagement of these fast-growing developing states. They furthermore asserted that anything they did to reduce their own emissions would simply be neutralized by the growing emissions of these emerging economic giants.

In order to resolve this stand-off, COP 11 launched a dual-track process to not only discuss the post-2012 'second commitment period' mitigation targets of Annex I parties that had ratified the KP (the KP track), but also a separate parallel 'dialogue' on 'longterm cooperative action' (the LCA track) to discuss the future commitments of those countries that had either refused to ratify the treaty (such as the US or Australia) or had no binding emission reduction obligations under it, that is, developing nations (UNFCCC 2006).

This was also a time when climate change began to be discussed not only within the multilateral UNFCCC framework but also in other politically important 'minilateral' forums—where traditional developing country coalitions held significantly lesser sway. For example, in June 2007, Germany invited the leaders of the five largest emerging economies (China, India, Brazil, South Africa, and Mexico) to attend the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm—in an enlarged G8+5 setting—and made climate change a key focus of its agenda.

At this G8+5 Summit, India's prime minister, Manmohan Singh, restated and defended the country's core positions on the topic. Noting India's low per capita (and even aggregate) emissions, he stressed that the time was 'not ripe for developing countries to take quantitative targets as these would be counter-productive on their development processes' (Singh 2007). However, in a significant show of flexibility, and emphasizing that India 'recognise[d] wholeheartedly' its 'responsibilities as a developing country', he also went on to unilaterally pledge that 'India's per-capita GHG emissions are not going to exceed those of developed countries even while pursuing policies of development and economic growth' (Singh 2007; emphasis added).

This was for the first time in the history of the climate talks that India had made such a voluntary offer to constrain its future potential emissions in any way. However, a careful reading of this pledge also clearly shows that it was as much a challenge to the developed world to reduce its own per capita emissions first, given the vast gap that existed in this regard. Moreover, it was also essentially consistent with India's long-standing position on 'per capita convergence', and hence did not reflect a major change in its international stance as such.

That India was unwilling to brook any dilution in the fundamental architecture of the UNFCCC was also made clear during the negotiation of the Bali Action Plan during COP 13 in December 2007. As this was a crucial document that aimed to set the terms for an 'agreed outcome' under the LCA track to be reached by COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009, India worked closely with other developing states to ensure that its content remained as consistent as possible with the framework and principles of the UNFCCC and KP (UNFCCC 2008). It particularly tried to ensure that a clear 'differentiation', or 'firewall', was maintained between what developed and developing countries would each be required to do on climate mitigation in the future—insisting, especially, that the latter was made contingent on the provision of external support from the former. Likewise, on the issue of international measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) of developing country mitigation efforts—a key Western concern—it ensured that such external scrutiny was contemplated only for those actions that were externally supported by the developed world, and not generally.

The two years that followed, between 2007 and 2009, remained essentially a period of North–South deadlock. Although the Indian government took a number of steps domestically at this time, which signalled the growing importance that it accorded to tackling this issue—including the launch of a National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in 2008 that outlined concrete measures across eight key areas to promote 'development objectives while also yielding co-benefits for addressing climate change effectively' (Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change [PMCCC] 2008; emphasis added)—its international positions remained largely unaltered.

However, the pressure on India and other major developing countries to accept a different sort of climate regime continued unabated. The first significant shifts in India's climate foreign policy were witnessed in July 2009, when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh—following the return to power of the United Progressive

Alliance (UPA) in the 2009 General Elections—signed the 'Major Economies Forum (MEF) Leaders Declaration on Energy and Climate' at a meeting held alongside the G8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy. This declaration specifically recognized, for the first time, that the rise in global temperature 'ought not to exceed 2 degrees C' and that the MEF countries would work together to identify a 'global goal' to reduce 'global emissions by 2050' (MEF 2009). Although only a political declaration, and not legally binding, India's signing on to this '2 degree C' temperature rise limit nevertheless signalled its willingness to concede, in theory at least, an implicit cap on its future emissions, even though this was left ambiguous and unstated (Ramachandran 2009).

The fact that India's political leadership was now willing to reconsider its international stance became further clear when Jairam Ramesh, the country's newly appointed environment minister, actively attempted to reframe India's traditional position on climate change in the months leading up to the Copenhagen Summit. Stressing repeatedly that India was highly vulnerable to climate change—and also that it needed to be seen internationally as 'a leader, as a proactive player, as somebody who is shaping the solution' on this issue—Ramesh argued that it was now in the country's own interest to go beyond its original 'per capita convergence' position and adopt a more aggressive 'percapita plus' approach, whereby specific 'performance targets' could be assigned through domestic legislation, or executive action, to key sectors of the country's economy (Ghosh 2009). He also suggested taking a more flexible stance on the question of allowing external reviews of India's domestic mitigation actions (Sethi 2009).

These new ideas provoked a great deal of domestic debate in the country, including within government, which saw strong concerns about the seemingly unilateral nature of these concessions being expressed by senior members of India's official climate negotiating team itself (TNN 2009). It also led to India's climate foreign policy being extensively debated within its Parliament. In the final parliamentary debate held just prior to COP 15, Environment Minister Ramesh declared that India would go to Copenhagen with a 'positive frame of mind' and was prepared to be 'flexible', but stressed there were three 'non-negotiables' that it would not compromise on: (i) it would not accept any 'legally binding emission reduction

cut'; (ii) it would not accept any 'peaking year'—a concept that had started emerging at this time; and (iii) it would not allow unsupported mitigation actions to be subject to the same type of scrutiny as those that were externally supported. However—in a clear shift of position from India's opposition to 'voluntary commitments' in the pre-Kyoto period and even from the prime minister's 2007 statement at Heiligendamm—Ramesh announced that India would voluntarily reduce the 'emissions intensity' of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 20–5 per cent by 2020 compared to its 2005 level through domestic mitigation actions, arguing that to do so would be in India's own best interests (Lok Sabha 2009). This was for the first time that India formally put forward a concrete numerical pledge in relation to climate mitigation on the table.

At COP 15 in Copenhagen, India coordinated extremely closely with a core group of similarly placed large developing nations (China, Brazil, and South Africa)—through the newly formed BASIC alliance—to jointly resist the mounting pressure that they now each came under from a largely unified US-led North. The latter insisted that the BASIC states not only accept stronger mitigation commitments but also that the KP, which they considered as fundamentally flawed, be replaced by a new, more 'undifferentiated' international agreement on climate change, where all major GHG emitters, developed and developing alike, would have similar mitigation obligations subject to similar levels of international scrutiny.

This Northern attempt to bypass the KP, and dilute the foundational norm of 'differentiation' that had been hardwired into the UNFCCC, was strongly opposed by the BASIC group and most other developing nations. It was in this intractable situation that the 'Copenhagen Accord' was uneasily born on the final night of COP 15, as a last-minute compromise between the BASIC countries and the US at their heads of state and government (HoSG) level. In the Accord negotiations, India worked actively to ensure that none of the three 'non-negotiables' that it had promised to its Parliament were fundamentally violated. It also played a key role in brokering agreement on the sensitive question of MRV by suggesting a less intrusive alternative of 'international consultations and analysis' to review the unsupported mitigation actions of developing countries (Chauhan 2010). The BASIC countries collectively also ensured that some of

the fundamental principles and provisions of the UNFCCC (such as 'CBDR&RC', 'equity', 'new and additional' finance, and recognition for the 'overriding priorities' of poverty eradication and development) were suitably acknowledged and referenced in the Accord. A 'differentiated' framework for recording the 'quantified economy-wide emissions targets' of developed countries and the 'nationally appropriate mitigation actions' of developing countries that both agreed to submit under the Accord was also ensured (UNFCCC 2010).

However, the inability of parties to realize an 'agreed outcome' at COP 15 as mandated by the 2007 Bali Action Plan-with the Copenhagen Accord only being 'take[n] note of' but not formally adopted-highlighted the deep political fissures that still existed between major developing and developed countries over what sort of international regime could deliver effective global action on climate change. While the former generally continued to insist on the implementation of a 'top-down', 'strictly differentiated', 'legally binding', 'targets and timetables'-based approach, exemplified by the UNFCCC and its KP, key developed states, especially the US, advocated a radically altered regime that would replace Kyoto with a 'more voluntary', 'less differentiated', 'bottom-up', 'pledge and review'-type system that would also require significant mitigation commitments and accountability from key developing countries.

Countries formally agreed to extend the 'dual-track' mode of negotiations—and the political understandings reached under the Copenhagen Accord (on restricting temperature rise to 2°C, registering and monitoring the mitigation commitments and actions of developed and developing countries, developed country commitments on finance, etc.) were successfully anchored within the Cancun Agreements at COP 16 the following year. But what became increasingly clear was that, notwithstanding the flexibility shown by countries such as India, the ancien régime was now under severe contestation and in a period of definite transition.

### From Durban (2011) to Paris (2015): A Period of Regime **Change and Acceptance**

The clearest evidence of which way the winds were blowing became apparent at COP 17 in Durban in 2011. Although India, represented

by a new environment minister, Jayanthi Natarajan, stressed that '[w]e cannot accept the principle of CBDR to be diluted. The firewall of CBDR must not be broken. Equity in the debate must be secured' (MoEF 2011), the final outcome of the conference could not be more different. Despite its entreaties, a decision was taken to terminate the 'dual-track' negotiations by the end of 2012 and to launch a singular new negotiating track in its place that called for the development of a 'protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention' by COP 21 in 2015, which would be 'applicable to all Parties' and be implemented from 2020 (UNFCCC 2012). Indeed, it was only through India's frenetic solitary efforts to avoid any 'universally applicable' legally binding instrument (a red line for it)—and its last-minute 'huddle' with the EU—that the third option of 'an agreed outcome with legal force' was even included in this mandate (Dubash and Rajamani 2015). However, what became amply clear was that, unlike the Bali mandate which had maintained a clear 'firewall' between developed and developing countries, this new 'Durban Platform for Enhanced Action'—despite India's voluble and repeated opposition—made no obvious distinction between developed and developing nations. Moreover, unlike the Copenhagen Accord and the Cancun Agreements, which had explicitly reaffirmed the core UNFCCC norms of 'equity' and 'CBDR&RC', the Durban Platform text made no reference whatsoever to either of these foundational regime principles (Sengupta 2012a). The Durban conference also revealed the extent to which Northern unity and growing fragmentation within the South, including in the BASIC group, now left India isolated and fighting its own corner. Although the KP continued to survive on paper, with developed countries agreeing at COP 18 in Doha the following year—on the insistence of the South—to a 'second commitment period' that would extend from 2012 to 2020, the fact that few industrialized states were willing to make any serious commitments under it underscored the extent to which the KP remained marginal to the process.

The period between 2012 and 2015 focused primarily on designing a new global climate agreement based on the new terms defined at Durban. At COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013, all parties to the UNFCCC were invited to voluntarily prepare and communicate their 'bottom-up' national-level pledges on climate action—or

Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)—in support of the 2015 agreement. COP 20, held in Lima in 2014, continued to develop the contours of this new agreement. At this juncture, a renewed pushback from the developing world, particularly from the BASIC group—and a newly created Southern alliance called the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), of which India was a core member—brought the issue of 'differentiation' back on the table, through their repeated insistence that the 2015 agreement had to remain fully consistent with the agreed provisions and principles of the UNFCCC regime, which, they stressed, could not undergo 'rewriting, revising or reinterpreting' (Kallbekken, Sælen, and Underdal 2014: 42).

The formal compromise that was ultimately agreed to on this in Lima was that the 2015 agreement would reflect the principle of CBDR&RC 'in light of different national circumstances' (UNFCCC 2015). In other words, no longer would the original Rio concept of 'differentiation'—as understood in terms of a strict divide between Annex I and non-Annex I party obligations and treatment—apply. Consequently, the Paris Agreement that was finally adopted at COP 21 in December 2015 incorporated the principle of differentiation within its text in a very different manner than had been originally conceptualized under the UNFCCC and its KP (see Chapter 12 in this volume). Intense negotiations, particularly by the BASIC and LMDC groups, throughout the months leading up to COP 21 ensured that ideas of 'equity' and 'differentiation' remained registered in different operational parts of this new treaty—and India played a key role in this process. Ultimately, the Paris Agreement agreed to at COP 21—with its nuanced and 'carefully calibrated mix of hard, soft and non-obligations' (Rajamani 2016: 337) and its 'sovereigntypreserving NDCs' (Dubash et al. 2018)—arguably took into account at least some of India's core concerns. Nevertheless, it represented a clear shift from the UNFCCC/KP framework in its much more symmetrical treatment of all parties, developed and developing alike, than had previously been the case, which India—ultimately in the end—was left with little choice but to acquiesce to.

Publicly, however, India—represented at COP 21 by a new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which had taken over the reins of the climate

negotiations in May 2014, following their victory in the 2014 General Elections—welcomed the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Indeed, just prior to COP 21, in October 2015, India communicated its own updated national pledge, or INDC, to the UNFCCC (see Chapter 19 in this volume). In this, India significantly enhanced its earlier pre-Copenhagen pledge of 2009, agreeing to reduce the 'emissions intensity' of its GDP by 33-5 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels (Government of India [GoI] 2015: 29). Moreover, India's INDC also included other specific time-bound targets to increase both the share of the country's national energy that would be derived from nonfossil fuel sources and its national tree and forest cover, among other measures. It, however, took care to note that its INDC did 'not bind it to any sector specific mitigation obligation or action' and that its successful implementation would be 'contingent upon an ambitious global agreement including additional means of implementation to be provided by developed country parties', in accordance with specific articles of the UNFCCC (GoI 2015: 30).

At COP 21 itself, Prime Minister Modi made active efforts to position India as a country that was fully aware of its global responsibilities on this issue. As a mark of its global commitment towards addressing climate change, the Modi government, in fact, also launched a new initiative together with France—the 'International Solar Alliance'—aimed at significantly expanding the global adoption of solar energy, especially across the tropics. This was in addition to the domestic decision that the Modi government had previously taken in June 2015: to increase India's national solar power generation capacity fivefold, from 20 GW to 100 GW by 2022, compared to the original goal that had been set in its NAPCC in 2008.

Following COP 21, India has continued to reiterate its political support for the Paris Agreement. This could be seen, for instance, through the remarkably rapid decision of the Indian government to officially ratify the Paris Agreement in October 2016, which subsequently successfully entered into force in November 2016. Likewise, India publicly also voiced its strong support for the Agreement in June 2017 after the Trump administration's announcement to withdraw the US from the treaty, with Prime Minister Modi asserting at a joint press conference with President Macron of France that the

'protection of the environment and the mother planet is an article of faith' (De Clercq 2017).

Nevertheless, in the technical negotiations that have followed since on the development of the Paris Agreement 'rulebook' that will make the treaty operational in 2020, Indian negotiators working together with the BASIC and LMDC groups have continued to seek ways to incorporate more traditional understandings on differentiation and conditionality of action within these emerging rules (LMDC 2017). Likewise, they have continued to raise the importance of enhanced developed country ambition and support, including on their climate finance commitments, in both the pre- and post-2020 periods, for ensuring the long-term success of the Paris Agreement (Table 7.1). What this suggests is that despite the new understandings that were ostensibly reached at Paris, the new regime remains fragile. Considerable differences of interpretation over what precisely was agreed to at Paris still exist among the negotiators. To what extent such ambiguity and contestation will affect progressive climate action remains to be seen.

**Table 7.1** Timeline of Key Events in Climate Change Negotiations

Year	International Events	Indian Events
1989	• UNGA Resolution 44/207 calls for 'framework convention'.	• MoEF constitutes 'Expert Advisory Committee' on global environmental issues.
1990	<ul> <li>IPCC First Assessment Report.</li> <li>Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) established.</li> </ul>	• India hosts 'Conference of Select Developing Countries on Global Environmental Issues'.
1991	<ul> <li>INC negotiations.</li> </ul>	• Economic crisis in India.
1992 1993	• UNFCCC signed at Rio.	<ul><li>India signs UNFCCC.</li><li>India ratifies UNFCCC.</li></ul>
1994	• UNFCCC enters into force.	
1995	<ul> <li>COP 1 adopts 'Berlin Mandate'.</li> <li>IPCC Second Assessment Report.</li> </ul>	
1997	• KP adopted at COP 3.	

**Table 7.1** (*cont'd*)

Year	International Events	Indian Events
2001	<ul> <li>IPCC <i>Third Assessment Report</i>.</li> <li>Marrakesh Accords adopted at COP 7.</li> </ul>	
2002	• COP 8 prioritizes 'climate adaptation'.	<ul><li>India ratifies KP.</li><li>India hosts COP 8 in Delhi.</li></ul>
2003		<ul> <li>India establishes National CDM Authority.</li> </ul>
2005	<ul> <li>KP enters into force.</li> <li>Ad Hoc Working Group on KP (AWG-KP) established at COP 11 to discuss 'second commitment period' targets.</li> <li>'Dialogue' launched at COP 11 on LCA.</li> </ul>	
2007	<ul> <li>G8+5 Summit at Heiligendamm, Germany.</li> <li>IPCC Fourth Assessment Report.</li> <li>Bali Action Plan adopted at COP 13.</li> <li>Ad Hoc Working Group on LCA (AWG-LCA) established at COP 13.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>PMCCC established.</li> <li>Prime minister's pledge at Heiligendamm.</li> </ul>
2008	• AWG-KP and AWG-LCA sessions at COP 14.	• National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
2009	<ul> <li>MEF Leaders Declaration at L'Aquila recognizes '2 degree C' limit.</li> <li>COP 15 'takes note of' Copenhagen Accord.</li> <li>AWG-KP and AWG-LCA mandates extended to COP 16.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>India signs MEF declaration.</li> <li>India announces voluntary 'emissions intensity' cut of 20–5% by 2020.</li> </ul>
2010	<ul> <li>'Cancun Agreements' adopted at COP 16.</li> <li>AWG-KP and AWG-LCA mandates extended to COP 17.</li> </ul>	• Planning Commission establishes Expert Group on 'low carbon economy'.

- 'Durban Platform for Enhanced Action' adopted at COP 17.
  - Ad Hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) established at COP 17.
- Doha Amendment to KP adopted at COP 18.
  - ADP sessions at COP 18.
- COP 19 invites parties to prepare and communicate INDCs.
- 2014 IPCC Fifth Assessment Report.
  - COP 20 reinterprets
     CBDR&RC as 'CBDR&RC
     in light of different
     national circumstances'
     (CBDR&RC-NC).
- Paris Agreement adopted at COP 21.
- India expands solar power goal fivefold.
- India communicates INDC pledging 'emissions intensity' cut of 33–5% by 2030.
- India launches 'International Solar Alliance' with France.
- 2016 Paris Agreement enters into force.
  - Ad Hoc Working Group on Paris Agreement (APA) established at COP 22 to negotiate Paris Agreement rulebook.
- Announcement of the US' withdrawal from Paris Agreement.
  - APA sessions at COP 23.

• India ratifies Paris Agreement.

 India reiterates support for Paris Agreement.

#### Explaining India's Behaviour in Global Climate Negotiations

As the world's second-most populous nation, a traditional developing country leader, an emerging global economic and political power, and a significant future emitter of GHGs, India has undoubtedly been one of the central players in international climate negotiations over the last three decades. How can its engagement, and varying impact and influence, in the negotiations over this period best be explained?

India's primary national purpose, since gaining independence after 200 years of colonial rule in 1947, has been to eradicate its deep-rooted poverty, achieve modernization and development through industrialization and economic growth, and regain what it considers as its 'rightful place' in the world (Gadgil and Guha 1992; Saran 2006).

There was an early realization within government that any international agreement to curb GHG emissions—which were intrinsically correlated to national energy use, economic growth, and development—could impinge upon these core national interests and hamper the country's future prospects. As Indian negotiators participating in the convention negotiations in the early 1990s acknowledged, the UNFCCC, to them, was not just an environmental treaty but rather a 'major multilateral economic agreement', in which '[t]he sharing of costs and benefits implied ... could significantly alter the *economic destinies* of individual countries' (Dasgupta 1994: 131; emphasis added).

This interest-based conceptualization of the international climate regime—and the desire to secure enough 'policy space' and 'carbon space' within it to ensure its future development—is what principally drove India's international behaviour on this issue over the years. Furthermore, this was coupled with an equally strong normative sentiment, based on notions of equity and justice, that tackling climate change was not the responsibility of developing countries like India as this was a problem caused primarily by the developed world.

#### Reasons for Continuity

The fact that India continued to resist any fundamental changes to the UNFCCC/KP regime that it managed to successfully negotiate

in the 1980s and 1990s, in the years that followed, may be attributed also to four additional factors (Sengupta 2012b; Vihma 2011).

First, even though a clear North-South bargain had been struck at Rio in 1992 on how to tackle climate change, there was little movement from the North to actually deliver on its promises, either in terms of reducing its own GHG emissions or in providing technology and finance to the South. On the contrary, the entire effort of the North, COP 1 onwards, seemed focused on undoing and revising the terms of the original Rio deal. In this situation, there was little reason for India to unilaterally change its foreign policy on this issue, especially now that it had international law on its side.

Second, for most of this period, there was a general domestic consensus within India (among government negotiators, political parties, environmental NGOs, business groups, scientists, and the media) that India's external position on climate change was legitimate and valid and did not require any changing. One of the striking features that illustrates this pan-national feeling is that even environmental NGOs that actively criticized the government's domestic environmental policies at home rallied to strongly defend its foreign policies on climate change abroad. For instance, the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a New Delhi-based environmental NGO, played a critical role in providing some of the most persuasive normative arguments used by the Indian government in the climate negotiations (see Chapter 5 in this volume), and in marshalling support for its positions among international climate NGO networks at key junctures.

A third reason for the long continuity seen in India's positions stemmed from the nature of the country's internal policymaking apparatus and process itself. Formulating India's external climate policy has traditionally been the preserve of a relatively small group of government officials and diplomats from the MoEF and Ministry of External Affairs, who believe that their core traditional positions are right, and have found little reason to change their worldviews and normative positions on this issue over time.

The fourth reason is the generally limited role that science and scientists, barring some exceptions, have played in determining India's official policies on climate change over the years. Notwithstanding the successive IPCC reports, economic and developmental considerations, and not environmental concerns or science, have been the predominant forces that have driven India's external thinking and policies on this issue. Moreover, given limited governmental capacity, the natural tendency of the Indian state and its bureaucracy has been to stick to existing orthodoxy, rather than venture out into new uncertain territory.

#### Reasons for Change

Yet, as the chapter has shown, there have also been significant changes seen in India's climate foreign policy, especially in the lead up to Copenhagen and Paris, even as it tried to simultaneously defend the old regime over this time. These changes can be attributed to at least six key factors.

First, the emergence of powerful new voices within India's policymaking bodies on climate change and, particularly, the internal shift in the balance of power between its political and bureaucratic leadership on this issue (Atteridge et al. 2012). As climate change began to feature more frequently at HoSG-level discussions, it received closer attention within higher echelons of government within India too. Also, the country's highest political leadership—cutting across party lines—was more willing than its bureaucrats to take political risks, and consider and accept options that extended well beyond India's traditional negotiating positions. This was exemplified prominently, for example, in the lead up to the 2009 Copenhagen Summit, in the policy shifts triggered by Environment Minister Ramesh—who expressed significantly differing worldviews, threat perceptions, and normative commitments on this issue than officials traditionally in charge of Indian climate policymaking (Michaelowa and Michaelowa 2012)—and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's implicit support. It was also equally seen in the more direct role that Prime Minister Modi himself played in making and approving the political judgement calls, trade-offs, and compromises that were observed in the lead up to, at, and following COP 21.

Second, India's understandings of what its core interests are on this topic have also evolved over time. Enabled, in part, by the growing scientific knowledge encapsulated in successive IPCC reports, there is more appreciation today, including among policymakers, of the country's intrinsic vulnerabilities on this issue—be it the potential impacts of climate change on India's monsoon-dependent agriculture, or its glacier-fed river systems, or its 7,500 kilometre-long coastline—and the need, therefore, for it to take and support early and ambitious global climate action in its own national interest (Thaker and Leiserowitz 2014).

Third, there is also a growing understanding that taking action on climate change does not necessarily have to come at the cost of development, but can be done in a way that yields other material 'co-benefits' for the country, whether in terms of improving local health by tackling household, vehicular, and industrial emissions, or enhancing the country's energy security by lowering dependence on fossil fuel imports and minimizing foreign exchange outflows for the same (Dubash 2013). Moreover, the recognition that cost-competitive alternative energy options based on renewables exist, and offer realistic 'leapfrogging' pathways as well as new business and growth opportunities for the country to achieve clean development, also fed into some of the changes seen in its external policies on this issue.

Fourth, domestic consensus on climate change within India is no longer as solid and unidimensional as it used to be (Dubash et al. 2018). Until the mid-2000s, the landscape of non-state actors working on this issue was dominated largely by institutions such as CSE and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), whose views were largely congruent with, and even helped to shape, India's traditional positions. Similarly, domestic business and industry groups such as the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) also tended to rally behind these positions, to the extent that they were engaged. In recent years, however, there has been a much greater proliferation of non-state actors domestically engaged on climate change, who represent a much wider variety of views (see Chapter 15 in this volume). Some of these groups—including those with strong transnational connections, such as Greenpeace India and others—have moreover been strongly critical of some of the core precepts that have underpinned India's traditional positions (Ananthapadmanabhan, Srinivas, and Gopal 2007; see Chapter 11 in this volume). Likewise,

new voices have also emerged within Indian industry, which have pointed to the growing business opportunities and advantages that could stem from taking greater and early action on climate change (Godrej and Steer 2016), thereby providing the societal context for India to consider more flexible alternative positions on climate change in recent years.

Fifth, growing international pressure on India also played a critical role in crystallizing the changes that were seen in India's climate foreign policy (Vihma 2011). This was not only the continual pressure that was brought upon it by the developed world but also, and perhaps more crucially, the 'peer pressure' that it came under from its traditional allies in the BASIC group (Sengupta 2012b). When these countries announced their voluntary mitigation pledges and submitted their INDCs in the lead up to COP 15 and COP 21, respectively, it eventually made it politically impossible for India not to follow suit. More generally, the desire to be viewed as a 'responsible member' of the international community—and avoid being isolated and blamed in the event of any failure in the global climate talks—was also a key explanatory factor behind the changes seen in India's positions.

Finally, the wider emergence of India as a powerful economic and political actor on the global stage, since its liberalization in 1991, also had an impact in driving the recent changes seen in its climate foreign policy, with its political leadership reappraising the necessity of pursuing an entirely defensive external strategy on this issue. This was aligned with a growing sentiment within powerful sections of India's political and policymaking establishment that a rising, more confident India should be more willing to shed its hard-line image as a 'naysayer' in international negotiations and assume a position of greater responsibility in all areas of global governance, including on climate change, that befitted its national aspirations for 'great power' status (Hurrell and Sengupta 2012). Furthermore, broader geopolitical changes in the international landscape at large also undoubtedly influenced India's thinking and policies on this issue. For instance, the enhanced importance that it attached to building a closer bilateral relationship with the US and the material and security benefits that it secured in return—such as the 2005 Indo-US nuclear deal-made India more willing to accept the US

and Western preferences on the global climate regime, rather than to simply pursue a line of unidimensional opposition to them.

What is clear from the aforementioned discussion is that although India was highly successful in shaping the original climate regime and defending it for a significant period thereafter, it found international climate negotiations harder to navigate in subsequent years. Growing unity within the developed world, accompanied by greater fragmentation within the developing world, created background conditions that were less favourable compared to what it had to face in the early years of the process. At the same time, however, more recently the international negotiations have opened up new spaces for India to substantively rethink its true national interests on this issue. As it engages in the post-Paris phase of the negotiations, India's challenge will be to sensibly balance the imperative of securing a fair international arrangement, on the one hand, while taking concrete domestic climate action, on the other—in a manner that minimizes the country's vulnerability and maximizes its prospects for national welfare, green growth, and smart development in a carbonconstrained world.

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