

21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) by Evie Plumb, Lancaster University BA Hons student, 2015

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WARNING: In preparing for the role play scenario, students must only research the conflict using reputable mainstream media sources, such as The BBC, CNN, ITN, The Guardian, The Times, The Independent, The Telegraph, etc. Briefing papers are provided to explain the broader context of the conflict.

Background and Context

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time. There is now almost undeniable evidence that patterns of global warming over the past two centuries have been predominantly caused by human activity. Through our heavy, and growing demand for water, agriculture, metals, oil and other minerals, humans have contributed to high levels of pollution in Earth's soils, oceans and atmosphere. This problem is only getting worse as the human population grows at an alarming rate. The major contributor to warming has been our burning of fossil fuels in every aspect of life. This is a process which releases carbon dioxide and other pollutants into the atmosphere and traps heat from the sun within the atmosphere which would otherwise have been re-released back into space. The consequences of this shift in one of Earth's natural processes include more violent and unpredictable weather patterns, droughts, flooding, the ability of many diseases, such as malaria, to spread much more easily, and rising sea levels, to name but a few.

Climate change is an issue that humans have been aware of for over 60 years. In that time there has been plenty of progress on understanding the issue and its possible effects on Earth and its inhabitants, but very little progress has been made on solving this pressing problem. With time running out to change the course of our rapidly deteriorating environment, world leaders and researchers have been collaborating to try to find a solution to the crisis.

The COP (Conference of the Parties) meetings have been happening for over twenty years now. At each gathering, experts, leaders and policy makers come together to try to create a global deal, an internationally reinforced promise, to try to combat the issue. However, this seems to be taking many attempts and lots of time as countries jostle to work out who is most responsible, who should pay for all the necessary changes, and even over whether human induced climate change is *real* or not.

Your task today will be to act out an international meeting to try to come up with a hypothetical solution to the climate change crisis. You will have to debate with leaders from other states and groups to try to get the best deal for your own state without hindering the international effort to combat the problem.

To simplify the process, each state or group has been allocated three possible pathways to choose from, each associated with a certain amount of emissions reductions, an economic cost and a number of 'points'. Ultimately, to keep emissions at a safe level the combined points of all groups must equal no more than 38. For each group, the first of these choices, "business as usual" (in other words - no changes made to the current way your group is run), is associated with your group's maximum number of points and no economic cost. The second of your choices represents efforts to reduce emissions and environmental impact to some degree and is associated with fewer points than option 1, but a higher cost. The third pathway offers the best environmental option, and is associated with the fewest points, but the costs will be the highest. For some states and groups, achieving option three would require financial assistance from another group so this is something that can be negotiated should you wish.

When considering your options, think about the setbacks that your group might encounter by choosing a particular pathway. These can include economic setbacks, immediate costs, slower development, job losses, restrictions on trade, weakened relations with other states, and the environmental, economic and security related risks of inaction. Within your groups, think about the different roles you would each like to take on. You could be a prime minister, a president, an economic advisor, a climate scientist, a diplomat, a lobbyist or many other roles.

Groups such as Greenpeace and Oil Producers Group may wish to sabotage and influence events in their favour through financial means, protests, media statements, bribes and other non-violent means. It is the role of the media to keep everyone up to date on the unfolding events. This can be done simply on a constantly updated PowerPoint on a projector or even on a whiteboard. You may wish to exchange mobile phone numbers within your group so that you can keep each other up to date on what is happening should you decide to split up to get more done in the time available.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this role play scenario is to improve understanding of the complexities involved in an international collaboration on tackling climate change and to develop a greater knowledge of the climate debate and where key actors stand, by:

- a) encouraging innovative thinking for solutions to the climate crisis,
- b) introducing new technical terms used in the science of climate change, in the political field, and within the UN,
- c) providing a platform through which students can practice negotiation, research and public speaking skills.

Preparation

The participants in the role play will prepare for an international Conference of the Parties, in an attempt to decide upon a hypothetical solution to the climate change crisis. Limited instruction will be provided as to the nature of the groups, with the onus lying on participants to develop their own understandings as they approach the event. Facilitators will discuss and help clarify these understandings during the research and preparation period in the role play as well as throughout the rest of the day. Participants will:

in advance of the event,

- a) conduct preliminary research into climate change and previous Conferences, preparing for their roles through engagement with media sources and briefing papers. This will involve utilising the supporting information and videos detailing basic climate science, UN procedure and the pathways for the various groups, as well as researching the climate history statistics and significant events for a group's allocated country.
- b) it may be helpful to research the other actors and groups that will be at the conference and what major issues may arise
- c) research and think about the possibly dynamics of the conference: which actors will help your cause and which may hinder your efforts

at the event,

- a) identify the interests, aims and objectives of their roles and the roles of others
- b) allocate roles within groups for individual participants (e.g. Environment Secretary, Ambassador, Chief Negotiator, Spokesperson Interviewer, Producer etc)
- c) co-ordinate within groups in developing a strategy to pursue those objectives
- d) engage with other groups to try to get the best deal for your own state without hindering the international effort to combat the problem, through communication and lobbying through whatever reasonable means are deemed appropriate
- e) prepare a summary of each group's position and the state of play between groups as they prepare for COP21

after the event,

- f) reflect upon the dynamics of interactions between actors involved in COP21

Important considerations

Injunctions or interventions will be made by the role play facilitators throughout the scenario. These will ensure that groups will have to think on their feet and respond to changing circumstances. The facilitators must decide if and when to use the injunctions.

Groups can make injunctions or interventions themselves, where realistic. All injunctions and interventions must be approved by the role play facilitators.

All injunctions or interventions intended for general consumption will be released by the Media team, but the actors making injunctions or interventions can make them in secret to specific

groups. It is up to the recipients of those secret injunctions or interventions as to whether they wish to reveal them to the Media, but the Media is entitled to try to uncover secrets.

The Media team will release information through printed sheets of paper that will be disseminated physically to the groups.

Key Actors and Pathways

There is the possibility for 14 groups within the role play, which can be divided up according to the number of participating students. The optimal number of participants is between 60 and 70, preferably with 5 students in each group.

It is possible for groups to operate with three or four members, but no fewer, as there will be insufficient numbers to sustain group activities, while it is difficult for all members of a group to participate fully if there are more than six in each group.

If there are too few students to allocate optimal numbers of students to each group, it is wise to reduce the number of groups. Start by withdrawing groups which are likely to have very similar interests to other groups.

China

1. Business as usual (10 points)
2. Reduce emissions 20% by 2050 (7 points)
 - a. Hydro-electric (HEP), wind, solar, nuclear, fossil fuels, subsidise electric cars and public transport (10% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 65% by 2050 (4 points)
 - a. HEP, wind, solar, high tax on meat, sustainable agriculture, high tax on aviation, nuclear, view to phase out fossil fuel use by 2080. Invest in developing nations' green technology and mitigation (30% GDP)

India

1. Business as usual (9 points)
2. Reduce emissions 25% by 2050 (5 points)
 - a. HEP, wind, solar, fossil fuels, subsidise domestic green technology, afforestation (15% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 50% by 2050 (3 points)
 - a. HEP, wind, solar, subsidise domestic and industrial green technology, afforestation, improve agricultural practices, improved public transport, education programs on how to reduce emissions in daily life, view to phase out fossil fuels by 2100 (35% GDP)

Brazil

1. Business as usual (9 points)

2. Reduce emissions 35% by 2050 (5 points)
 - a. HEP, wind, solar, regulate deforestation, improved public transport (20% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 55% by 2050 (3 points) Business as usual (8 points)
1. Reduce emissions 35% by 2050 (5 points)
 - a. Nuclear, solar, wind, invest in emissions reductions abroad, subsidise domestic building insulation, higher aviation tax (10% GDP)
2. Reduce emissions 60% by 2050 (3 points)
 - a. Nuclear, solar, wind, invest in emissions reductions abroad, stop Arctic exploration, higher aviation tax, afforestation, view to phase out fossil fuels by 2080, phase out coal production (30%)

USA

1. Business as usual (10 points)
2. Reduce emissions 35% by 2050 (7 points)
 - a. Solar, wind, higher aviation tax, higher car tax, afforestation, tighter agricultural regulation, tighter industrial regulation, nuclear power (10% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 55% by 2050 (4 points)

UK

1. Business as usual (6 points)
2. Reduce emissions 50% by 2050 (3 points)
 - a. Use fracking as a bridge fuel, increase nuclear energy production, increase aviation taxes, invest in emissions reductions abroad, solar subsidies, reduce coal production (15% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 80% by 2050 (2 points)
 - a. No fracking, solar investment, wind power, wave power research, increase recycling, eliminate coal production, aviation tax, public transport, invest in reductions outside the EU, afforestation, agricultural regulation (40% GDP)

Nigeria

1. Business as usual (5 points)
2. Reduce emissions 40% by 2050 (3 points)
 - a. International financial assistance, decrease corruption, solar power, water treatment, regulate oil producing companies (45% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 70% by 2050 (2 points)
 - a. International financial assistance, decrease corruption, solar power, water treatment, regulate oil producing companies, phase out Shell and all oil

extraction, clean up areas affected by Shell, restore wetlands, preserve desert, improve public health services, agricultural regulation (60% GDP)

Philippines

1. Business as usual (3 points)
2. Reduce emissions 35% by 2050 (2 points)
 - a. Build up flood defences, afforestation, request international assistance to develop geothermal energy production, agricultural regulation, industrial regulation (50% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 50% by 2050 (1 point)
 - a. Build up flood defences, afforestation, request international assistance to develop geothermal energy production, agricultural regulation, industrial regulation, citizens support fund, home building standards, phase out oil and gas extraction (75% GDP)

Bangladesh

1. Business as usual (3 points)
2. Reduce emissions 35% by 2050 (2 points)
 - a. Afforestation, industrial and agricultural regulation, improve public transport, HEP dam, family planning, housing laws to reduce new builds on low lying land (40% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions 50% by 2050 (1 point)
 - a. Afforestation, industrial and agricultural regulation, improve public transport, HEP dam, family planning, housing laws to reduce new builds on low lying land, coastal defences, wind power and solar (70% GDP)

Islands Group

1. Business as usual (3 points)
2. Reduce emissions by 30% by 2050 (2 points)
 - a. Require international financial aid, emergency plans, protected ocean areas, afforestation, recycle, reduce waste, solar (35% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions by 50% by 2050 (1 point)
 - a. Require international financial aid, coastal defences, emergency plans, cap number of tourists that can fly into archipelagos, protected ocean areas, afforestation, recycle, reduce waste, solar (55% GDP)

Saudi Arabia

1. Business as usual (7 points)
2. Reduce emissions by 30% by 2050 (4 points)

- a. Investments into solar energy, for export, cap annual oil production, protect coral reefs, afforestation, industrial regulation (10% GDP)
3. Reduce emissions by 80% by 2050 (1 point) Investments into solar energy, for export, phase out oil extraction by 2050, protect coral reefs, afforestation, industrial regulation (45% GDP)

Oil Producers Group

Greenpeace

Media

Resources

In advance of the event, you are asked briefly to look through relevant news sources to conduct some preliminary research on the topic. Enclosed below are some links to news stories on the topic. It is very important that you only read news from credible news agencies, such as the BBC, Guardian, Telegraph, Times, Independent, etc.

At the event, please bring with you your laptops for the purposes of research and communication.

You will be able to follow updates from the Media team through the main projector.

Overviews of Climate Change:

- *Climate Change video*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifrHogDujXw>
- *Background on COP*: <http://unfccc.int/bodies/body/6383.php>
- *Latest publication from IPCC* (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change): <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/index.shtml>

For each country specifically, some factors worth researching are:

China

- *Dams*: displacing thousands of people to make way for dams, for example the Three Gorges Dam
- *Nuclear*: the pros and cons
- *Smog*: major cities are struggling due to smog
- *Meat consumption*: environmental cost of rising demand for meat
- *Population*: success/failure of 1-child policy
- *Rising middle class*: straining the system with increasing demands for cars, meat, etc and a generally higher level of consumption

India

- *Economic inequality*: hindering sustainability efforts?
- *Sanitation*: would this problem get worse with climate change?
- *Agriculture*: prepared for the effects of climate change?
- *Rivers into Bangladesh*: <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2013/12/20/india-bangladesh-river-water-sharing-politics-cooperation/>
- *Nuclear*: pros and cons?
- *Population*: how to care for rising population?
- *Rising middle class*: strains system with rising demands for meat, cars, travel, consumer goods

Brazil

- *Dam collapse*: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/23/brazil-dam-collapse-mining-waste-reaches-ocean-rio-doce>
- *Deforestation*: is selling up rain forested land really worth the investment? Cattle ranching and palm oil are key reasons for deforestation

Russia

- *Nuclear*: pros and cons?
- *Permafrost*: melting permafrost in Russia could tip Earth's systems into disarray, <http://www.grida.no/publications/et/at/page/2545.aspx>
- *Arctic exploration*: responsibilities when exploring this fragile landscape
- *Oil*: allegations that Russia is buying oil from Daesh

USA

- *Deal with China*: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/25/us-china-joint-presidential-statement-climate-change>
- *Oil production*: producing own oil to reduce foreign dependence
- *Fracking*: is this practice safe?
- *Arctic exploration*: responsibilities when competing with others states for Arctic oil exploration in this fragile landscape
- *Ocean protection*: Obama's designated ocean protections zones

UK

- *Fracking*: is this practice safe?
- *EU*: European laws help UK move towards sustainability?
- *Nuclear*: pros and cons?

Nigeria

- *Shell's impact* on Nigerian land and people:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejym4mKelhM>
- Are issues with corruption hindering real progress?

Philippines

- *Vulnerable to natural disasters*, for example Typhoon Haiyan:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SSXLIZkM3E>
- *Deforestation*: pros and cons
- *Mudslides*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6oYNxE5oMQ>

Bangladesh

- *Excess himalayan melt water from Nepal & India worsening floods*
- *Low lying*: 20% landmass is less than 1m above sea level
- *Typhoons*: more intense and regular

Islands Group

- *Low lying*: very vulnerable to sea level rise
- *Dependence on tourism and fishing*: are both being done sustainably?
- *Aviation*: environmental cost of people flying in and out

Saudi Arabia

- *Economic dependence on oil*
- *Potential for solar energy use and production for export*

Key Facts Table

Group	GDP per capita (USD)	Major Exports	Major Imports	Climate Change risk level global rank	% of cumulative global emissions since 1850	population	inequality index (GINI coefficient)
China	6807	Electronics & textiles	Oil, iron, plastic, copper & soybeans	31st	7.6%	1.357 billion	0.42
India	1499	Petroleum, textiles, medical supplies, rice, car parts	petroleum, gold, electricals	16th	2.2%	1.252 billion	0.28
Brazil	11208	Iron, oil, soybeans, sugar, poultry	petroleum, electrical, cars, chemical products	82nd	0.8%	200 million	0.53
Russia	14612	Oil, gas, coal, steel, metals.	electricals, cars, medical supplies	21st	8.1%	144 million	0.40
US	53042	military equipment, petroleum, cars.	computers, petroleum, cars, medical supplies.	25th	29.3%	319 million	0.42
UK	41787	cars, petroleum, medical supplies	cars, petroleum, computers, medical supplies.	58th	6.3%	64 million	0.41
Nigeria	3006	petroleum, cocoa, ships	petroleum, cars, wheat, tobacco	125th	0.5%	174 million	0.40
Philippines	2765	computers, electricals	petroleum, cars, aviation vehicles	4th	0.2%	102 million	0.43
Bangladesh	958	textiles	petroleum, cotton	6th	0.1%	159 million	0.32
SIDS (small island developing states)	3699	fish, ships, metals	tug boats, petroleum, meat, rice	3rd - 180th (Haiti - Timor-Leste)	0.1%	730 million	0.41
Saudi Arabia	25962	petroleum, gas, polymers	cars, petroleum, gold, delivery trucks, medicines	119th	0.5%	29 million	0.32

Information for Facilitators:

Practical resources:

- Ideally be one large hall and several smaller rooms which groups can be based in after the students split up
 - The hall should be arranged with chairs positioned towards a focal point, so that speakers can deliver speeches in an effective way
- A television to display video clips and interviews produced by the media team
 - Alternatively, a projector and screen should be used
- The media should have access to a camera, electronics and recording devices
- All groups should have access to laptops or PCs
 - Ideally one laptop per team - these should be utilised to research online articles and access resources
- The facilitator will provide ‘runners’ who can take information to each room; interventions should happen fairly frequently during the negotiation/lobbying period and groups will need to react to developments in a timely manner

Instructions:

- Assign students to groups prior to arriving
- Assign groups to rooms/ spaces
- Distribute timetable, instructions and group briefing to students as they arrive
- Distribute interventions at the appropriate moments to the appropriate groups
- Encourage students to interact between groups
- Direct students to resources list when they need direction
- Group briefing of facilitators to ensure continuity, solidarity and mutual understanding
- Monitor progress of groups research and interactions - encourage students to negotiate with other groups to meet their aims
- Allow for creativity in negotiations but must also be realistic
- Ensure all group members are participating
- One facilitator to deliver opening speech acting as Ban Ki Moon. Speak about the climate crisis and the urgency for something to be done
- One facilitator to act as Chairman to time speeches and invite speakers to deliver their speeches in turn

Timeline:

This timeline is indicative. It can be amended according to needs and resources available.

1 week in advance of event: List of participants finalised by schools and groups allocated so as to enable participants to prepare for their allocated role and conduct basic research into the conflict.

A five hour timeframe enables adequate examination of the topic. A particular emphasis is placed on research, which is why a large time period is allocated to this stage.

9:30: Arrive at venue

9:40: Introduction and briefing of the event

9:45: Groups split and research – compile offers, demands & speech.

10:15: Opening speech (by facilitator) acting as Ban Ki Moon

10:20: Two minute timed speech by each country

This can be emotive: include details about your offer, your predicament, what you hope to achieve and how you think the 38 point maximum can and should be met.

This includes the Oil Group and Greenpeace.

Chairman times speeches and invites speakers to deliver their speeches in turn.

10:50: Break

11:00: Interactions Open

Bargaining on potential deals with other states/groups can begin, to try to get the overall points at 38 or below.

You may need financial help, or you may want to offer financial assistance to another group to help them choose a pathway with fewer points.

12:15: Break

13:00: Re-adjourn for mid-session plenary and Media broadcast.

13:15: Further deliberations.

This final half hour for interactions is when you can push for and finalise any deals you wish to strike with other groups.

13:45: Re-adjourn for the final deliberation - was the 38 points target reached?

Each country summarises the developments of the day in a two minute timed speech. Make sure that you state which pathway you chose and how many points that will add to the total.

14:15: Debrief - reflect on the complexities of coming to an agreement

14:30: End of session

The timeline is flexible. If the facilitators believe that the role play has reached a conclusion (such as a general agreement between major parties) in advance of the scheduled end, they can call an end to proceedings.