# Was anything achieved in Cancún?

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Unlike the previous meeting in Copenhagen a year ago, the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancún, which finished last Saturday, did produce an agreement. In the words of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres, 'The beacon of hope has been reignited and faith in the multilateral climate change process to deliver results has been restored'. The key question is - is it good enough?

The ‘results’ Figueres is referring to are processes not outcomes. Her choice of words can be read as a critical comment on what happened in Copenhagen, where nations failed to 'work together under a common roof' and reach an agreement 'in a transparent and inclusive process'. Much of what has been agreed relates to the functions of new institutions and the start of processes to create these institutions. The big omission, as NGOs were quick to point out, was on concrete and legally binding emissions reduction targets. That challenge was moved forward, again, to next year’s meeting in Durban.

Cancún demonstrates the challenge for international climate policy. It is very difficult to achieve fair outcomes without procedural justice, but the latter takes a lot of time, goodwill and collaborative effort to establish. The Cancún agreement isn’t nearly good enough, but what are the alternatives? Until some a way is found to deliver global security to future generations without the need to first build institutions for global environmental governance, the UNFCCC is the only show in town. With Cancún, this show is on the road again, albeit very slowly.

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