



Concept note

„Towards a Global System of Multi-Level Climate Governance”

08 September 2014

FFU in co-operation with IASS Potsdam,
Berliner Straße 130, D-14467 Potsdam

For a long time it has been argued that climate challenges, such as climate change, can be best addressed on the international stage. But the inertia on the international political stage in recent years has contributed to a “polycentric approach” (Ostrom) to addressing the multifarious problems of climate challenges. Thus, climate governance is being understood as multi-level and multi-actor system. The “Agenda 21” of the UN-Summit in Rio provided the first conceptual basis for this approach. The multi-level system, in which climate governance takes place, seems to provide the most advanced experience as a global system with typical horizontal and vertical dynamics, supporting innovation and lesson-drawing.

The conference will ask whether *the multi-level system of climate governance has become a global system with an inherent logic and dynamics*. Meanwhile it seems to have created a broad opportunity structure for eco-innovation. The broad variety of agents and possible interactions may be one of its main characteristics. The interaction between levels is another one. National governments or the EU generalize, integrate and support innovative best practice at lower levels. They may also induce horizontal dynamics at lower levels – pioneer activities and lesson-drawing, networking and cooperation as well as competition. The multi-level system of climate governance is a *global system* because it has global objectives (mitigation), a global policy arena (UN, G20 etc.) and *a global knowledge base* (IPCC). However it is also a global system if climate policy is conceived in terms of industrial policy, relating to global markets which are essentially policy-driven. Here it seems that climate policy has been able to mobilise economic interests at all levels of the multi-level system.

Against this background, the conference will cover the following issues:

1. Is there an inherent logic of the institutional architecture of the multi-level governance system? How can best practice of multi-level reinforcement be explained?
2. What are the roles of each level within the multi-level system? What triggers horizontal lesson-drawing between countries and cooperation such as the Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40)?
3. Which are the institutional accountabilities and capabilities for change involved in effective global multi-level system of climate governance?

The conference seeks to understand the dynamics of climate politics in a multi-level governance system. In doing so, the conference brings together selected researchers and practitioners in the field of global climate governance to discuss the inherent logic, vertical and horizontal dynamics of global climate governance as well as its constraints and possibilities.



Preliminary Conference Programme

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9:00 **Welcome and introduction:** Prof. Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Prof. Dr. Brigitta Schütt, Free University Berlin; Prof. Dr. Martin Jänicke, Environmental Policy Research Centre.

9:45 – 10:30 **Opening Address** Prof. Dr. Hans Bruyninckx, European Environmental Agency: “The EU as a Multi-Level System of Climate Governance”.

Discussion 1: Role and Importance of the different levels of the global system of multi-level climate governance

10:30 – 11:30 **The global level:** Prof. Dr. Frank Biermann, University Amsterdam; Dr. Halldór Thorgeirsson, United Nations Climate Change Secretariat; Carolin Zerger, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety; Lutz Weischer, Germanwatch.

11:30 – 12:30 **The European level:** Prof. Dr. Laurence Tubiana, Special Representative of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; Prof. Dr. Andrew Jordan, School of Environmental Science University; Prof. Dr. Christian Calliess, Free University Berlin.

12:30 – 13:30 **The national level:** Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Wurzel, University of Hull; Dr. Navroz Dubash, Centre for policy research; Dr. Helge Jörgens, Environmental Policy Research Centre.

13:30 – 14:15 **Lunch break**

Discussion 1 (continued): Role and Importance of the different levels of the global system of multi-level climate governance – Chair: Prof. Dr. Udo Simonis

14:15 – 16:00 **The sub-national level:** Matthias Machnig, Social Democratic Party;
Dr. Kirsten Jörgensen, Environmental Policy Research Centre; Prof. Dr.
Kristine Kern, Potsdam University.

16:00 – 16:15 **Coffee break**

Discussion 2 Regional/National variants of multi-level climate governance
– Chair: Prof. Dr. Udo Simonis

16:15 - 17:30 **China:** Dr. Bing Xue, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies and
Chinese Academy of Sciences
India: Prof. Dr. Joyashree Roy, Jadavpur University Kolkata.
EU: DirProf. Dr. Christian Hey, German Advisory Council on the
Environment.
North America/NAFTA: Prof. Dr. Miranda Schreurs, Environmental
Policy Research Centre.

17:35 – 18:15 **Final Discussion**

18:15 **Conclusion** Prof. Dr. Miranda Schreurs, Environmental Policy Research
Centre.