

## **“iVolveremos! / we will return”: The state of play for the global climate justice movement**

**John Foran**

The warmest November ever recorded, worldwide. The strongest typhoon ever to hit land. The previously nonexistent Northwest Passage in the Arctic opened. The latest climate reports telling us that climate change is not coming, that it's already here. The data on global warming and severe climate impacts mount up inexorably.

Meanwhile at the nineteenth annual U.N. climate summit, the COP19 (Conference of the Parties) in Warsaw, Poland, between November 11 and 22, 2013, a lot happened but little was achieved. I was in Warsaw with my co-director Richard Widick of the International Institute of Climate Action and Theory (<http://www.iicat.org/>), and a team of five UC Santa Barbara students and alumni, calling ourselves the iicat [Climate Justice Project](#). Richard focused on filming interviews with some of the COP's more powerful players among the delegates, corporate lobbyists, and experts for a feature film about the struggle over the new global climate treaty to cut greenhouse gas emissions deeply enough to keep the planet below a temperature rise that would threaten a social catastrophe. The rest of us interviewed young activists and filmed demonstrations inside and outside the COP for another documentary project and a book of their voices.

A negotiator from the global South moved people to tears. Two climate scientists got very political. Negotiators for the more than 100-nation strong Group of 77 staged a walkout from one of the closed sessions in frustration with the global North's lack of ambition or generosity. Then global civil society matched this with the biggest walk-out of participants from a COP ever seen.

What does it all amount to? What is the state of play in the negotiations? What are the prospects that the global climate justice movement can pressure the nations into the kind of serious negotiations that will be required for the 2015 deadline of a binding climate treaty that takes into account the urgency of the science? This essay will explore these questions as it charts some of the high and low points of the Warsaw COP, including the situation leading up to it, and the prospects for a stronger global climate justice movement going forward.

### **The run-up**

In late September the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a “Summary for Policymakers” derived from its much-anticipated Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). Its findings are as definitive as science can be: “Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have

diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased” ([IPCC 2013](#)).

The report goes on to conclude in the measured tones that characterize IPCC reports but which nevertheless state the deadly facts:

Human influence has been detected in warming of the atmosphere and the ocean, in changes in the global water cycle, in reductions in snow and ice, in global mean sea level rise, and in changes in some climate extremes. This evidence for human influence has grown since AR4 [the Fourth Assessment Report, issued in 2007]. It is *extremely likely* [emphasis added] that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century....

Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system. Limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC 2013).

Meanwhile, on June 25, 2013, in the steamy heat of Washington, D.C., Barack Obama unveiled his administration’s new climate action plan (Executive Office of the President 2013), stating “The question now is whether we will have the courage to act before it’s too late. And how we answer will have a profound impact on the world we leave behind not just for you but for your children and your grandchildren” (Chemnick 2013).

He also proclaimed “We’ve got a vital role to play. We can’t stand on the sidelines.” The Obama climate plan rests on a combination of enforcing existing or enacting new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations for emissions from new and existing power plants, new federal government targets mandating energy efficiency and renewable energy, and a variety of lesser measures. Interestingly, and to its credit, the United States has registered an 11 percent drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since the peak year of 2007; the country is now about on par with its 1990 levels ([Adams 2013](#)). While bold compared to the lack of ambition on climate in his first term, Obama’s plan is far from the breakthrough needed at the COP, despite praise for it from the U.S. climate negotiator Todd Stern, who said the president’s plan would help him in his work, because it demonstrated U.S. seriousness on the issue.

“The more that they see that the United States is acting with vigor and determination, the more credibility and leverage we have internationally, there’s no question about that,” Stern said, adding that negotiators from other countries had already responded to the comments Obama has made on climate change since his re-election in 2012. “Any sign – and this certainly is – of strong presidential action and strong leadership on this issue [has] a very positive effect and translates into a boost for our credibility” (Chemnick 2013).

In the days after Typhoon Haiyan’s devastation of the Philippines, Walden Bello, a member of the Philippine House of Representatives and a board member of Greenpeace International, wrote in *The Nation*:

For a time earlier this year, it appeared that Hurricane Sandy would bring climate change to the forefront of President Obama's agenda. It did not. While trumpeting that he was directing federal agencies to force power plants to cut carbon emissions and encourage movement toward clean-energy sources, Obama will not change the US policy of nonadherence to the Kyoto Protocol, which Washington never ratified. Although 67 percent of Americans believe in climate change, Obama does not have the courage to challenge the fanatical climate skeptics in the Republican Party and the business establishment.

Washington's military-led relief effort in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan should not obscure its fundamental irresponsibility regarding climate change, not only when it comes to curbing emissions but also on the matter of aid to developing countries suffering the consequences of the carbon-intensive economies of the developed world. Large-scale compensation is out of the question, says State Department envoy Todd Stern, who also said at a London seminar in October that "lectures about compensation, reparations and the like will produce nothing but antipathy among developed country policy-makers and their publics" ([Bello 2013](#)).

Or, as Bill McKibben ([2013](#)) recently put it, under Obama, the United States has become a "global-warming machine."

Elsewhere, the national-level political news was not good for the planet. In Australia, the Labour Party that had instituted a successful if not universally popular carbon tax was ousted from power in favor of a climate-denying prime minister who professes to believe that climate change is not real (much like the majority of elected Republican Party congresspeople in the United States). The new prime minister, Tony Abbott, considers the science "absolute crap" and called his predecessor's legislation of a carbon tax a "so-called market in the non-delivery of an invisible substance to no-one" ([Boer 2013](#)), saying it was "basically socialism masquerading as environmentalism, and that's why it's going to get abolished" ([Weymouth 2013](#)).

Citing the country's retreat from nuclear power following the 2011 Fukushima meltdown, Japan's new government announced it was reneging on its previous Kyoto Protocol greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 25 percent under 1990 levels by 2020. Japan is now going for a target of *increasing* emissions by three percent by 2020!

In the Maldives, climate justice hero Mohamed Nasheed, the "Island President" ([2012](#)) who had spurred delegates to take action at the Copenhagen, Cancún, and Durban COPs, was denied the election in a hard-fought and dirty campaign, removing one of the most eloquent and prestigious voices for a strong treaty from the crucial COPs that remain in this decade ([Foran and Gray 2013](#)).

Canada's Harper administration dragged the country's reputation further into the mud with its all-out extraction frenzy in the Alberta tar sands fields, a dystopian dead zone of pollution and climate wreckage.

China's industrial growth continued apace, pushing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to a global annual record, while its citizens choked on the pollution its development entailed. In fairness, 2013 was perhaps the year when both the Chinese citizenry and government said they had had enough and that strong measures are now needed to rein in the "economic externalities" caused by China's rise in the global economy. Chinese solar production, for both domestic and international markets, remained the strongest in the world, an achievement deplored by both the United States and the World Trade Organization on the grounds that it was the result of "unfair trade practices."

Even the European Union's climate champion, Germany, which pulled off the miracle of generating one-half of its electricity from renewable sources on one fine summer's day, saw its emissions rise as lignite coal picked up the slack caused by phasing out nuclear power.

Host Poland, for its part, retained the dirtiest, coal-fired electrical grid in all of Europe, and arranged for the World Coal Association to hold its annual summit during the two-week long COP, while the COP itself was underwritten and sponsored by fossil fuel corporations like Lotos (whose brand was stitched into the handsome shoulder bag given freely to all inside the COP) and emissions-leading countries and industries such as Emirates airline, whose logo graced the comfy beanbag cushions that weary participants slept or worked on as the COP went into its second week.

So the outlook going into Warsaw was not bright, although the scientists had clearly indicated that this COP had to start to reverse some of these trends, or else the strain put on the planet's climate and its people would sooner rather than later become too much to bear.

## **Plenaries, side events and climate trains**

### **An opening plenary to remember**

The motto for this COP, chosen by the host country, was "I care." Beata Jaczewska, Poland's head negotiator, picked up the phrase for her remarks at the Opening Plenary on Monday, November 11: "I care for the Earth. I care for climate. I care for the outcome of this negotiating process, of this conference. I care for the future. I care. Do you care?" The plenary featured the usual statements of welcome, a heartwarming and polished video of young children in a Kiribati village named "Poland," and grand speeches full of promise. The problem, of course, is that most countries, including China (regularly) and the United States (sometimes) say the right things, but none of the big emitters actually does anything courageous in the negotiations. The COP itself can be seen as a terrain of struggle, with the progressive nations locked in mortal combat with the vested interests of the wealthy North and the developmental ambitions of the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

Then, in the middle of the proceedings, something new happened, providing the first sign that the world might not stand idly by while the COP took only baby steps in the negotiations. The chief delegate from the Philippines, Naderev “Yeb” Saño, addressed the assembled nations with these words ([video](#) at IISD 2013):

To anyone who continues to deny the reality that is climate change, I dare you to get off your ivory tower and away from the comfort of your armchair. I dare you to go to the islands of the Pacific, the islands of the Caribbean and the islands of the Indian Ocean and see the impacts of rising sea levels, to the mountainous regions of the Himalayas and the Andes to see communities confronting glacial floods, to the Arctic where communities grapple with the fast dwindling polar ice caps, to the large deltas of the Mekong, the Ganges, the Amazon, and the Nile where lives and livelihoods are drowned, to the hills of Central America that confronts similar monstrous hurricanes, to the vast savannas of Africa where climate change has likewise become a matter of life and death as food and water become scarce. Not to forget the massive hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the eastern seaboard of North America. And if that is not enough, you may want to pay a visit to the Philippines right now....

What my country is going through as a result of this extreme climate event is madness. The climate crisis is madness....

It is the 19th COP, but we might as well stop counting, because my country refuses to accept that a COP30 or a COP40 will be needed to solve climate change. And because it seems that despite the significant gains we have had since the UNFCCC was born, 20 years hence we continue to fail in fulfilling the ultimate objective of the Convention. Now, we find ourselves in a situation where we have to ask ourselves – can we ever attain the objective set out in Article 2 – which is to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system? By failing to meet the objectives of the Convention, we may have ratified the doom of vulnerable countries.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture and the situation is such that even the most ambitious emissions reductions by developed countries, who should have been taking the lead in combating climate change in the past two decades, will not be enough to avert the crisis. It is now too late, too late to talk about the world being able to rely on Annex I countries to solve the climate crisis. We have entered a new era that demands global solidarity in order to fight climate change and ensure that pursuit of sustainable human development remains at the fore of the global community’s efforts. This is why means of implementation for developing countries is ever more crucial....

We cannot sit and stay helpless staring at this international climate stalemate. It is now time to take action. We need an emergency climate pathway....

This process under the UNFCCC has been called many names. It has been called a farce. It has been called an annual carbon-intensive gathering of useless frequent flyers. It has been called many names. But it has also been called the Project to save the Planet. It has been called “saving tomorrow today.” We can fix this. We can stop this madness. Right now. Right here, in the middle of this football field.

I call on you to lead us. And let Poland be forever known as the place we truly cared to stop this madness. Can humanity rise to the occasion? I still believe we can ([Saño 2013](#)).

Saño's speech moved people to tears in the overflow hall where I sat. There was nothing to match its power and import in the last two COPs in Durban and Doha which I attended. Saño's words drew up a glaring contrast, often noted by its critics, between the official COP where middle-aged men (mostly) in suits show up year after year to fumble their mandate to do something historically meaningful, and what we might call "The People's COP," the efforts of global civil society to inject reality and creativity into the discussions. In a telling sign of the UNFCCC's increasingly hard-line instincts to stifle strong civil society input, Executive Secretary Cristiana Figueres issued a five-year ban to three young activists who had gone into the Plenary with banners of solidarity to escort Mr. Saño out of the hall. This formed part of a wider pattern of exclusion and dismissal of civil society, which had already taken the form of severely restricting the size of civil society delegations, and would be followed by the Executive Secretary's appearance at the World Coal Association summit a week later as a keynote speaker. Figueres would leave Warsaw with her reputation severely damaged in the eyes of a wide swath of civil society.

### **Radical scientists at the side events**

While the negotiators dithered and dined, civil society took up its responsibilities as best it could. At the formal side events, there was the usual small-scale thinking and self-promotion by the countries and corporate greenwashers, but there were also some bright exceptions. There was a lively forum on the 350.org-inspired fossil fuel divestment movement that swept U.S. universities in 2013 and was moving into other Northern countries, most notably the United Kingdom, as the 2013-14 academic year opened. Young representatives from the global South effectively got across the point that in most of their countries such a campaign would have little traction, unless coupled with one based on truly adequate sustainable development funds and technology for their countries' efforts to adapt to climate change and extreme weather catastrophes.

Kevin Anderson and Alice Bowes, climate scientists at the Tyndall Centre in Manchester, England, did what more scientists need to do: they not only analyzed the climate problem, they used their knowledge to confront the political problem that lies beneath it, a vision already signalled in the subtitle to their well-attended side event: "Global Carbon Budget 2013: rising emissions and a radical plan for 2 degrees." They gave a sobering presentation of the numbers: we have an atmospheric carbon budget remaining of about 1,000 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> for a 66 percent chance of staying under two degrees Celsius (the upper limit agreed by the COP, although itself quite possibly too high for humanity). The world is putting up about 35 gigatons a year right now, annual

emissions rose 3.5 percent per annum for the ten years before 2008, and despite the recession, have continued to rise 2-3 percent every year since. Then they got down to the policy implications of our predicament:

- Avoid 4 degrees at all cost
- The global North needs to cut 70 percent of our emissions over the next decade
- Only the richest several percent of the world population need do radical mitigation
- Market solutions won't achieve any of this

As they noted, “we’re not short of capital, just the initiative and courage.” Even more stunning are the political implications that Anderson drew just before the Warsaw COP: “Today, after two decades of bluff and lies, the remaining 2°C budget demands revolutionary change to the political and economic hegemony” ([Clarke 2014](#)). Anderson said in another interview during COP19: “I’m really stunned there is no sense of urgency here,” pointing out that what’s needed is leadership, courage, innovative thinking, engaged people, and difficult choices ([Leahy 2013](#)). And who’s providing all this at the moment? The question hung pregnant in a room filled with seasoned climate justice advocates.

### **Riding the Climate Train**

Some of the people who do possess these virtues were on the “Climate Train” that was organized by European activists to bring undelegated reinforcements into Warsaw overnight on Friday, November 15 for the big global day of action march the next day. Chris Williams, a U.S. eco-socialist who rode the train, provided my group with a lively personal account of the heady atmosphere as people debated and shared stories all night, celebrating (with beer) their movement’s vitality, decorating themselves with face paint and making placards for the march:

Over the course of the 18-hour train ride, a glimpse was offered of the kind of positive alternative that exists, if people can build the movement for climate justice more widely.

Each carriage was organized by different environmental and left-wing groups, with two stewards appointed to each. While organizers had hoped for 500 passengers, more than 750 rode the climate justice train to Warsaw. Each carriage was adorned with banners, flags and posters proclaiming the politics of different groups; even the toilet doors had polite multilingual handmade signs detailing appropriate and considerate usage. Nutritious food was provided and served from a food car taken over and run by dedicated activists; drinks and food were served throughout by Oxfam and a local organic brewery. All train announcements were made in three languages, and a train carriage was set aside as a “debate car.”

He continued:

This proved entirely superfluous, because debates and discussions raged the length and breadth of the train, long into the early hours of the morning: about how to build the movement, what position to take on different issues, what could be expected from the climate talks in Warsaw and how the demonstrations might affect them. The hopeful, energetic and tremendously inspiring atmosphere couldn't have been more different to the pall of futility enveloping the official COP19 talks at the stadium in Warsaw. The train ambience was multinational and multicultural in the best sense of those terms, comradely and with a vivacious spirit and energy that was infectious as people shared thoughts, food and stories ([Williams 2013](#)).



*French research chemist, after face painting, contemplates the journey ahead. Photo and caption by Chris Williams.*

### **Movements: Climate Justice Youth Continue to Step Up**

The mood of the next day's march, though held under a gloomy November sky, was anything but somber. Several thousand activists from all continents paraded down one of Warsaw's main boulevards from the Soviet-era Palace of Culture over the Vistula River to the National Stadium, where the COP was being held. They chanted, sang, and testified in support of real system change to solve the climate crisis. A clown brigade tailed the heavily-armored police who lined the route and accompanied the march, disarming them with their antics, hugs, and kisses. The march ended in the dark at a nearby amphitheatre where speeches were made pledging mutual solidarity between the global labor and climate justice movements (there are some hopeful recent developments in this respect discussed at the end of this essay). Then we melted into the night, some to attend the traditional wild NGO party in downtown Warsaw, others,



such as myself, left to process the depressing news that Nasheed's bid for president in the Maldives had fallen short by less than two percent of the vote that very afternoon.

The people we talked with offered some amazing stories. There was Hamzat Lawal from Nigeria, who arrived at the COP to find that his country's most experienced negotiators were inexplicably absent in the first week. This prompted him to write an open letter to the country's president, and to our (and his) surprise, the negotiators suddenly arrived for week two.

We met Silje Lundberg, chair of Young Friends of the Earth Norway, an organization with 6,500 members, who has been a climate activist since the age of twelve. Literally a force of nature, Silje seemed to be everywhere, speaking at press conferences (including the one we organized with young climate activists, [IICAT 2013](#)), side events, and after actions.

We also listened to the life story of Surya Karkat, a student at the College of the Atlantic in Maine and member of the dynamic and creative Earth in Brackets organization (<http://www.earthinbrackets.org/>), who told us how he and five friends had started first one, then three schools in Nepal, his home country, dedicated to the holistic education of their students that fosters an appreciation of their environment and the threat posed to it by climate change. Earth in Brackets, it was explained to me, chose their name to reflect on the fact that the most promising proposals for treaty text at the COPs are put in brackets while they are being negotiated, and at the end of the day, most are dropped when there is no consensus in their favor.

David Gawith, a New Zealand youth activist, told us how he helped start up Connected Voices (<http://connected-voices.org/our-history/>), a project that brings into the COP the words of young people on the front lines of climate change who don't have the resources to be there in person, especially those from island states like Kiribati, Palau, Tonga, Samoa, Tokelau, Nauru, the Solomon Islands and the Marshall Islands. From a small class project, in two years, the organization has grown into a flourishing global group engaged in this valuable justice work.

One of the more spectacular "actions" of COP19 took place on the UNFCCC-designated "Gender Day" when a group of young Latin American women (and one North American, Natasha Weidner of our iicat team) danced their way through the corridors in an attempt to "Sexify" the COP by drawing attention to the rigid formality of the negotiations, their dull maleness, and jaded delegates, making a joyful comment on the lack of any serious consideration of gender inside the negotiations (the same can be said for youth and for communities marginalized by poverty, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and excluded voices in general). The action was videotaped, and ended with the statement "Equity is Hotter than Climate Change," leaving viewers to ponder for themselves this provocative and controversial intervention.

Emily Williams, a recent graduate of UC Santa Barbara and another member of our team, became very involved with the UNFCCC youth constituency

YOUNGO. One of the working groups was trying to foreground the issue of “Intergenerational Equity” or “Inteq” – the heartbreaking realization that these negotiations must take note of a fundamental constituency, the world’s young people, and the billions who will come after most of the negotiators have passed from the scene. Emily recounted a meeting the group had scheduled with the U.S. State Department envoy Trigg Tally, whom they caught coming out a meeting on his way to another meeting. They made him stop for the time it took him to eat a sandwich and explained the importance of the concept, asking that he at least not block its inclusion in a final text. When delegates from the global South in fact did broach the idea in the next meeting, the U.S. was able to say they knew about it and found it “interesting.” Indeed, one of the final documents approved in Warsaw made reference to “future generations,” the first mention ([Hopkins 2013](#)) of the concept since the creation of the Convention did so under Article 3.1 back in 1992. Of such (well-planned) chance encounters the seeds of the unforeseeable may sometimes grow.

Each COP is preceded by a COY, a Conference of Youth, at which youth attending the COP, along with young activists who are not delegated to enter the COP, spend three days getting to know each other in workshops, trainings, and pre-COP organizing work. Many of the connections made will be taken forward in the two weeks of the COP, and later as activists return home, now friends with like-minded people in different parts of the world, able to stay in touch through social media to strengthen their ties and build stronger global movements. Another member of our team, Ben Liddie, put on a workshop that showed people how to make colorful cloth patches with political message [see one at <http://www.climatejusticeproject.com>].

But there were also points of tension in the youth movement over such issues as whether to work for climate justice within the COP or protest its inability to deliver a fair and ambitious treaty – no surprise when people from so many places and viewpoints gather together, most of them for the first time. Overlaid on these competing perspectives are tensions between activists and organizations from the global North and global South (though even groups from the same country or region can have very different analyses and aims). These tensions mirror the inequalities found in the U.N. negotiations themselves, yet tend to be dealt with markedly better by the movements than the countries. One angle of thinking about these divides is between the more privileged groups from the global North who have access to resources to attend the COP, and those from the global South, who may not, inevitably leading to less diversity inside YOUNGO (one imagines that this playing field will be somewhat more level this December at COP20 in Lima, Peru). Luke Kemp, a researcher with the Australian National University and Coordinator of the Inteq Group, told me that another key debate surrounds the question, “What is the aim and function of YOUNGO? Are we supposed to be simply a meeting place for diverse youth groups to meet, share ideas and discuss (a kind of mini-UNFCCC of sorts), or are we supposed to be something greater, an integrated body for youth that can effectively participate in and influence the international political process?”

The divisions inside the movement between “radicals” and “reformers” constitute a debate between those who believe that the climate crisis can be addressed within capitalism and those who conclude that managing the crisis will require societies to go beyond capitalism into something else. Another important debate focuses on critical tactics for dealing with the climate crisis. Some young activists are eager to dialogue directly (when this is possible) with their own country delegations to influence negotiating positions, while others hope to move delegates through actions designed to point out their biases and limitations. Still others show up primarily to build a radical, even anti-capitalist, oppositional global movement that sees no avenue for change through the COP process. The Canadian Youth Delegation, for example, who were very active at the Durban and Doha COPs in 2011 and 2012, opted not to sink precious time and resources into attending COP19 and instead to stay focused on pressing climate justice work in Canada.

Our film shows how much better the movement is than the Parties to the Convention at working together, making progress, foregrounding the science, representing civil society and future generations, fighting for a just treaty, and so forth. (filmed by Summer Gray and viewable at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbtdXFeEUXk>).

These differences can come into play in YOUNGO, which operates by consensus, and which requires the agreement of all for its actions and statements at the COP. Lots of energy can be expended trying to navigate the dilemmas that arise, as both moderates and radicals see their initiatives watered down in order to achieve consensus, with proposals blocked by one group as too radical or by another for not being radical enough (“radical” in this context, or in any context, for that matter, has diverse and nuanced meanings, and though I consider myself a radical when it comes to climate and social justice, I feel it is important to work constructively with everyone and to be equally critical of oneself as well). Relations between the youth climate justice movement and the “elders” of the more established climate justice movement are another point of division for analysis. These tensions played out to some degree in the walkout by civil society delegates that was the political culmination of the Warsaw talks, and are complicated by the more general question of what happens to these activists after they are no longer “youth.” How does their gradual entry, year by year, into the larger movement, shape that movement?

As these tensions came to a head in the first week of the COP, an extraordinary meeting was organized for the middle Sunday, when the COP itself is not in session, for people to air their differences. As a 58 year-old college professor, I was not in attendance, but I know that the discussion went on for more than seven hours, and I note that the youth movement’s willingness and desire to confront such differences and come out stronger is vastly superior to that of their elders in the national delegations. For this movement to actually advance, it is crucial that these barriers be overcome, yet I am left with little doubt that almost everyone in the movement is aware of this and willing to try.

## **The walkout and the convergence space**

Youth activists engaged in many creative, hard-hitting symbolic actions in Warsaw. There was an auctioning off of the climate to well-dressed corporate and financial bidders. There was a passing the hat skit where activists dressed up as negotiators came up with small change for the Green Climate Fund, and where one iicat team member tore up a dollar bill to give half of it to the fund. There was the Red Dot campaign of those fasting in solidarity with Yeb Saño, who said he would maintain his fast until something meaningful was accomplished on the issue of Loss and Damage from climate-driven extreme weather events.

A humorous button-driven campaign called “WTF – Where’s the Finance?” that gave out colorful buttons that summed up the feelings of many toward this COP. And there was the tug-of-war staged between civil society delegates and corporate lobbies, as Earth in Brackets’ Nathan Thanki (2013) explains in his excellent assessment of the COP19 actions, “Designing for Activism,” with the rope representing “the climate (what this fight is about).”

There was also a major protest on Monday, November 18 outside the meetings of the World Coal Association where the crowd loudly expressed their outrage at the bald-faced hypocrisy of the Polish government’s energy policies (although large numbers of the Polish people – as much as 80 percent – want action on climate change, Brockley 2013) and the presence of UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres as keynote speaker. Figueres told the summit: “Let me be clear from the outset that my joining you today is neither a tacit approval of coal use, nor a call for the immediate disappearance of coal. But I am here to say that coal must change rapidly and dramatically for everyone’s sake.” A group of scientists held a press conference to debunk the notions of “clean coal,” carbon capture and storage, or a sustainable future based on fossil fuels: “Avoiding dangerous climate change requires that the majority of fossil fuel reserves need to stay underground.... Current trends in coal use are harbouring catastrophic climate change” (Davidson et al. 2013)

The movement also had messages for the coal summit. The German green group Urgewald, along with the Polish Green Network, BankTrack and CEE Bankwatch Network (2013) released a report, *Banking on Coal*, that documents how “American, Chinese and British banks are currently the biggest investors in coal, and if all the investments pay off then there is no hope of saving the planet from the ravages of global warming. ‘It is mind-boggling to see that less than two dozen banks from a handful of countries are putting us on a highway to hell when it comes to climate change,’ said Heffa Schücking, one of the report’s authors. ‘Big banks already showed that they can mess up the real economy. Now we’re seeing that they can also push our climate over the brink’” (Brown 2013).



*Protest at the World Coal Summit, held in Warsaw the same week as the COP. Here, a healthy lung and doctors triumph over coal lobbyists. Photo and caption: Corrie Ellis*

The climax of COP19, and not just from the standpoint of civil society, but of the whole two-week long summit, was the walkout on Thursday, November 21, the day before the negotiations were scheduled to finish. Seeing no meaningful progress in the talks, finding themselves excluded from the process on many levels, and witnessing the blatant corporate presence – even sponsorship – at the COP, hundreds of activists staged a walkout from the National Stadium, most of them vowing not to set foot in it again. Estimates of the crowd's size ranged from 300 (undoubtedly an underestimate, as 300 white t-shirts were distributed before the action and hundreds of those who walked out didn't have them) to a high estimate of 800. By any reckoning, a significant portion of all civil society delegates to COP19 simply walked out. There were about 8,300 participants at COP19, and of these approximately 1,500 were representatives of civil society NGOs and organizations.

Our camera team of Summer Gray and Corrie Ellis made a video ([Gray 2013](#)) that captures the elevated mood of the participants as they turned their backs on the Warsaw COP. We had witnessed some of the preparations for this the day before in the Convergence Space, an old two story building across town with rooms provided by Polish climate activists for the movement to use during the COP. The walkout was conceived and planned by the more radical of the young activists and youth organizations, but it came to enjoy broad appeal (it had a

predecessor in the mass walkout of civil society at the Rio+20 meetings in Brazil in June 2013). In addition, veteran organizers from Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, ActionAid, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, the Bolivian Platform on Climate Change, LDC Watch, the International Trade Union Confederation, the Philippines Movement on Climate Change, and the World Wildlife Fund – normally not mistaken for a radical climate justice group – among others, lent the names of their organizations to the action, and Kumi Naidoo, the executive director of Greenpeace, turned up to deliver the principal remarks at the press conference that preceded the walkout.

At 2 p.m. precisely, groups of activists who had met up in many corners of the cavernous National Stadium started to walk out, converging on the ground level of the building which led to the exits. We filmed as they streamed by, in their hundreds, happy with their decision. The mood was defiant; the white shirts said “Polluters talk, we walk!” and on their backs, “Volveremos!” (“We will be back”). The messages were clear, passing judgment on the complete inability of the UNFCCC to advance the treaty process at COP19, and signaling that this walkout was tactical, that the movement would return, with renewed force, to the 2014 COP20 in Lima, Peru, where Latin American civil society and the governments of Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Cuba, and others might make their more radical demands for climate justice heard and felt inside the COP.



*Demonstrating outside the COP after the walkout. Photo: John Foran*

At the Convergence Space afterwards, a strange and truncated debriefing occurred, facilitated by senior figures in the major climate justice organizations, and one couldn't help but feel that the energy and work of the youthful activists who had made it happen was not fully acknowledged. Yes, there was gratitude to Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace for attracting the media to the press conference before the walkout, but the conception and execution of the walkout belonged to the youth. The number of people who had a chance to speak about the walkout was limited to just a few, and the opportunity for the group of 100 or so activists to plan ahead dissipated. I was reminded of Anne Petermann's bracing critique (2011) of the "Big Green" male leadership at the Occupy action on the very last day of Durban's COP17 in 2011, when the same leadership encouraged those who had been sitting down for several hours and making lots of noise just outside the entrance to the big plenary room where delegates were making their final proposals, to leave the hallways peacefully at the request of the UN security forces so as not to be de-badged and prevented from returning to future COPs. And yet, the great civil society walkout at Warsaw must still be seen for what it was: a major event and statement laid down by a movement that is still too small to do what it needs and wants to do. For now, as Hugo Chávez once said.

The convergence space itself was used throughout the two weeks to host talks and meetings, make posters and plan actions. The perimeter of the largest room was graced with floor to ceiling posters of the history of the COP, one poster for each meeting, its name drawn from film history to capture the spirit of that particular COP. The whole exhibit, called "Climate Talkies" was the work of Chandra Bhushan (2013), Deputy Director General of India's Center for Science and Environment. Thus the first COP in Berlin, in 1992, was represented by *Great Expectations*; Kyoto 1997 featured Al Gore as James Bond in *Live and Let Die*; the 2007 COP13 in Bali was captioned "The End is Near" from *Apocalypse Now*; Copenhagen in 2009 starred Obama, Angela Merkl, Gordon Brown, and the leaders of India and China in *The Full Monty* ("No Plan, No Money, No Underwear"). COP17 in Durban was immortalized by *Waiting For Godot*: "Nothing Happens. Nobody comes, nobody goes. It's awful." And Warsaw? It was well summed up (even before it started) as *Dumb and Dumber*, a place where "Dumb happens," and a chilling illustration of Voltaire's epigram about the Lisbon earthquake of 1755: "Men argue. Nature acts."

### **Decisions, post-mortems, and encomia: what was agreed and what was not at COP19**

In the UNFCCC's concluding press release, Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres expressed cautious optimism about the outcome of COP19: "We have seen essential progress. But let us again be clear that we are witnessing ever more frequent, extreme weather events, and the poor and vulnerable are already paying the price.... Now governments, and especially developed nations, must

go back to do their homework so they can put their plans on the table ahead of the Paris conference. A groundswell of action is happening at all levels of society. All major players came to COP19 to show not only what they have done but to think what more they can do. Next year is also the time for them to turn ideas into further concrete action” ([United Nations Climate Change Secretariat 2013](#)).

The UNFCCC was particularly proud of progress on the reforestation project known as REDD+, and maybe there is something to this. A group of observers from the Vermont School of Law offered this assessment:

One of the more significant outcomes of this week was the package of decisions, known as the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries), that the COP approved to provide a formal framework, safeguards, and funding in hopes of cutting deforestation in half by 2020 and halting it by 2030. Every schoolchild knows that the forests are the world’s lungs: this is the UNFCCC’s smoking cessation program.

REDD+ has been implemented on the ground by various development organizations, including the World Bank, USAID, and the World Wildlife Fund, in a somewhat haphazard and experimental fashion since its conception in Montreal in 2005 and development in Bali in 2007. It was met with serious criticism by indigenous peoples around the world as another form of colonialism, with Bolivia in particular championing to keep market mechanisms out of this mitigation activity. This new version of REDD+ hopes to address those concerns. The safeguards included for biodiversity, ecosystems, and indigenous peoples’ territories, livelihoods, and rights are commendable. It may even serve as a mechanism for governments to more formally recognize indigenous land rights. Hopeful thinking? Perhaps. We will have to watch carefully how the new REDD+ decisions improve its implementation on the ground ([Jervey 2013](#)).

Hopes, indeed. One wonders how many forests will remain after taking seven more years to cut the rate of deforestation by 50 percent and then 30 more to stop deforestation altogether. “And yet,” as John Holloway likes to say. And yet...

“Warsaw has set a pathway for governments to work on a draft text of a new universal climate agreement so it appears on the table at the next UN climate change conference in Peru. This is an essential step to reach a final agreement in Paris, in 2015,” concluded COP19 host President Marcin Korolec, who was embarrassingly dismissed as Poland’s Minister of the Environment *during* the COP, apparently for comments he made about a new shale gas project that were not deemed sufficiently enthusiastic by his government. Beata Jacewska, Poland’s head negotiator, has said that “coal has to be part of the solution.”

As in Doha at COP18, though a modest amount of new text was generated, COP19 did not advance the treaty process to any degree remotely likely to achieve what is needed by 2015 (or 2020, or...). Loss and Damage made it into



the text as an area where substantial funding should be made available in the aftermath of climate-induced extreme weather disasters, and was applauded by some, including Yeb Saño and the Third World Network, as a major accomplishment. The latter hailed it as a “landmark” decision that “lifted the general gloom that had been prevalent during most of the two-week negotiations,” noting that estimated damages from natural disasters worldwide have doubled from about \$200 billion a year ten years ago to \$300-400 billion a year now. Yet efforts to establish loss and damage as the third pillar of fighting climate change, alongside mitigation and adaptation, fell short of this objective, as it was placed “under” the adaptation working group’s charter, after hours of negotiation were spent debating the word “under,” which the global South had to accept in exchange for only a pledge to review its final institutional location in 2016 ([Third World Network 2013](#)). And, of course, no funds have yet been allocated to the new “Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts.”

Hard battles were fought within and between the global North and South that hinged on such nuances of wording. The negotiations on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action that are supposed to lead to the new global treaty saw jousting over whether the two groups continued to have “common but differentiated responsibilities” as in the foundational documents of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, with its binding emissions reductions on the North only, or whether, as the Durban Platform itself indicated, all countries would have to make such commitments, most importantly, the major Southern emitters of India, China, and Brazil, among others.

U.S. negotiator Todd Stern was pleased with the outcome (always a bad sign): “I think we had a good outcome in the end. It was quite a tough negotiation” ([Ritter 2013](#)). But the so-called “path” to a climate deal is well behind schedule. The global North had the word “commitments” for emissions reductions watered down, in a move seconded by India and China, to “intended nationally determined contributions,” substantially weaker legal language which leaves a fair amount of room for evasion. Furthermore, countries agreed to announce their commitments only in the first quarter of 2015. There were no pledges made by the North to the Green Climate Fund for the next seven years, postponing the day of reckoning to 2020, by which they had agreed in Copenhagen to come up with \$100 billion annually for adaptation, a figure that is clearly ambitious only for them, and not for what the world needs now or will need by then, when the real costs of inaction will be in the trillions of dollars annually (compare the inability of the wealthy countries to fund the GCF with the estimated \$500-700 billion they provide annually to fossil fuel corporations by subsidizing their operations). As the Third World Network’s assessment of the outcome concluded, all of these issues will be “the subject of very intense talks [in 2014], with meetings of the ADP track scheduled for March, June, and December.

Movement figures saw the outcome as the latest in a string of bad COPs. The Philippine human rights group IBON International titled its press release:

“Commitments lost, ambitions damaged,” and concluded, “Despite the tremendous pressure to come up with positive results, the Warsaw climate talks delivered no substantive outcome and instead allowed dirty energy industries to undermine the fundamental objectives of the UNFCCC itself” ([IBON International 2013](#)). Climate Justice Now! campaigner Alex Rafalowicz briefed activists in an e-mail that the take-away point for Warsaw was: “The difference between this ‘outcome’ in Warsaw and ‘no outcome’ in Warsaw is ‘virtually nothing.’” Alden Meyer, the director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists who has missed only one of the 19 COPs, said, “Loss and damages is big but we have the bare minimum in the rest to keep going” ([Leahy 2013](#)).

It’s hard to see anything else of much substance in the final decisions, even though the main press release is titled “UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw keeps governments on a track towards 2015 climate agreement” ([2013](#)). If this is true, the agreement is going to lock in planetary ecocide. As *The Guardian*’s Graham Readfearn notes:

There’s a gap that’s getting wider in the global climate talks taking place in Warsaw between the near unanimous pledge to keep global warming below 2C and the ability of current policies to achieve the goal.

When I say gap, I really mean a chasm. And when I say chasm, I mean a huge, gaping, canyon-like hole big enough to either eat a planet or at least lose an Earth or a carbon dioxide swamped Venus down there for a while.

## **Futures**

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is convening world leaders “along with business, finance, civil society and local leaders” to a special “Climate Summit 2014: Catalyzing Action” on September 23 in New York, with the words: “I challenge you to bring to the Summit bold pledges. Innovate, scale-up, cooperate and deliver concrete action that will close the emissions gap and put us on track for an ambitious legal agreement through the UNFCCC process.” He went on:

My big idea is not new. Nor is it, in the larger sense, mine. But it is an idea that will be one major focus of my work next year, and one in which I believe deeply. In 2014, we must turn the greatest collective challenge facing humankind today – climate change – into the greatest opportunity for common progress towards a sustainable future. Next year is the year for climate action....

Countries have agreed to finalize an ambitious global legal agreement on climate change by 2015. But there is a steep climb ahead and 2014 is a pivotal year for generating the action and momentum that will propel us forward....

The science is clear. Human activities are the dominant cause of climate change. We cannot blame nature....

We now know it is possible to close the emissions gap. We must build on this momentum.

This Summit is meant to be a solutions summit, not a negotiating session. I have invited all Heads of State and Government, along with leaders from business and finance, local government and civil society.

I am asking all who come to bring bold and new announcements and action. I am asking them to bring their big ideas.

Until then, I will continue to put every effort into mobilizing political will, moving financial investors, influencing business leaders and motivating people everywhere to do all they can....

Future generations will judge our action on this issue. In 2014, we have the chance to step over to the right side of history. Let's take it ([Ban Ki-moon 2013](#)).

The Secretary-General's bold invitation is of course welcome, but his telling placement of business and finance ahead of civil society and local leaders suggests that the hoped-for breakthrough into progress on the treaty is rather unlikely. The summit might be better titled "Climate Depression 2014: Paralyzing Action." On a promising note, there is ongoing planning in radical U.S. climate justice circles for a "People's Summit" to take place in New York at the same time, where rather than a conventional protest and demonstration against the UNFCCC governments' lack of seriousness on the issues, the movement will craft and offer "bold and new announcements and action" and "big ideas" of its own.

Then there is the Venezuelan proposal to host a series of encounters for global civil society under the rubric of a "Social Pre-COP" in the course of 2014. As Claudia Salerno, Venezuela's lead negotiator (who had hit her hand on the table so hard in Copenhagen that it began to bleed, "to show how developing countries are bleeding"), said at a meeting which I attended: "A situation of madness requires a little craziness," adding, "We are not afraid to fail.... [There is] nothing to lose, and maybe a lot to gain."

The Pre-COP idea was designed to consist of a convention of youth in March and of indigenous activists in May, followed by a conference on the economics of Buen Vivir (Living Well) in July, and the Social Pre-COP itself in mid-October – all with the aim of strengthening the capacity of civil society to make an impact in Lima. This is a bold initiative, and a risk no doubt worth running as long as the post-Chávez Venezuelan government, revolutionary as its legacy may be, does not impose itself onto the process ([Escalante and Jauregui 2013](#)). In fact, the February-March opposition street protests against the Maduro government appear to have moved the process onto the back burner, and its ultimate fate looks up in the air (in a manner of speaking) ([Edwards, Murphy, and Eisner 2014](#)). The latest information announces two pre-COP events, now set for July 15-18 and November 4-7 in Caracas.

Another major new initiative is the Global Climate Convergence (<http://globalclimateconvergence.org/>), which proclaims "People, Planet, Peace

over Profits” and is seeking to build “collaboration across national borders and fronts of struggle to harness the transformative power we already possess as a thousand separate movements springing up across the planet,” and whose first big campaign was a “Mother Earth Day to May Day” 2014 call for simultaneous education and direct action events across the United States. The basic idea is to create a lasting collaboration between climate activism and other forms of social justice, including progressive labor, indigenous organizing, and the fledgling ecosocialist movement in the United States, and ultimately, no doubt, beyond. Convened by chair of the Green Party of the United States, Jill Stein, in the fall of 2013, this call resonates with the formation of the new U.S. ecosocialist organization System Change Not Climate Change (<http://systemchangenotclimatechange.org/>), which aims at shifting the momentum of the climate justice movement in an anti-capitalist direction by starting “a far-ranging discussion within society: can stopping climate change be compatible with an economic system that is flooded with fossil fuel profits? Can we create a safe and healthy planet for all human beings while simultaneously allowing ever-expanding resource extraction, endless growth, and the massive inequalities that come along with it?”

The most important events of 2014 may well be the unglamorous, under the radar organizing that will take place at all points of the compass as the global justice movement does the hard work of building itself into a force to be reckoned with. There are innumerable networks of world citizens already involved in this movement building. Our task is to entwine these networks around a re-imagined vision of climate justice, big enough to include everyone from the young radicals to the long-standing and slower moving NGOs, institutions from local governments to schools and universities, communities of faith, labor organizations whether unionized or not, indigenous movements, and intergenerational activism. Our demands must be made with an unyielding insistence on a binding plan for radical emissions reductions, generous and unconditional technology and financial contributions to adaptation efforts, and solidarity in the face of the inevitable climate chaos to come.

We have no option other than to take up the challenge of building the current global climate justice movement into a social movement strong enough to confront the biggest threat the global community has ever faced, and into a force strong enough to defeat governments backed by the largest corporations in the history of capitalism, in the process countering the massive disinformation campaign and cultural inertia that these state and economic elites rely upon to control us even as their own scientists are increasingly blunt about the risks.

Now more than ever, the cry for “System change, not climate change!” must echo forcefully in the halls of the COP, and far beyond. ¡Volveremos!

### **Acknowledgements**

My thanks to Richard Widick, Natasha Weidner, Greg King, Harold Marcuse, and Luke Kemp for their comments on the first draft of this essay.

## References

- Adams, Emily E. 2013. “U.S. Carbon Dioxide Emissions Down 11 Percent Since 2007” (October 2), [http://www.earth-policy.org/data\\_highlights/2013/highlights41](http://www.earth-policy.org/data_highlights/2013/highlights41)
- Ban ki-Moon. 2013. “Big Idea 2014: The Year for Climate Action” (December 11), <http://www.un.org/climatechange/blog/2013/12/11/big-idea-2014-the-year-for-climate-action/>
- Bello, Walden. 2013. “Typhoon Haiyan’s Message to the World.” *The Nation* (December 9), <http://www.thenation.com/article/177297/typhoon-haiyans-message-world>
- Bhushan, Chandra. 2013. “20 Years Plus: Climate Talkies,” <http://indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/climate-talkies/>
- Boer, Roland. 2013. “Enter the Genuine Conservatives: Australia’s Election in 2013.” *The International Marxist-Humanist* (October 2), <http://www.internationalmarxisthumanist.org/articles/enter-genuine-conservatives-australias-election-2013-roland-boer>
- Brockley, M. 2013. “Colossal Fossil for Australia’s New Government”(November 22), <http://www.climate-network.org/fossil-of-the-day>
- Brown, Paul. 2013. “King Coal Gets a Kicking at Warsaw Climate Talks,” *Climate News Network* (November 18), <http://ecowatch.com/2013/11/18/king-coal-kicking-warsaw-climate-talks/>
- Chemnick, Jean. 2013. “Obama Launches ‘Coordinated Assault’ against Warming.” *Environment and Energy News PM* (June 25).
- Clarke, Renfrey. 2014. “The New Revolutionaries: Climate Scientists Demand Radical Change” (January 9), <http://climateandcapitalism.com/2014/01/09/climate-scientists-become-revolutionaries/>
- Davidson, Ogunlade et al. 2013. “New Unabated Coal is Not Compatible with Keeping Global Warming below 2°C.” Statement by leading climate and energy scientists, <http://www.europeanclimate.org/documents/nocoal2c.pdf>
- Edwards, Guy, Michael Murphy and Paola Eisner. 2014. “Venezuela’s 2014 Climate Summit Faces Credibility Crisis” (March 11), <http://www.rtcc.org/2014/03/11/venezuelas-2014-climate-summit-faces-credibility-crisis/>
- Escalante, Maria and Adrian Fernandez Jauregui. 2013. “The Pre-COP: A Chance We Must Take” (December 29), <http://www.earthinbrackets.org/2013/12/29/the-pre-cop-a-chance-we-must-take/>
- Executive Office of the President. 2013. *The President’s Climate Action Plan*. Washington, D.C.,

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/image/president27sclimateactionplan.pdf>

Foran, John and Summer Gray. 2013. “A Fight Like Many Others: What Happens in the Maldives Election on October 19 Concerns Us All,”

<http://www.dhivehisitee.com/election-2013/tag/mohamed-nasheed/>

Gray, Summer. 2013. “COP19 Walk Out: Voices of the Climate Justice Movement,”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbtdXFeEUXk&feature=youtu.be>

Hopkins, Ellie. 2013. “Getting Inteq in the Text: Intergenerational Equity at COP19” (December 9),

<http://www.youthpolicy.org/environment/2013/12/09/inteq-at-cop19/>

IBON International. 2013. “Commitments Lost, Ambitions Damaged: No Outcome in Sight from Warsaw Climate Talks” (November 24),

[http://iboninternational.org/page/whats\\_new/261](http://iboninternational.org/page/whats_new/261)

IICAT [International Institute of Climate Action and Theory]. 2013. “What Must the 2015 Treaty Do? Perspectives from Youth Climate Justice Activists and IICAT,” Warsaw Climate Change Conference - November 2013 Videotaped Press Briefing (November 15), [http://unfccc4.metafusion.com/kongresse/cop19/templ/play.php?id\\_kongresssession=6932&theme=unfccc](http://unfccc4.metafusion.com/kongresse/cop19/templ/play.php?id_kongresssession=6932&theme=unfccc)

IISD [International Institute for Sustainable Development]. 2013. “Philippines Delegate Naderev Saño Announces His Decision to Go on Hunger Strike on the First Day of the COP19 Climate Change Summit in Poland” (November 11),

<http://www.iisd.ca/videos/climate/cop19-special-videos/>

IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change]. 2013. “Summary for Policymakers.”

Pp. 1-28 in *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis*. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Edited by T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex, and P.M. Midgley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

[http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5\\_SPM\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf)

[http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5\\_SPM\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.climatechange2013.org/images/report/WG1AR5_SPM_FINAL.pdf)

Jervey, Ben. 2013. “COP 19 Warsaw Wrap-Up: Where Does a Global Climate Deal Stand?” (December 1), [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-jervey/cop-19-warsaw-wrapup-where\\_b\\_4367857.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ben-jervey/cop-19-warsaw-wrapup-where_b_4367857.html)

Leahy, Stephen. 2013. “South Scores 11th-Hour Win on Climate Loss and Damage” (November 24), <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/11/south-scores-11th-hour-win-on-climate-loss-and-damage/>

**McKibben**, Bill. 2013. “Obama and Climate Change: The Real Story.” *Rolling Stone*

(December 17), <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/obama-and-climate-change-the-real-story-20131217>

Petermann, Anne. 2011. “Showdown at the Durban Disaster: Challenging the ‘Big Green’ Patriarchy” (December 16), <http://climate-connections.org/2011/12/16/showdown-at-the-durban-disaster-challenging-the-big-green-patriarchy/>

Ritter, Karl. 2013. “Modest Deal Breaks Deadlock at UN Climate Talks.” Associated Press (November 23), <http://www.ajc.com/ap/ap/top-news/climate-talks-stalled-over-finance-carbon-cuts/nb3Dp/>

Saño, Naderev. 2013. “Typhoon Haiyan: We Cannot Afford to Procrastinate on Climate Action.” *The Guardian* (November 11), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/11/typhoon-haiyan-philippines-climate-change?INTCMP=SRCH>

Schücking, Heffa. 2013. *Banking on Coal*. Urgewald, BankTrack, CEE Bankwatch Network and Polska Zielona Sieć with Rainforest Action Network, World Development Movement, and PowerShift, [http://www.banktrack.org/show/news/banking\\_on\\_coal\\_undermining\\_our\\_climate](http://www.banktrack.org/show/news/banking_on_coal_undermining_our_climate)

Thanki, Nathan. 2013. “Designing for Activism” (December 22), <http://www.earthinbrackets.org/2013/12/22/designing-for-activism/>

*The Island President*. 2012. Directed by Jon Shenk. 86 minutes. <http://theislandpresident.com/>

Third World Network. 2013. “Overview of the Warsaw Conference (COP19) Outcomes.” *Warsaw News Update* 23 (November 24), [http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/climate/news/warsaw01/TWN\\_update23.pdf](http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/climate/news/warsaw01/TWN_update23.pdf)

United Nations Climate Change Secretariat. 2013. “UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw Keeps Governments on a Track towards 2015 Climate Agreement,” [http://unfccc.int/files/press/news\\_room/press\\_releases\\_and\\_advisories/application/pdf/131123\\_pr\\_closing\\_cop19.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/press/news_room/press_releases_and_advisories/application/pdf/131123_pr_closing_cop19.pdf)

Weymouth, Lally. 2013. “An Interview with Australia Prime Minister Tony Abbott” (October 24), [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/lally-weymouth-an-interview-with-australia-prime-minister-tony-abbott/2013/10/24/f718e9ea-3cc7-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/lally-weymouth-an-interview-with-australia-prime-minister-tony-abbott/2013/10/24/f718e9ea-3cc7-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story.html)

Williams, Chris. 2013. “Warsaw Climate Talks Go Up in Smoke,” *Truthout* (November 21), <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/20152-warsaw-climate-talks-go-up-in-smoke>

## **About the author**

John Foran is a Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and co-director of the International Institute of Climate Action and

Theory ([www.iicat.org](http://www.iicat.org)). He is the author of *Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions* (2005) and *Fragile Resistance: Social Transformation in Iran from 1500 to the Revolution* (1993). He is currently working on a book titled “Taking Power or (re)Making Power: Movements for Radical Social Change and Global Justice” and a co-edited volume with Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Priya Kurian, and Debashish Munshi, “Climate Futures: Voices from the Margins.” He is active with the iicat Climate Justice Project ([www.climatejusticeproject.com](http://www.climatejusticeproject.com)). E-mail: [foran AT soc.ucsb.edu](mailto:foran AT soc.ucsb.edu)