

# Understanding the mechanism to implement the Paris Agreement to the UNFCCC

*United Nations University (UNU-IAS)*

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Lecturers:

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## 1. Course Description

The climate negotiations process started in 1992 when countries signed the international treaty – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) during the Rio Earth Summit. This Convention was the result of the revelation that climate change was unequivocal and anthropogenic. The UNFCCC had put in place several principles through its 26 articles, laying the foundation for mitigation action, adaptation, finance, technology, and monitoring and reporting. The first protocol under the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, agreed upon in 1997, furthered the objective of the Convention, with set timelines and targets. However, this protocol was not considered fully effective in abating global greenhouse gas emissions to the level needed. Therefore, the Paris Agreement (PA) was adopted in 2015 during the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. It commits all countries to climate action based on their capability and intent. The Agreement is being celebrated as a milestone in the history of climate negotiations as it is hoped that it will be key to implementing climate-positive solutions and also enhancing climate governance from local to national levels.

Even with the past efforts to abate climate change, human activities caused approximately 1.1°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, which is likely to reach 1.5°C by 2040 if it continues to increase at the current rate as per the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2021. Therefore, PA holds much more responsibility to tackle the global crisis in a shorter span of time. The impact of PA is expected to be more far-reaching, including on all domains of development, namely the economic, social and environmental, as well as on all countries. The world has already pledged to make the best of its efforts to do away with carbon intensive technology and be less dependent on non-renewable energy resources.

With increased complexities in the climate change regime, including new market mechanisms, transparency arrangements, reporting requirements, and global stocktake assessments, it has become much more important to understand both the modalities under the previous agreements and their relevance and implementation as a part of PA. Following the Common but Differentiated Responsibilities principle from the UNFCCC, PA provides some flexibility associated with finance, technology, and transparency to developing countries. This makes finance, capacity building, and technology transfer also relevant topics under the agreement.

## **2. Requirements and Grading Policy**

### **Class participation and discussion (20%)**

#### **Assignment 1: Analysis of national climate change mitigation policy -1 (20%)**

- Write a research paper for a selected country with analysing NDC, GHG estimation results, mitigation policy and measures and its background.
- Format:
  - Arial 12, 1.5 space, justified alignment, double side, cover page, references (in-text citation and bibliography can include both reports and academic articles)
  - Harvard referencing style
  - Maximum of 3,500 words (excluding references)

#### **Assignment 2: Class Presentation -on assignment 1 (20%)**

- Time: 10 minutes
- Contents: Overview the analysis on assignment 1

#### **Assignment 3: Analysis of adaptation, international cooperation, multistakeholder engagement etc (20%)**

- Write a research paper on another topic relevant to the Paris Agreement (i.e., climate adaptation, international cooperation, multi-stakeholder engagement, etc.)
- [Propose what research is needed to understand the opportunities and challenges related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.]
- Format:
  - Arial 12, 1.5 space, justified alignment, double side, cover page, references (in-text citation and bibliography can include both reports and academic articles)
  - Harvard referencing style
  - Maximum of 3,500 words (excluding references)

#### **Assignment 4: Class Presentation -on assignment 1 (20%)**

- Time: 10 minutes

- Contents: Overview the analysis on assignment 3

### 3. Course Objectives and Learning Goals:

This course will aim at enhancing the understanding of the students on the key climate agreements, and their modalities and relevance for the Paris Agreement. It will discuss the key articles of the agreement in detail, including that on climate change mitigation (Article 4), market mechanisms (Article 6), climate change adaptation (Article 7), Finance (Article 9), transparency (Article 13), and Global Stocktake (Article 14). The course will also examine the enablers and barriers in the context of the science-policy interface in the current climate regime. First, the course will present an overview of the UNFCCC agreement and its Kyoto Protocol, discussing key modalities and goalposts. Second, it discusses each key article, as mentioned above, in the context of negotiations, rules and procedures agreed, and its relevant science-policy aspects. Third, the course will provide an opportunity to develop students ability to explore information on climate change data and policy and measures which are necessary to consider solutions of different goals of the Paris Agreement for a common temperature goal.

### Course Outline

Lecture / Assignment	Date	Content	Instructor
<b>Block 1: Overview of Climate Change and the Paris Agreement</b>			
Lecture 1		Orientation and course overview and a brief introduction to the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol texts	Dr Akio Takemoto Dr Himangana Gupta
Lecture 2		Overview of physical science basis of climate change (AR6) in the perspective of key articles of the Paris Agreement	Dr Atsushi Sato
Lecture 3		Climate mitigation Part 1 – NDCs and voluntary commitments, GST	Dr Himangana Gupta Dr. Atsushi Sato
Lecture 4		Climate mitigation Part 2 – Reporting framework- National	Dr Atsushi Sato

Lecture / Assignment	Date	Content	Instructor
		communications, GHG inventory and Track-and progress [and GST]	
<b>Block 2: Details of mitigation under the PA</b>			
Lecture 5		Climate mitigation Part 3 – GHG inventories reporting and monitoring and data management	Dr Atsushi Sato
Lecture 6		Climate mitigation Part 4 – LULUCF: REDD+ and other land-based mitigation options	Dr. Himangana Gupta
-		Assignment 1 (submission)	
Lecture 7		Assignment 2 (Presentation):	Dr. Akio Takemoto Dr. Himangana Gupta Dr. Atsushi Sato
Lecture 8		(feedback-session of the presentation above)	Dr. Akio Takemoto Dr. Himangana Gupta Dr. Atsushi Sato
<b>Block 3: Details of market, adaptation, means of implementation under the PA</b>			
Lecture 9		Market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement	tbc (Mr. Kentaro Takahashi -IGES) (Dr. Yasushi Ninomiya - IEE)) (or others)
Lecture 10		Climate adaptation(Note: Adaptation to be divided into 2 days)	tbc (Dr. Naoyuki Okano or others from IGES)
Lecture 11		International cooperation of climate change, including TT and CB	tbc (Expert from JICA)
Lecture 12		Paris Agreement Implementation: multistakeholder 1:	Mr. Makoto Kato (OECC)
Lecture 13		Paris Agreement Implementation: Multistakeholder 2: Private sector	tbc (Japan business Fed.)
		Assignment 3 (submission)	
Lecture 14		Assignment 4 (Class presentation): Proposal for actions	Dr. Akio Takemoto Dr. Himangana Gupta Dr. Atsushi Sato
Lecture 15		Feedback session	Dr. Akio Takemoto Dr. Himangana Gupta Dr. Atsushi Sato

## **Important Information**

### *Class Conduct & Etiquette*

Students are expected to arrive on time and not to engage in disruptive behavior during class. This includes, among other things, private side conversations, the use of cell-phones and other electronic devices, or the reading of newspapers. Cell-phones should be switched off and stored in the bag. We wish to create an atmosphere of open and tolerant discussion in the classroom and request students to recognize every individual's right to have an opinion. The lecturer and other students should be treated with dignity and respect, in particular in discussions on contentious political issues where a diversity of opinion is likely to arise. However, we also recognize that there are limits to tolerance and the lecturer reserves the right to request disciplinary action against any student who violates this policy or repeatedly shows disruptive behavior in class.

### *Computer Use in Class*

The use of computers (including tablets) in the classroom is restricted to taking notes, reading of the course material or searching for course related information in the internet. Any disruption of the class by cell phones, instant messaging programs or other communication devices will not be tolerated. The lecturer reserves the right to revoke this permission if a student is found using a computer for any non-course related activities.

### *Plagiarism & Academic Misconduct*

Please be aware that the consequences of plagiarism are severe and students found guilty of academic misconduct will be punished in accordance with UNU's academic honesty policies. The lecturer reserves the right to run all assignments through an anti-plagiarism software provided by the UNU. If evidence of academic misconduct on the assigned presentations, the mid-term exam or the final essay should be found, the assignment will receive a failing grade. In case of repeated violations of academic conduct, the student may receive a failing grade for the entire course and will be reported to the appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.