The Power of Precision:
Re-envisioning the UNFCCC through Institutional and Procedural Equity

A Report for the World Resources Institute Global Climate Team
Meet our Team!

Jessica Aman  
Chantal Raguin  
Dr. Sarah Alexander  
Max Wohlgemuth  
Dr. Allison Chatrchyan  
Mima Holt
Today We'll Discuss
Research Question

▷ How has equity been a driving force in both the processes and outcomes of the UNFCCC?

Why it matters

▷ Equity only mentioned: 1 time in 1992 UNFCCC Framework, 1 time in Kyoto Protocol, 5 times in Paris Agreement

Methodology

▷ Primary and secondary document review
▷ Observed/participated in the Making UNFCCC and its COP More Resilient and Fit for Purpose workshop series
Background

UNFCCC Adopted
“The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” (United Nations, 1992)

Paris Agreement
Allow Parties to interpret equity for themselves; each country can submit non-binding commitments to decreasing their emissions. Bottom-up approach to equity

Kyoto Protocol
Division of Countries: Annex I and Annex II through historical accountability and ability to pay. Top-down approach to equity.

IPCC 1.5 Report
“the Paris Agreement associates the principle of equity with the broader goals of poverty eradication and sustainable development, recognising that effective responses to climate change require a global collective effort that may be guided by the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals” (Allen et al., 2018)
Defining Equity

INSTITUTIONAL EQUITY

Institutional equity pertains to fairness within the UNFCCC and its agreed upon practices.

Institutional equity encompasses the conception of equity within the convention. The key question here is: how is equity defined or evoked within the official documents of the UNFCCC?

Institutional equity also encompasses distribution of power within the convention. The key questions here are: Who has power within the convention? when decisions are made, are the decisions made in a way that treats parties fairly?
PROCEDURAL EQUITY

Procedural equity pertains to fairness within a decision-making process.

Procedural equity pertains to official decision-making mechanisms. The key questions here are: **who is at the table for key decisions within the UNFCCC? Who is missing?**

Procedural equity also describes distribution of power within decision making processes. The key questions here are: **Who has power in making decisions? Which types of entities have power (e.g., countries, NGOs, etc.)? Among those groups with power, how is that power distributed? Do some countries or non-state actors have more power than others?**
### Challenges to Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multilateralism</th>
<th>Differences in Resources</th>
<th>Equity for Non-state Actors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States acting in self-interest</td>
<td>Developing vs Developed nations</td>
<td>Vary widely in objectives, roles and impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting climate action for others could slow national economy</td>
<td>Financing of climate change and Mitigation</td>
<td>○ Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising nationalism/ Domestic politics</td>
<td>Voluntary Contributions</td>
<td>○ Sub-state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity ambiguity</td>
<td>Technological Resources</td>
<td>○ Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○ Activists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○ NGOs</td>
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<td>Uneven access</td>
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Paths to Progress

**Multilateralism**
- Deploy specific definitions of equity
- Re-frame to emphasize benefits, avoid free-riding
- Build flexibility in agendas and revision to agreements

**Differences in Resources**
- Develop voting blocs such as BASIC and G-77: stronger together
- Build procedural equity in negotiations: inclusive leadership and modes of dialogue

**Equity for Non-state Actors**
- Increase role in representing general public through activism and media
- Increase watchdog role: monitor NDCs
- Encourage carbon emissions commitments
Conclusions and Recommendations

Define
Defining equity will ensure understanding among all parties (countries, non-state actors, etc.)

Deploy
Deploying clear definitions will enable the principle of equity to be considered at each step in the UNFCCC process

Achieve
Achieving equity in the UNFCCC will result in more equitable climate action
Thanks!

Any questions?