

## **Durban Deal Struck After Tense All-Night Session**

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China, India, Africa and the EU were at loggerheads on Friday night, pushing UN climate talks into extra time on Saturday as 194 countries attempted to reach a global deal to prevent dangerous global warming.

There were signs of movement on all sides, according to people in the talks in Durban, with compromises possible but no final breakthrough. Some long-standing rifts between the developing and developed countries, and between the EU and the US, appeared bridged.

A new text, seen by the Guardian, was introduced at midnight and went some way to easing the fears of developing countries that rich countries could wriggle out of their obligations.

Governments are wrangling over what form any future agreement on global warming should take, following a disappointingly weak agreement in Copenhagen in 2009 and slow progress at Cancun last year.

Also at stake in Durban was the future of the Kyoto protocol, the only existing legal treaty forcing rich countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. If the talks collapse, the protocol will be in effect dead after its current provisions expire at the end of next year.

Discord was in the air as some nations wanted to strengthen the proposals while others wanted to keep them vague. An early draft was slammed by China's chief negotiator, Su Wei, and by Seyni Nato, spokesman for the Africa group at the talks, who both said they feared it could mean the end of the Kyoto protocol.

Su told the Guardian: "The G77 [group of more than 100 developing countries] could not take this [proposal] as the basis for discussion. This is killing the Kyoto protocol. They want to finish the Kyoto protocol."

The EU on Friday night said it was committed to continuing the Kyoto protocol beyond 2012. However, as the price of this offer, it wanted China and other nations to agree a "roadmap" that would see negotiations begin immediately with a view to completing a new treaty by 2015 to come into force in 2020. The EU also wants any such new agreement to be legally binding, though other countries want a weaker commitment. The issue of whether emissions cuts should be legally binding or voluntary pledges has dogged these talks for at least a decade.

The text seen by the Guardian talked of a "legal instrument applicable to all parties", a phrase understood to be acceptable to the US and the EU, though it is weaker than a

"legally binding" commitment. But the text did not contain a deadline for countries to ratify any new agreement, a key concern in the earlier drafts.

EU member states, with a handful of allies including Norway and Switzerland, are the only developed countries prepared to carry on with the Kyoto protocol. The US has always rejected the 1997 pact, and Japan, Canada and Russia have declared they will not take on new emissions targets under the protocol beyond 2012.

From now until 2020, most of the world's governments – including all of the biggest emitters – are covered by their own national emissions-cutting targets, but these are voluntary and not legally binding, in the way the Kyoto protocol is. Many nations are concerned that this is too open to political meddling and allows countries to renege on their commitments – and that could harm the climate. They are pushing for the new post-2020 agreement to be legally binding.

The EU was confident it had the support of more than 120 countries, including major developing economies such as Brazil, South Africa, Argentina, many African countries and the world's least developed economies in pushing the deal through. However, under UN rules, every country must agree the text of any agreement for it to be passed. The talks are scheduled to resume on Saturday morning, with another day of negotiating in prospect.