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The contestation of the meaning of climate finance in the negotiations on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance

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Abstract

This thesis examines how key actors create and contest the meaning of climate finance in the negotiations on the New Collective Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG). To do so, I develop central framings and counter framings and discuss my findings in relation to broader environmental discourses. I then apply Carl Death's concept of multilateral summits as performative acts of theatre to assess the performative nature of the NCQG outcome and to explore the role of power in influencing discourse. My research finds that actors contest fundamental issues of responsibility, ownership and purpose through frame conflicts, ultimately challenging the principles of climate governance. Moreover, the NCQG negotiations align with Death's theorisation of summit theatre, following a typical plot curve and reinforcing the existing world order. However, my research questions whether the NCQG was a successful performance of elite responses to the climate crisis.

Diese Arbeit untersucht, wie zentrale Akteure die Bedeutung von Klimafinanzierung in den Verhandlungen über das New Collective Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) kreieren und umkämpfen. Dazu entwickle ich zentrale Framings und gegen-Framings und diskutiere meine Ergebnisse in Relation zu breiteren umweltpolitischen Diskursen. Anschließend wende ich Carl Deaths Konzept multilateraler Konferenzen als performative Theaterakte an, um die performative Natur des NCQG-Ergebnisses und die Rolle von Macht bei der Beeinflussung von Diskurs zu analysieren. Meine Forschung zeigt, dass Akteure durch Frame-Konflikte grundlegende Fragen von Verantwortung, Eigentum und Zweck verhandeln und damit letztlich die Prinzipien der Klima-Governance herausfordern. Darüber hinaus entsprechen die NCQG-Verhandlungen Deaths Theoretisierung, indem sie einer typischen Handlungskurve folgen und die bestehende Weltordnung festigen. Allerdings stellt meine Forschung infrage, ob das NCQG eine überzeugende Inszenierung der Reaktionen von Eliten auf die Klimakrise darstellt.

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Thank you.

Content

I Abbreviations

AGN .... *African Group of Negotiators*
AILAC .... *Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean*
AOSIS.. *Alliance of Small Island States*
bn .... *billion*
CAN.. *Climate Action Network International*
COP .... *Conference of the Parties*
ENB .... *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*
ENGO ....*Environmental non-governmental organizations*
EU .... *European Union*
G77 .... *Group of 77+China*
GCF .... *Green Climate Fund*
GEF.. *Green Environmental Facility*
IFA .... *International Financial Architecture*
LDCs... *Least Developed Countries*
MEA .... *Multilateral Environmental Agreements*
NAPs.. *National Adaptation Plans*
NCQG.. *New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance*
NDCs .... *Nationally Determined Contributions*
SB ....*Sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation*
SIDS .... *Small Island Developing States*
UN .... *United Nations*
UNFCCC .... *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*
USA .... *United States of America*
USD .... *United States Dollar*
YOUNGO .... *Official children and youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*

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1. Introduction

The global climate crisis reached unprecedented heights in 2024, a year that, for the first time, exceeded the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The effects of climate change are already being felt worldwide, resulting in deaths, wildfires, floods, health risks and food insecurity (IPCC et al., 2023).

However, the climate crisis transcends national borders and cannot be meaningfully addressed by any single state alone. Multilateral forums such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), its annual Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and the Paris Agreement have emerged to play a central role in combating climate change and strengthening global resilience to its impacts. The UNFCCC enjoys universal membership among states and, beyond that, brings together a diverse range of intergovernmental organizations and non-party stakeholders from civil society, academia and business in its meetings (UNFCCC, n.d.-f). The Paris Agreement, adopted at COP21 in 2015 is the key treaty in the multilateral governance of the climate crisis. In it, 195 countries that are parties to the agreement, have committed to the long-term goals of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees over pre-industrial level, of increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and of making financial flows consistent with low emissions and climate-resilient development (*Paris Agreement*, 2015).

Both the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement recognize that developed and developing countries have different levels of responsibility in addressing climate change. Those are based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The principle states that while all parties are called upon to mitigate emissions and adapt to climate change, developed countries are expected to take the lead and to additionally support developing nations by providing means of implementation through financial and technological resources (ibid.). Climate finance as a means of implementation, therefore, is a crucial enabler of climate action in developing countries. The lack of climate finance has been identified as a key constraint to global progress in climate action (IPCC et al., 2023).

Unlocking sufficient financial resources to accelerate progress toward the Paris Agreement's goals was the central aim of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG), a new climate finance framework that is entering into force after 2025.

The multiyear work program on the NCQG, culminating at COP29, generated a wide range of interpretations of climate finance, leading to highly complex and contentious negotiations. As the first major attempt to establish a comprehensive framework for climate finance the NCQG is likely to shape its meaning for years to come. Understanding how the final agreement was reached hence gives great insight into the inner workings of climate finance governance.

This thesis contributes to the understanding by providing an in-depth analysis of the research question: **How do key actors construct and contest the meaning of climate finance in the negotiations on the NCQG?** A deeper understanding of the process of meaning-making gives insights into the nature of multilateral climate governance as well as the complex power structures that govern these spaces. The thesis approaches the research question of how key actors construct and contest the meaning of climate finance in the negotiations on the NCQG through the lens of discourse theory, recognizing that language shapes reality. By conceptualizing multilateral agreement-making as a form of performative summit theatre, I will analyse how different actors create and challenge the meaning of climate finance through dominant framings and counter-framings. These framings will be derived from a broad set of data, including written submissions, participant observations and interviews. Additionally, I will examine how the creation and contestation of meaning through the framing of climate finance reflects the nature of climate governance, critically assessing whether the system is fit to effectively addresses the climate crisis.

I begin my work by providing a state-of-the-art literature review on the topics of creation and contestation of meaning at sites of multilateral agreement-making and climate finance. Afterwards, I develop my conceptual framework by first theorising both sites of multilateral agreement-making and the creation of knowledge through discourse. This is followed by a description of the applied methodology, covering the understanding of framings and drivers as well as reflections on my positionality in the topic and corresponding ethical considerations. In the subsequent methods section, I lay out the delimitation of my research object and my process of data collection and data analysis. The ensuing chapter gives an overview of climate finance governance under the UNFCCC, followed by an analysis of the actors' climate finance positions developed out of the analysed data. Out of the positions I then inductively develop framings through which the meaning of climate finance is being created and contested in the NCQG work program. I furthermore connect these framings to broader environmental governance discourses developed in prior research. Finally, I discuss my findings against the theory and literature on sites of multilateral agreement-making and meaning-making.

2. Literature Review

The analysis of sites of multilateral agreement-making such as the world climate conferences has evolved significantly over the last decades, incorporating various topics, perspectives and analytical frameworks. Both the creation and contestation of meaning at these sites as well as the topic of climate finance have been the object of scientific literature from the field of political science.

2.1 Meaning-making in environmental governance

The study of meaning-making in multilateral negotiations has gained significant attention in international relations and environmental governance. Scholars have examined how discourse, knowledge production and framing shape negotiation outcomes and influence power dynamics. This literature highlights how different actors compete to establish dominant narratives, define key issues and advance strategic interests within international forums.

A foundational perspective in discourse analysis stems from Hajer, who argues that meaning in politics is shaped through discourse. Discourse in turn determines which problem definitions gain dominance. He emphasizes that discourse is contested among actors and that shaping discourse is an exercise of power, as it structures how issues are framed and legitimized. Once embedded in policy frameworks, dominant discourses gain legitimacy and shape decision-making (Hajer A., 1995). Putnam further explores discourse in negotiations, showing how language and symbols influence meaning construction and how actors define issues through discourse (Putnam, 2010). Vadrot contributes to this debate by introducing the concept of "epistemic selectivities," demonstrating how scientific knowledge is strategically used to reinforce hegemonic discourses and validate certain policy claims over others (Vadrot, 2017).

Within environmental politics, Bästrand & Lövbrand build on the work of Hajer to map out specific discourses of environmental governance. In their ground-breaking work on the contestation of discourses of environmental governance, they identify three central discourses – ecological modernisation, green governmentality and civic environmentalism – and examine their use in policy rhetoric around international reforestation projects. Through these discourses they map different understandings of climate governance that include market-driven solutions, scientific expertise and stakeholder participation. (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2006).

Dryzek provides a key framework for understanding the evolution of dominant environmental discourses. He identifies major discourses such as environmental problem-solving, survivalism, sustainability and green radicalism, showing how they evolve over time and shape international environmental affairs (Dryzek, 2012). His later work further explores how environmental politics have been structured by language from the 1960s to the Paris Agreement, emphasizing that discourse defines the scope of possible policy responses (Dryzek, 2021).

The role of knowledge production in environmental negotiations is another crucial theme. Corson et al. examine biodiversity governance through collaborative event ethnography. They show how hegemonic discourses emerge through constant reproduction in negotiations. Their findings indicate that as a concept like "protected areas" becomes hegemonic it expands to accommodate diverse actors, altering its meaning and power dynamics (Corson et al., 2014). Vadrot similarly analyses multilateral environmental negotiations as sites of struggle over knowledge, highlighting how global power imbalances, particularly the North-South divide, determine which actors shape negotiation outcomes (Vadrot, 2020).

In the context of UN climate negotiations discourse analysis has been used to examine how knowledge and political interests interact. Pascoe et al. investigate how climate science enables and constraints negotiations, identifying three dominant discourses in climate science, survivalism, ecological modernization and economic rationalism. Their study of COP21 shows how Papua New Guinea strategically adopts hybrid discourses to best align with national interests (Pascoe et al., 2019). Calliari focuses on loss and damage negotiations, finding that the positioning of loss and damage in climate governance is highly contested (Calliari, 2018). Furthermore, Audet maps the discourses on climate justice at COP16, demonstrating how discourse coalitions align both with and beyond traditional North-South divisions and negotiation blocks (Audet, 2013). McGee & Wenta examine technology transfer institutions, showing how different discourses incorporate or reject redistributive claims, shaping the extent to which equity concerns are addressed (McGee & Wenta, 2014). Zhu & Shang explore African countries' discursive strategies in their NDCs, identifying common narratives around responsibility, vulnerability and conditionality to highlight historical injustices and the need for external support (Zhu & Shang, 2024). Bäckstrand & Lövbrand's analysis of climate governance discourses leading up to the Paris Agreement finds that green governmentality and ecological modernization have merged into a dominant "liberal environmentalism" discourse, while civic environmentalism has gained traction in advocating for climate justice (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2019).

Framing has also been widely studied in climate negotiations as a strategic tool to shape policy decisions. Nisbett & Spaiser explore to what extend youth activists succeeded in framing climate finance through a justice framing at UNFCCC COPs, finding that their normative framings successfully entered the discourse at the conferences (Nisbett & Spaiser, 2023). Similarly, Lefstad & Paavola map how different actors frame climate justice within the UNFCCC, identifying four country groupings that strategically use or reject justice claims to advance their interests. Their findings however suggest that while justice arguments are frequently deployed, the UNFCCC has not institutionalized climate justice, as negotiations are structured by existing power asymmetries (Lefstad & Paavola, 2024). Vanhala & Hestbaek's research on loss and damage negotiations highlights how competing frames, such as "liability" and "compensation", were merged into an ambiguous overarching frame, allowing actors to attach different meanings to the final decision. This framing strategy facilitated consensus despite underlying conflicts, demonstrating how contested meanings can be managed through ambiguity (Vanhala & Hestbaek, 2016).

Overall, the literature demonstrates that meaning-making in multilateral negotiations is a contested process, shaped by discourse, knowledge production and strategic framing. While dominant discourses establish the boundaries of possible policy actions, alternative narratives continuously challenge and reshape these frameworks.

2.2 Climate finance

Climate finance is one of the key pillars of global climate action, intended as a means of implementation to support developing countries. It has become a central topic in international climate negotiations, particularly in light of the persistent funding gap in developing countries. The body of research on climate finance has evolved significantly, covering issues such as governance, transparency, distribution and justice. This literature review synthesizes key contributions to the study of climate finance, highlighting major themes and methodological approaches.

A foundational challenge in the study of climate finance is the lack of a universally accepted definition and standardized accounting practices. Scholars such as Shishlov & Censkowsky examine how inconsistencies in accounting methods inflate financial commitments and create challenges in tracking actual flows (Shishlov & Censkowsky, 2022). Similar concerns are raised by Roberts et al., who highlight the lack of accountability in climate finance reporting resulting of opaque distribution mechanisms (Roberts et al., 2021). The issue is further complicated by the fact that much of the reported climate finance consists of loans rather than grants, increasing financial burdens on developing nations rather than alleviating them as shown by Zagema et al. (Zagema et al., 2023). Ferreira shows that transparency remains a central concern to improve trust between developed and developing countries (Ferreira, 2018).

The effectiveness of climate finance in supporting climate action has also been widely debated. Gordon and Timperely examine in their works, whether climate finance has lived up to its intended role, finding that financial commitments remain far below the estimated trillions needed annually as well as an overemphasis on mitigation over adaptation (Gordon, 2023; Timperley, 2021). Rashid et al. investigate whether climate finance has led to increased mitigation ambition, finding little evidence of a strong correlation between financial support and enhanced emission reduction commitments due to structural barriers playing a significant role in determining the impact of climate finance (Rashid et al., 2023).

Climate finance is furthermore analysed from a justice perspective. Gifford & Knudson as well as Khan et al. explore the justice dimensions of finance for adaptation. Khan et al. highlight the failure of wealthier nations to provide adequate adaptation support and their avoidance of historical responsibility (Khan et al., 2020), while Gifford's & Knudson's research suggests that financial flows are disproportionately directed toward mitigation projects in middle-income countries, rather than adaptation efforts in the most climate-vulnerable nations (Gifford & Knudson, 2020). Similarly, Islam investigates the application of distributive justice in climate finance allocation, showing that while vulnerability influences funding decisions, moderately vulnerable countries often receive more support than the most vulnerable (Islam, 2022). Ledger & Klöck examine how

Australia's climate finance contributions align with principles of climate justice in the Pacific. Their findings suggest that Australia's financial support is inconsistent and often not additional, thus not meaningfully contributing to climate justice (Ledger & Klöck, 2023). Furthermore, Ciplet et al. adopt a world-systems perspective, arguing that climate finance often reinforces global dependencies and climate injustices, with wealthier nations maintaining control over funding mechanisms that serve their economic and political interests (Ciplet et al., 2022).

The distribution of climate finance is also a major topic of concern beyond justice perspectives, with a growing body of literature analysing the disparities in funding allocation. A study by Tamasiga et al. focuses on Africa's marginalization in global climate finance, highlighting the structural biases that limit access to funds for the most vulnerable countries (Tamasiga et al., 2023). The research of Tennant et al. highlights similar findings, revealing that while Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are among the most vulnerable, they struggle to secure adequate financial support due to complex eligibility criteria and donor preferences (Tennant et al., 2024). This aligns with broader discussions on the political economy of climate finance, as explored by Halimanjaya, who analyses how geopolitical and economic factors influence the allocation of mitigation finance stronger than objective assessments of climate vulnerability (Halimanjaya, 2016).

The literature on climate finance also includes a significant focus on the governance of post-2025 climate finance commitments with attention shifting toward the NCQG. Qi & Qian analyse the rise of South-South cooperation, finding that China's climate-related development assistance could play a key role in supporting developing countries in post-2025 climate finance in the light of a system that has so far failed to do so (Qi & Qian, 2023). The issue of expanding the climate finance contributor base post-2025 is also examined by Pauw et al., who discuss proposals to include high-income developing countries in climate finance commitments. They argue that the historical divide between developed and developing nations no longer reflects current economic and emissions realities, necessitating a more dynamic and inclusive financing framework (Pauw et al., 2024). Colenbrander et al. examine potential new funding mechanisms beyond expanding the contributing states, including private sector engagement and alternative taxation schemes (Colenbrander et al., 2023). Similarly, Bhattachary et al. analyse how climate finance can be accelerated through unlocking different sources of climate finance in the NCQG (Bhattacharya et al., 2024).

Scholars such as Alayza and Falduto et al. explore the potential structure and sources of the NCQG, emphasizing the need for diversified funding mechanisms as well as improved transparency and accountability mechanisms (Alayza, 2023; Falduto et al., 2024). Pauw et al. expand on these discussions by analysing qualitative aspects of the NCQG, such as transparency, accountability and equitable burden-sharing. Their work underscores the importance of setting clear sub-targets for adaptation finance and loss and damage, ensuring that financial commitments translate into tangible support for the most climate-vulnerable nations (Pauw et al., 2022).

Climate finance governance has also been examined in terms of political influence and institutional structures in the negotiations. Skovgaard investigates how the increased involvement of finance ministries influences the framing of climate finance in the negotiations. He identifies the competing framings “budget framing” and “market failure framing” and analyses how these framings are used by negotiators from different countries. His research finds that the same framings are used by both developed and developing nations and that countries with finance ministries adopting the market failure frame are more willing to provide climate finance, while those using the budget frame focus on limiting contributions (Skovgaard, 2017).

The study of climate finance has evolved from a focus on financial commitments and accounting methodologies to broader questions of equity, governance, justice and geopolitical power. While significant research has been conducted on the shortcomings of current climate finance governance, emerging discussions on the NCQG, the quality of finance and the role of new contributors indicate that the field is rapidly adapting to ongoing political and economic shifts. Although there is already some research on the possible content and structure of the NCQG, there exists a gap in the literature on how actors positioned themselves in the negotiations and how they constructed and contested the meaning of climate finance in the NCQG work program.

3. Theory

3.1 Sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making

The climate crisis and environmental degradation are challenges that cannot effectively be tackled on a national or regional level. These challenges hence make multilateral policy processes increasingly relevant. Summits are at the centre of multilateral environmental policy processes as they bring together not only different states, but also a variety of non-state actors such as non-governmental organisations, intergovernmental organisations, businesses and researchers. At the summits, international treaties governing environmental issues are negotiated and then brought to life through recurring conferences of parties, constituting a central piece of the policy response to transnational environmental challenges.

For these reasons, sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making have become a popular topic of analysis in political sciences. Understanding multilateral environmental politics has historically been very prominent in the domain of international relations and through the concept of an international regime (Keohane & Nye, 2001; Ruggie, 1975). This understanding emphasises the analysis of the behaviour of states within an institutional arrangement and focuses on the regimes capability and efficiency in solving the collective action problem of the environmental crisis (Levy et al., 1995). The conceptualisation of multilateral environmental politics as a regime has further been developed in the concept of regime complexes. The concept of regime complexes centres the analysis of complex institutional arrangements beyond traditional platforms of multilateral agreement-making in environmental politics (Keohane & Victor, 2011) and while mainly being state-centric, also looks at other institutional actors such as international organisations (Langlet & Vadrot, 2024).

The complexity of multilateral environmental regimes has encouraged the use of network perspectives on these sites. Analysing sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making through networks enables research on how different regimes and actors relate to one another across sites (Kim, 2013) and on the formation and evolution of roles and coalitions of actors (Money, 1998).

The object of research at sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making have further been opened to different actors and levels through the concept of governance. Governance focused analysis of multilateral environmental politics looks at the role of both state and non-state actors at different levels and in multiple forms of governance within the field of environmental politics (Bulkeley & Newell, 2023; Hoffmann, 2011). The challenge to state-centric conceptualisation of sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making has been further advanced through the use of ethnographic methods in studying these sites. Ethnographic methods have enabled researchers to broaden and deepen the understanding of relevant actors (Jinnah, 2014) and spaces (Schroeder &

Lovell, 2012) in the formation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). Additionally, they have opened these sites up for the analysis of power structures and authority (Vadrot, 2020).

I build on these understandings and use the concept of *sites of agreement-making* developed by Hughes et al. (Hughes et al., 2021) combined with the theorisation of *summit theatre* by Death (Death, 2011) for my analysis. Hughes et al. define agreement-making as

> "the multiple actors, sites and processes through which environmental agreements are made, and the new sets and arrangements of actors, sites and processes that are created by any specific agreement, which have the potential to reinforce or reorient the global political order" (Hughes et al., 2021, p.2).

This understanding opens the analysis of multilateral summits and governance systems to the inclusion of diverse spaces beyond the formal negotiation room and beyond state-centric concepts to allow a more complex analysis of multilateral order-making. The concept furthermore emphasises that the process of agreement-making does not happen in a neutral or objective way but reflects the power structures between the actors present (ibid.). Furthermore, the making of MEAs has the potential to reinforce or disrupt existing orders, having direct impact on how power structures, resources and responsibility are (re)distributed among actors. The struggle over reinforcing or disrupting the existing order is then at the heart of environmental agreement-making and can be observed in each negotiation, even over seemingly irrelevant pieces of text and wording (ibid.).

Summits however rarely seem to actually transform existing order. This can be understood through their conceptualisation by Death as a performative answer to the climate crisis (Death, 2011, p.2). Understanding summits such as COP29 as performative and theatrical does however not reject their very real political reality and impact but opens them up to a new understanding (ibid., p.6). The performative role of MEAs can rather be seen as showing a global audience through symbolic politics that political elites are tackling issues such as the climate crisis while at the same time these summits are reinforcing the existing world order (ibid., p.2).

In their theatrical role, summits communicate certain norms and expectations to the audience while emphasising the capable response of the political elites and current world order in responding to the crisis (ibid., p.9). The norms and expectations that are being communicated by summit theatre are however highly contested by the different actors (ibid.). The typical plot curve of a climate summit with seemingly inevitable failure being followed by a sudden declaration of success is also part of the performative nature of summits, always affirming the ability of the system to successfully tackle the crisis (ibid.).

This theatrical and performative nature does however not imply that deals are being staged and negotiated behind doors. On the contrary, the transparency and the inclusion of media and non-state actors play a central role in summit theatre (ibid.). Civil society engagement within the summit theatre takes on a special role. Their protest both challenges the hegemonic order-making but also legitimises it (ibid., p.12). The very openness of the summits to protest amplifies the successful performance of meaningful action while providing the necessary theatricality and visibility, supported by intense media coverage that communicates the summit theatre to a wider audience (ibid., p.14).

Understanding the sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making as performative and theatrical opens the eye to numerous implications on how environmental issues such as the climate crisis are being handled and understood (ibid., p.2). One of the implications of summit theatre is that announcing voluntary initiatives with a lot of media attention has at times become a more popular option for states than agreeing on a legally binding treaty, which weakens the multilateral response to environmental crisis (ibid., p.11). Additionally, the performative nature of summits favours bigger actors that can demand visibility, not the most democratically or ethically legitimised actors (ibid., p.15). Most importantly, the technical and depoliticised structures of these summits purposely fail to challenge existing orders, while hiding in performance and theatre that these are unfit to tackle the crisis they have caused and leaving no room for visions of alternative orders (ibid., p.15).

3.2 The creation of knowledge through discourse

Discourses play a central role in the creation of knowledge at sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making. In this thesis, a discourse is understood as an ensemble of concepts, categories and ideas that gives significance to how actors construct and understand reality and allows people with a shared discourse to share an understanding of a given issue (Dryzek, 2012 p.46, 2021 p.10). Discourses hence constitute knowledge claims through the inclusion and exclusion of assumptions and judgements that establish the foundation for agreements and disagreements (Dryzek, 2012 p.46f.). Social reality is furthermore constructed through discourse within the social practices which produce the discourse (Pascoe et al., 2019 p.79).

Within this understanding of discourse as central in the construction of knowledge, written and spoken text play an important role in materialising and communicating discourse (Paltridge, 2021 p.7). The production of texts is both shaped by social practices as well as shaping them. Texts do not exist in a vacuum but create their meaning in reference to other texts that already exist, constantly being created in a relationship with prior text and existing social context (ibid.). The same is true for discourse, which through its role in the construction of reality is both shaped by its social context and shaping it. This is based on the assumption that language itself is not a neutral object but also shaped by its users and social contexts (ibid.).

Analysing the creation of knowledge through the lens of discourse is based on the understanding that discourse constitutes reality and that creating a discourse thus means creating a reality. If someone were to learn about something through a certain discourse, this understanding of the issue would be their knowledge about it and become part of their social reality (ibid.). This critical understanding of discourse in the construction of knowledge rejects the idea of value-free and objective knowledge. Instead, knowledge is always influenced by the social structures and contexts of the discourse it is created through (Pascoe et al., 2019 p.79). In its creation of meaning, discourse includes certain truths, while marginalising or excluding others. Thereby it establishes what is accepted as common and legitimate knowledge and constructs reality (Dryzek, 2021 p.10). The specific knowledge that a discourse creates hence enables or constraints certain actions (Pascoe et al., 2019 p.79). Hegemonic discourses can also be contested through alternative discourses, as discourse is not static but emerges over time. If a discourse is contested, this can lead to the existence of competing discourses or to a new hegemonic discourse (Dryzek, 2006, p.8).

Discourse is a powerful tool in the creation of knowledge, and power also plays an important role in how its creation and contestation materialises. Discourses set the norms and perceptions of an issue, hence being beneficial to some while neglecting other actors' interests (Dryzek, 2021 p.10). The analysis of knowledge creation through discourse can therefore enable the exploration of interests that lie below the surface of the texts. It allows the critical examination of how text and discourse are aligned and whose interests they serve or do not serve (Pascoe et al., 2019 p.79).

Analysing sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making through discourse is based on the notion that the language used is important in how environmental issues are understood and thus how the governance of these issues materialises (Dryzek, 2021 p.10). The power of language in creating meaning is evident in multilateral negotiations, a space where a wide variety of actors comes together to fight over words, well aware of the implications each of them can have (Vadrot, 2020 p.234ff.). The different understanding of environmental issues is therefore central to the negotiations of MEAs as they are the basis of political disputes (Dryzek, 2021 p.13).

At sites of multilateral environmental agreement-making, there is at least an official agreement on the goal of improved climate protection. The conflict is often observable when it comes to which social realities and which discourses are being discussed and which ones are being excluded (Hajer, 1995, p.43). The process of inclusion or exclusion of certain truths and notions of an issue can be a powerful way to shape multilateral agreements in a way that is beneficial for a certain actor or group of actors (Dryzek, 2021, p.10). Dominant discourses on any given issue can however also be contested through conflicting discourses that prioritise or marginalise other truths. In the negotiations of MEAs, discourse analysis can therefore enable the analysis of the fight for dominance and authority over meaning (Hajer, 1995, p.44). This is especially important as the contestation of knowledge is not fought on neutral grounds but within multilateral policy processes which are based on multiple forms of inequality among participating actors (Zhu & Shang, 2024 p.218).

4. Methodology

4.1 Creating and contesting meaning through framing

The concept of framing has been utilised in a wide range of disciplines and with a variety of different methods (Van Hulst et al., 2024). The concept is based on the observation that any issue, problem domain, situation or interaction can be understood and represented very differently by different actors (Dewulf & Bouwen, 2012, p.169). It is further based on the understanding of discourse theory, that in saying something we create meaning. This makes framing a powerful tool in creating reality through establishing a hegemonic understanding of an issue (Van Hulst et al., 2024, p.6). In the field of conflict and negotiation studies, framing has been used to understand the processes of creation and contestation of meaning as well as how frames emerge or become dominant (Dewulf & Bouwen, 2012).

Framing describes the process of giving meaning to an issue by selectively including and excluding aspects of the problem complex, focusing on or relegating certain aspects and embedding the selected aspects in the overarching problem domain (Dewulf et al., 2011, p.53). In the process of framing, different actors select and relegate different aspects of a problem complex, which leads to differing understandings of an issue. The selection of aspects happens through discourse and in policy processes such as multilateral negotiations, this selection is done in a strategic manner (Van Hulst et al., 2024, p.6f.).

This work understands framing as cognitive issue framing, through which actors give meaning to substantive issues in a negotiation setting (Dewulf et al., 2009, p.167). The cognitive approach to framing investigates actors' representation of an issue through surface evidence that holds indirect information about their underlying cognitive frames (ibid., p.176). In the process of framing, actors can engage in meaning-making on two levels. On the one hand, they can contest the boundaries of a complex policy problem, hence which issues should be part of a common understanding of the problem domain. On the other hand, they can engage in the framing of issues that are understood as part of the problem domain (Dewulf et al., 2011, p.53). Both of these processes of framing work by strategically including, excluding, marginalising or emphasising certain frames and cues (ibid., p.54).

Contrasting framings of an issue by different actors can lead to frame conflicts. Within frame conflicts, counter-frames can be constructed to contest the meaning making of opposing actors. The contestation of these frames and counter-frames can in turn induce the suppression or dominance of certain frames (Van Hulst et al., 2024, p.6ff.). In this process of frame contestation, particular interests and positions as well as hegemonic discourses and power positions can strategically be challenged or perpetuated (ibid., p.8).

4.2 Drivers

According to Spector et al. actors take on different levels of activity and different roles in international environmental agreement making. They are drivers, conductors, defenders, brakers and cruisers (Spector et al., 1994, p.11). Drivers are actors that actively organise the negotiation to bring about an agreement consistent with their interests. Conductors also actively work towards an agreement but from a neutral position while defenders are prioritising a single issue over an overall agreement. Brakers are actors that oppose either certain issues or the broader regime and lastly cruisers are actors without strong interests that follow other actors in the negotiations (ibid.). Actors can take on these roles at any time and can shift their role over the course of a negotiation. These roles can play an important part in the consensus building within state coalitions, where drivers and conductors organise consensus (ibid.). Actors also have strategies to their availability that go beyond the described roles, such as exiting the negotiation or participating in trade-offs with other actors (ibid.).

For this research, it is important to look at the stakeholders most active in shaping the meaning of climate finance in the negotiations, as they most likely shape the discourse that the negotiations follow. Hence, following the definition of Spector et al., this work looks at the drivers of the negotiation, as they are the most likely to try and influence the negotiations according to their preferences. To understand how actors act as drivers and shape the discourse around a negotiation, this research looks beyond the activity in the negotiation room and also tries to capture actors' involvement in side events, as will be outlined in the methods section. To reconstruct which actors have taken on the role of drivers, I established a framework which is outlined in the methods section. The indicators for the framework were chosen to capture a broad range of publicly visible aspects of driving the discourse around the NCQG within the UN climate regime.

4.3 Ethics & Positionality

As a male white researcher from the Global North, my perspective on the world is influenced by my socialisation in a capitalist and neoliberal society that I profit from. This fact, as well as my personal involvement in the topic have to be kept in mind when reading my research.

I have been actively involved in climate politics on a national level in Germany and Austria since 2019 and in international climate politics since 2022. This involvement equips me with a deep knowledge on the topic and space that I analyse in this research but it also influences my understanding of them. I am doing my best to not let my personal biases shape my research and analysis. However, I am well aware that I cannot completely detach myself from them and that this research does not constitute an objective truth but is a product of my analysis of the data I have collected.

I have learned to navigate and understand the spaces of climate politics, including the spaces this thesis analyses from a civil society perspective, and my understanding of them is consequently coloured by this experience. I have attended two COPs and two Sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBs) in person as well as one COP virtually. I am active within the official Children and Youth Constituency of the UNFCCC (YOUNGO), one of the actors that is being analysed in this research. I am a part of the finance and markets working group and a colleague and friend of the people who have shaped the position of YOUNGO which is analysed here. Additionally, I have interacted with some of the actors I am analysing and that I have interviewed as an activist before and while writing this thesis. I have always clearly separated the roles of activist and researcher and disclosed my activism to anyone I have approached for this thesis.

The topic of climate finance has been the focus of my activism since attending SB58 in June 2023 and my perspectives on the negotiations of this topic are deeply influenced by my experiences following the NCQG negotiations and other finance items at SB58, COP28, SB60 and COP29. In my research I have tried to distance myself from personal opinions on certain positions, but my very personal interest in a liveable future on this planet can certainly not be completely put aside in my work.

As a researcher from the Global North, I also directly benefit from the existing world order and power asymmetries which the climate crisis is caused by. My privileged position has allowed me to observe the NCQG negotiations on the ground as an activist and a researcher. Profiting from these privileges bears the risk of leaving me with blind spots in my critical analysis of the creation and contestation of the meaning of climate finance and sustaining the very asymmetries that I analyse.

5. Methods

5.1 Delimitation of research object

To understand how the meaning of climate finance is created and contested, it is necessary to look at those actors that were most active in shaping the meaning during the work program. As this thesis is limited in its scope, it is necessary to limit the number of actors analysed in a way that allows for in-depth analysis while still including a variety of different positions. Relying on the previously introduced concept of drivers, I define the most active actors in shaping the work program as drivers (Spector et al., 1994). In line with my understanding of multilateral agreement-making, I expand this assessment beyond the negotiation room to also include other forms of activity within the UNFCCC conferences.

To identify the drivers of the NCQG work program I established a framework with three indicators that quantify the level of activity of each actor. Those are the actors' number of submissions, their activeness during the negotiations on the NCQG at SB60 and their active involvement in side events on the topic. The first indicator is the amount of written submissions that parties, party groups and non-party stakeholders submitted during the work program on the NCQG (UNFCCC, n.d.-c). This encompasses submissions both to the technical expert dialogues and the meetings under the ad hoc work program. The submissions are the most prominent possibility of influencing the direction of the work program as the views expressed in them are meant to guid the co-chairs in building the work plan and setting the topics.

The second indicator is the activeness of stakeholders during the negotiations. To measure this indicator, I chose the negotiation session at SB60 for two reasons. On the one hand, I was present at this negotiation session and hence had the necessary documentation to retrace the interventions made. On the other hand, it was a very decisive session for the framing of climate finance, as the first draft text on the NCQG was negotiated there. To quantify the level of activity of actors during the negotiations at SB60, I used two sources. The number of mentions in the climate finance section of the daily ENB reports of SB60 (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, n.d.) combined with the number of interventions during the negotiations on the NCQG at the Second Ad Hoc Work Program during SB60 in June 2024 (own observations). The ENB reports are a widely recognised key resource that covers a variety of environment related UN processes, providing daily summaries of the most important events across all negotiation streams. Mentions in the climate finance section of the daily reports hence indicate a high level of activity and visibility of the actor. The interventions made during the important negotiations at SB60 furthermore demonstrate an actor's level of activity in shaping the draft text on the NCQG. The number of interventions was divided by two, as their large number would have otherwise dominated the framework disproportionately. As an intervention is not more relevant to identifying the drivers than any other indicator, their number should not dominate the entire framework.

The third indicator is the number of side events on the topic of the NCQG that actors either organised or were panellists in during the UNFCCC conferences since the beginning of the NCQG work program in 2022 (UNFCCC, n.d.-d). In line with my conceptualisation of sites of multilateral agreement-making, I include side events in my framework as they are an important platform to construct the meaning of climate finance at UNFCCC conferences beyond the negotiation room. A high level of activity of an actor in side events on the topic hence indicates a role in shaping the meaning of climate finance.

Through the framework I have identified nine driving actors which will be analysed in this research. The negotiation groups African Group of Negotiators (AGN), Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) and the Arab Group, the parties European Union, Norway and the United States of America as well as the civil society constituencies Environmental non-governmental organisations (ENGO) and Children and Youth non-governmental organisations (YOUNGO). This sample includes 65 written submissions with at least five from every actor for the discourse analysis. The submissions include three joint submissions, one by AILAC and AOSIS and two by ENGO and YOUNGO. In the table these submissions are counted towards each of the involved actors.

Table 1. Drivers in the NCQG Negotiations

Party / Party Group / Civil Society Constituency	**Submission**	**Interventions AHWP II /2 + ENB mentions**	**Side Events**	**Total**
AGN	7	9	5	**23**
AILAC	10	2	2	**14**
AOSIS	6	10,5	3	**19,5**
Arab Group	8	10	0	**18**
EU	9	3,5	3	**15,5**
Norway	6	2,5	1	**9,5**
USA	5	3	2	**10**
ENGO	6	0,5	9	**15,5**
YOUNGO	8	0,5	2	**10,5**

Note. The table follows alphabetical order, starting with state actors followed by non-state actors. The data for the submissions is from the NCQG submissions portal (UNFCCC, n.d.-c). The data for the interventions at the Second Ad Hoc Work Program during SB60 is from my own observations. The data for the ENB reports is from the climate finance section of the daily reports on SB60 (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, n.d.). The data for the side events is from the side event schedule of the UNFCCC (UNFCCC, n.d.-d).

The cut off between drivers analysed in this research and other actors is decided by identifying a number of observed actors that is feasible for the limits of a thesis while still representing a broad geographic and economic distribution. According to the framework, there is no major gap in levels of activity between the drivers and the next most active actors. The choice of actors should hence not be understood as a definite judgment of actor's engagement in the work program. Negotiation teams moreover significantly vary in size, making an active involvement across all indicators more feasible to bigger teams than to more limited ones. Additionally, while covering a wide range of activities under the work program, the framework could be missing indicators that point towards other countries being drivers that are not publicly available.

The reason why country groups of developing countries are analysed as one coherent actor instead of their member countries individually is that they jointly submitted their written submissions on behalf of the groups. With very few exceptions, they furthermore take the floor within the negotiations on behalf of their respective groups. Developed countries such as Norway and the USA, that are members of the Umbrella Group, are also organised in party groups. They however both submitted their submissions in national capacity as well as delivered their interventions in national capacity. Therefore, they are analysed as single actors.

In the framework, the country groups Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Group of 77+China (G77) were not taken into consideration, even though they were among the most active actors. G77 is a group representing 134 developing countries which are nearly all organised in smaller country groups as well (The Group of 77, n.d.). The size of the groups leads to very diverse positions on controversial topics within the negotiations on the NCQG and the group does not submit common submission to the work program. Therefore, it is not suitable to be analysed as one coherent actor. The LDCs were not taken into account although being very active, as they strongly overlap with AGN, AOSIS and Arab Group with 39 of their 45 members also represented in these groups (LDC Climate Change, n.d.). Due to this significant overlap with other very active groups, the LDCs were excluded to ensure that the actors analysed represent a wide variety of different positions.

As this research aims to look beyond state actors in the creation and contestation of the meaning of climate finance, civil society is also included in the framework. The unique rules for civil society engagement in the UNFCCC however complicate the identification of non-party drivers. Civil society is organised within officially recognised constituencies under the UNFCCC. These constituencies, opposed to singular non-state actors, can influence negotiation streams not only through handing in submissions and organising side events but also through delivering interventions in the negotiations. Furthermore, individual civil society organisations that were active during the work program such as the World Wildlife Fund are organised within the constituencies. Hence, their meaning-making is represented through the constituency. Due to these more comprehensive possibilities and their broader representation, constituencies are best fit to be analysed in this research. Among the constituencies, ENGO and YOUNGO are clearly identified as the drivers according to the framework as they show much higher levels of activity than other constituencies.

For the purpose of this research ENGO and Climate Action Network International (CAN) are considered as one actor, as their networks of environmental NGOs overlap significantly, with CAN representing the majority of civil society organised within ENGO (Climate Action Network International, n.d.).

5.2 Data Collection

I have collected different forms of data for my research on this topic. A key form of data for this thesis is text. The production of text plays a key role in multilateral negotiations, where a wide variety of texts are produced (Allan & Chasek, 2023, p.143). The category of text that this thesis analyses are submissions. This encompasses submission from both parties and observers. The submissions offer insights into parties' positions as well as non-party stakeholders' views on the negotiation item (ibid., p.146). The submissions made by parties, party groups and civil society during the three-year negotiation period of the NCQG are the central piece of data for this research. The nine drivers I have identified have submitted a combined number of 65 submissions, with each driver handing in at least five. The length of these submissions ranges between two to fourteen pages and while some give a more general overview of an actor's positions, other focus in detail on very specific aspects of the finance goal.

The analysis of text is complemented by interviews I have conducted for the research. Interviews allow researchers a more nuanced insight into the often complex processes at a multilateral conference, especially when combined with other methods (Yamineva, 2023, p.169). Conducting interviews can be done in varying ways, depending on the intended outcomes (ibid.). I have conducted the interviews after my literature review and my text analysis for the purpose of information gathering. The interviews with key stakeholders of the drivers had the purpose of strengthening my analysis of the different framings used in the NCQG work program.

During COP29 I identified and contacted members of the climate finance teams of the different actors to interview after the conference. Unfortunately, the members of the finance team of the USA were not open for an interview. Additionally, members of the finance teams of AGN and the Arab Group confirmed their availability for an interview after COP but then either stopped responding to messages or cancelled on short notice. Hence, I was not able to conduct interviews with these three actors. The interviewees that I did interview have different positions within the finance teams of the respective actors, reaching from lead negotiator (state actors) or climate finance team lead (non-state actors) to junior team member. The interviews with AILAC, AOSIS, the EU, Norway and YOUNGO were done via zoom, while the interview with ENGO was done asynchronously via voice messages. The interviews were done in a semi-structured way, with priorly prepared but open questions. While some questions were the same for all interviewees, other questions were tailored to the specific coding that emerged from the actor's submissions (see exemplary questions in annex I).

The data from the submissions and interviews is being complemented by my own observations at COP29. The ethnographic method of participant observation allows for research to capture more hidden phenomena at multilateral negotiations such as questions of access, order and power (Marion Suiseeya & Zanotti, 2023, p.187). My personal observations from COP29 are not organised in a systematic manner and are limited to my personal perspective and experience. However, the participant observation and witnessing the negotiations first hand allows me a more complex understanding of more hidden processes of contestation that are less visible in texts and interviews.

I have attended all public negotiations on the NCQG at COP29 as well as some side events and actions on climate finance. My source of data on the interventions in the negotiations is the shared note-taking document of the Women and Gender Constituency and YOUNGO, to which I have contributed at COP29. The document contains 75 pages of notes, including 36 pages of notes from interventions by the actors analysed in this thesis. There are, however, limitations to this data as observers were not always allowed in the room and webcasts sometimes did not work. The notes are further limited to the meetings that took place in larger settings and do not include more informal deliberations to which only high-level state representatives had access. Additionally, I could not attend a larger number of side events on climate finance as they often overlapped with negotiations, in which case I prioritised the latter. For this reason, multiple side events also had to take place without climate finance negotiators who were supposed to be on the panel, making them less relevant to this research.

The data collected through the submissions, interviews and negotiations is naturally not a neutral point of data but shaped by what the actors want to portray and how they want to be perceived. As my research aims at analysing the actors' construction and contestation of meaning and not at producing a neutral account of climate finance, this is not an obstacle to the research but an asset.

Table 2. Sources of Data

Data point	Category	Date
Submissions	Text	2022-2024
Interviews	Interview	12.2024-01.2025
Notes from the negotiations	Participant observation / Own observations	12.11.2024-23.11.2024
Notes from side events	Participant observation / Own observations	12.11.2024-21.11.2024
Other observations	Participant observation / Own observations	11.11.2024-24.11.2024

Note. Different forms of data collected for this research. See annex III for a detailed table on all data points.

I coded all submissions, interviews and interventions in a qualitative process to identify central positions and framings of each actor. In the initial coding, I have analysed fragments of text for the understanding of climate finance contained in them. During this coding I stayed close to the original data and collected the different meanings and understandings of climate finance conveyed. After having done the initial coding for all data sets, I conducted a second phase of coding in which I organised the different initial codings into more abstract categories to organise the meanings given to climate finance thematically (see annex II for exemplary coding). These categories that I inductively developed out of the initial codes were:

- Responsibility for Climate Finance
- Purpose of Climate Finance
- Delimitation of Climate Finance
- Recipients of Climate Finance
- Scope of Climate Finance
- Justice and vulnerability in Climate Finance

The coding and the categories I developed were then the basis for both my description of positions on climate finance and my inductive setting of more abstract framings and counter framings in the negotiations.

The combination of these different data sources together with my personal participation and positionality in this topic allow me a complex and nuanced analysis of the contestation of meaning in the negotiations on the NCQG.

6. Climate Finance Governance

The central pieces of multilateral climate governance, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement all emphasize the need for financial support from wealthier nations to those with limited resources and greater vulnerability to climate change. This acknowledges the significant disparities in both countries' contributions to climate change and their ability to mitigate its effects and adapt to its consequences. Aligned with the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” established in the Convention, developed nations are expected to provide financial assistance to support developing countries in achieving the objectives of the UNFCCC (*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992).

Article 4 of the Convention outlines the financial responsibilities of developed countries in supporting climate action in developing nations. It mandates that developed countries provide new and additional financial resources to help cover the costs of emissions reporting and reduction efforts. These financial commitments should be adequate, predictable and include appropriate burden sharing among developed nations (ibid., Art.4.3). Additionally, developed countries must assist particularly vulnerable developing nations in adapting to the adverse effects of climate change (ibid., Art.4.4). They are also required to promote and finance the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and expertise to support sustainable development (ibid., Art.4.5). Importantly, the ability of developing countries to fulfil their climate commitments depends on the extent to which developed nations meet their financial and technological obligations, while also recognizing that economic growth and poverty reduction remain top priorities for developing nations (ibid, Art.4.7).

Furthermore, article 11 of the Convention establishes the formation of a financial mechanism for the provision of concessional and grant based climate finance for developing countries (ibid., Art.11). The activities funded through the financial mechanisms should address climate change and they can be complemented by climate finance that is provided through other bilateral, regional or multilateral channels. Article 11 further requires the financial mechanisms to regularly report on both their work and on climate finance needs to implement the convention to the COPs (ibid., Art.11).

The operating entities of these financial mechanisms are the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Green Environmental Facility (GEF). They report to the COPs and directly finance activities, programs and measures in developing countries relating to climate change (UNFCCC, n.d.-b). They are complemented by funds dedicated to specific programs which are most often chaired by either the GEF or the GCF. These funds are the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage and lastly the Special Climate Change Fund. The GCF, the GEF as well as all funds have been adopted as part of the financial mechanisms of the Paris Agreement as well (ibid.).

The Kyoto Protocol reinforces the financial obligations of developed countries in supporting developing nations' climate efforts in its article 11 (*Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1998). It reiterates the requirement of developed countries to provide new and additional financial support that should be adequate, predictable and fairly distributed among developed countries to ensure an effective and equitable flow of resources (ibid.).

At COP15 in 2009, parties agreed on an operationalisation of climate finance support, the so called 100 billion (bn) goal. Developed country parties committed to jointly mobilising 100bn United States Dollar (USD) for mitigation and adaptation action in developing countries by 2020 (*Copenhagen Accord. Draft Decision -/CP.15*, 2009). This funding should come from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance and should support developing countries in mitigation, adaptation, technology development as well as transfer and capacity-building to enhance the implementation of the Convention (ibid.).

The 100bn USD goal was however not met in the years 2020 and 2021, according to the data aggregated by the OECD on behalf of the developed countries (OECD, 2024). This data is further highly contested due to the lack of transparency and agreed upon accounting methods in the 100bn goal. While, according to the OECD, the goal was met and exceeded in 2022, independent reports come to very different conclusions (Zagema et al., 2023). These differences in accounting were an issue even within the climate finance negotiations at COP29, where parties debated which numbers to acknowledge (own observations).

The Paris Agreement, negotiated at COP21, gives climate finance a dual purpose. In article 2.1c the Agreement calls for the alignment of all financial flows with the global transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient development as part of its long-term goals (*Paris Agreement*, 2015). In article 9, the obligation of developed countries to provide financial resources to assist developing nations in both mitigation and adaptation efforts is reaffirmed (ibid., Art.9.1). Climate finance should hence be aligned with low-carbon and climate-resilient development globally while also being a central instrument of support for developing countries.

In article 9 of the Agreement, countries beyond developed countries are for the first time also encouraged to contribute voluntarily to climate finance support (ibid., Art.9.2). The mobilisation of climate finance is described as a global effort in which developed nations are expected to take the lead. Finance should be mobilised from diverse sources, ensuring that these efforts support country-driven strategies while taking into account needs and priorities of developing countries and going beyond previous commitments (ibid., Art.9.3). The scaling up of financial resources should furthermore be balanced between adaptation and mitigation, prioritizing the needs of particularly vulnerable nations (ibid., Art.9.4). The Paris Agreement also calls for the financial mechanisms to ensure efficient and simplified access to climate finance, particularly for these vulnerable nations (ibid., Art.9.9). Moreover, the Paris Agreement decides that developed countries must report biannually on the climate finance they provide and mobilise, with financial considerations integrated into the Global Stocktake (ibid., Art.9.7).

At COP21 parties additionally agree on extending the 100bn goal until 2025 and on setting a new collective quantified goal from a floor of 100bn prior to 2025. Both the extension of the 100bn goal as well as the NCQG shall be set in accordance with article 9.3 of the Paris Agreement (*Adoption of the Paris Agreement. Decision 1/CP.21*, 2016).

At COP26 in 2021 parties decide the modalities of the work program on the NCQG (*Glasgow Climate Pact. Decision 1/CMA.3*, 2022). The work program shall be conducted between 2022 and 2024 in an open, transparent and inclusive manner with regular consultations with UN-agencies, the Standing Committee on Finance, experts, academia, the private sector and civil society (ibid.). The work program shall further consist of eleven technical expert dialogues, three meetings of the ad hoc work program and three high-level ministerial dialogues with annual reports to the COPs of the co-chairs on the work conducted (ibid.). Additionally, the COP decision establishes that the NCQG should contribute to the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement while taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. The deliberations on the goal should include quantity, quality, scope, access features, sources of funding and transparency arrangements (ibid.).

The extensive work program with its innovative form of expert dialogues and broad inclusiveness of all stakeholders was however only successful to a limited extend. The draft text that it produced over the multiyear deliberations was rejected by parties in the first negotiation at COP29 (own observations). After extending COP29 by two days, the conferences nevertheless succeeded in producing an agreement on the NCQG (own observations). The parties determine that the NCQG should accelerate the achievement of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement laid out in article 2, limiting global warming and increasing the ability to adapt to climate change (*New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance. Draft Decision -/CMA.6*, 2024). This should be accomplished in a matter that makes financial flows consistent with low emissions and climate-resilient development while not threatening food production, reiterating the importance of reforming the international financial architecture (IFA) and addressing disenablers and barriers for climate finance in developing countries (ibid.). The parties further decide that the goal should support developing countries in implementing their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and national adaptation plans (NAPs). It should reflect the needs and priorities of developing countries while highlighting that those are reported to be around a trillion USD annually. The decision calls on all actors to work together in scaling up climate finance for developing countries from all sources to at least 1.3 trillion USD annually by 2035 (ibid.).

Additionally, the parties reaffirm the commitment laid out in article 9 of the Paris Agreement of mobilising at least 300bn USD annually for climate action in developing countries, with developed countries taking the lead. This finance should come from a wide variety of sources, include climate-related finance from multilateral development banks and support mitigation, adaptation and transparency arrangements (ibid.). The support is supposed to achieve a balance between mitigation and adaptation while taking into account country-driven strategies and acknowledging the gaps in funding for loss and damage. Parties also recognise the importance of supporting just transitions and cross-cutting efforts in developing countries through the goal (ibid.). The decision further encourages developing countries to contribute to the goal through South-South cooperation on a voluntary basis and calls on all parties to enhance their enabling environments (ibid.).

The final decision on the NCQG also addresses various quality issues such as the need for enhanced access to climate finance, the need for concessional-finance for most vulnerable countries and the inclusion of vulnerable communities in the benefits of climate finance (ibid.). The parties additionally determine to launch the "Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T" leading up to COP30 to scale up concessional and non-debt-inducing climate finance for developing countries (ibid.). Lastly, the decision establishes periodic stock taking of the implementation of the NCQG, with a review in 2030 and deliberations on the way forward prior to 2035 (ibid.).

The adoption of the NCQG however came with strong protests from developing countries during the plenary session. A number of developing countries criticised both the content of the decision and how it was reached, with India leading the way and objecting to the adoption as it was not allowed to intervene prior to the gavelling (own observations). No country however formally challenged the very fast gavelling of the presidency so even in light of harsh criticism from developing countries, the adoption of the NCQG remained (UNFCCC, n.d.-a; own observation).

7. Climate Finance Positions

Based on the analysis of the data outlined in chapter five, this chapter provides an overview of the drivers' positions on climate finance. The positions will be outlined for each actor individually. They derive from the categories that I inductively developed in the coding process and summarise the drivers' positions on central conflict lines around the goal. They are based on the different sources outlined in the methods section to give a well-rounded overview of how the different actors attribute meaning around the most important aspects of climate finance. The categories that guide this chapter are the questions of who should be responsible for climate finance, what should be the purpose of climate finance, how should climate finance be delimited, who should receive climate finance, what should be the scope of climate finance and what roles should justice and vulnerability play in climate finance. An overview of the key positions of all drivers can be found in the following table 3.

During the negotiations there were also discussions around other smaller elements such as access modalities or transparency arrangements. While these discussions are not portrayed in-depth in this work, the meaning that is attributed to more technical features is being included in the analysis.

7.1 African Group of Negotiators

The African Group of Negotiators outlines their idea of the NCQG as a goal that enables all developing countries to combine climate action with a right to development through financial support from developed countries.

According to AGN's position, the responsibility to pay for climate finance lies exclusively with the developed country parties. The group understands climate finance as a public obligation of these countries and demands of them to establish burden sharing arrangements to fairly share the costs of climate finance between developed countries. AGN underlines that providing climate finance is not an act of charity by developed countries but a requirement for both ambition and survival in developing countries. Concerning responsibility, AGN references the logic of the 100bn goal that they would want to see continued in the new climate finance goal.

Looking at the receiving side of climate finance, AGN criticises a lack of meaningful increase of climate finance to the African continent within the 100bn goal. Therefore,

Table 3. Overview of drivers' key climate finance positions

	Who should pay for climate finance?	Who should receive climate finance?	What should climate finance be used for?	What counts as climate finance?	How should the quantum be set?	What role do justice and vulnerability play?
AGN	Developed countries	All developing countries	Country driven climate action & sustainable development in developing countries	Concessional finance	Science on N&P of developing countries	Supporting those who have contributed the least but are affected the most
AILAC	Developed countries	All developing countries	Enabling developing countries to reach goals of the PA	Concessional finance & addressing disenablers	Science on N&P of developing countries in limiting global warming	Support as a matter of justice & rights-based goal
AOSIS	Developed countries	(Most vulnerable) Developing countries	Enabling developing countries to reach goals of the PA	Public concessional finance & IFA reform	Science on N&P in worst case scenarios as a floor	Considerations for most vulnerable & justice and equity as basis of goal
Arab Group	Developed countries	Developing countries	Needs and priorities of developing countries	Public concessional finance	Science on the N&P of developing countries	None
EU	Global effort led by developed countries	Most vulnerable & ambitious countries	Global transformation & support for developing countries	All finance globally spent on climate action	Realistic and doable quantum set in a political process	Public finance for most vulnerable & rights-based goal
Norway	Countries with economic capabilities & private sector	Global investments & support for developing countries	Achieve goals of the PA & support for developing countries	All climate specific investment and support	Realistic and doable quantum set in a political process	Special considerations for most vulnerable countries, right-based goal
USA	Global goal including all parties and all sources	Most ambitious countries	Global economic transformation to reach goals of the PA	All climate related finance and policies	As a floor of 100bn USD	Special considerations for most vulnerable countries & groups
ENGO	Developed countries	Developing countries & communities	Achieve goals of the PA & support for developing countries and communities	Public concessional finance	Updated science on the needs of developing countries	Rights-based goal & justice for affected communities
YOUNGO	Developed countries	Developing countries & communities	Achieve goals of the PA & support for developing countries and communities	Public concessional finance	Floor, based on science on needs of developing countries	Justice, equity and rights as basis of goal

Note. This table provides an overview of the basic positions of the drivers, which will be set forth in-depth in this chapter. The data on the position is from the respective submissions, interventions and observations at COP29 and interviews conducted for this research. In the table, PA is short for Paris Agreement and N&P is short for needs and priorities.

AGN stresses the need for all developing countries to receive climate finance with an equitable distribution. AGN also argues that the climate finance goal can only relate to developed countries as a contributor and developing countries as recipients and therefore rejects mentions of article 2.1c, which would mandate all countries to rechannel finance flows towards net-zero. AGN further stresses that the climate finance goal under the UNFCCC should only account for climate finance that flows from developed to developing countries. They also strongly oppose the inclusion of domestic climate finance mobilisation in the goal. Furthermore, AGN recalls the lessons they have learned from the 100bn goal regarding the types of finance included. They criticise the high number of loans in climate finance as well as too little transparency and accountability due to the broad understanding of what can be counted as climate finance. In this context, AGN stresses the need to exclude any non-concessional finance such as market-rate loans as well as export credits from climate finance instruments and demands for concessional finance to be accounted for in grant-equivalence. However, AGN argues in favour of the inclusion of other climate finance instruments and enablers including reducing cost of capital in developing countries, increasing the mobilisation ratio from public finance, expanding financial instruments such as local currency lending and climate resilient debt clauses and debt forgiveness arrangements.

Looking at the broader picture, AGN criticises that the current logic of climate finance fails to deliver what is actually needed by them. They lament that climate finance is currently not based on the needs of developing countries, but on what developed countries are willing to provide. According to AGN, this however does not address the developing countries need for structural change to enable them to reconcile climate action and sustainable development.

In line with this critique of the current climate finance regime, AGN stresses that the purpose of the NCQG is not a global transformation, but the support of developing countries in their climate resilient development. For this reason, AGN contests any mention of global needs, a global transformation or of article 2.1c in the text and negotiations on climate finance, arguing that these aspects are outside the mandate of the NCQG.

The NCQG should however encompass all costs of the green transition in developing countries and act as a counterbalance to negative implications for development. Climate finance should enable developing countries to achieve progress in their development through the inclusion of supporting the strengthening of institutional capacities and the efforts towards the eradication of poverty. For climate action not to hinder general development, AGN emphasises the need for debt sustainability in climate finance and calls for finance that does not increase the debt burden on developing countries. According to AGN, this is especially important in regard to the special circumstances of African countries with difficult economic situations, a high degree of vulnerability to the effects of the climate crisis and a lack of climate finance being directed there.

When it comes to financing climate action in developing countries, AGN stresses the need for finance to support country driven ownership of climate action. As there are individual national circumstances in every country, countries should have full ownership over their paths in development and climate action. Furthermore, AGN argues that high levels of climate finance are a precondition for ambitious climate action in developing countries. Hence, limiting global warming globally through the pathways outlined by the IPCC can only be achieved through sufficient climate finance that enables climate action in developing countries. This finance would need to be directed towards mitigation, adaptation and losses and damages as well as towards financing a just transition in developing countries.

AGN emphasises that providing sufficient climate finance to developing countries and especially to the African continent will lead to benefits globally due to the opportunities for investment and the economic benefits of financing mitigation and adaptation now, compared to the exponentially higher costs of alleviating effects of the climate crisis later.

The African Group of Negotiators also stresses the importance of justice in climate finance. For them, justice in climate finance means linking the NCQG to the larger landscape of the IFA and acknowledging the inequalities in current international financial flows. Additionally, AGN describes climate finance as an act of fairness to support those who contributed the least, but are the most vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis, such as the African countries. For these countries, climate finance should be a means to counterbalance negative implications for development and reconcile development and climate action.

7.2 Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean

AILAC's position on climate finance shifted significantly over the course of the NCQG workstream. While the first submissions stress a dual purpose of the climate finance goal, addressing both a long-term global transition and the support of developing countries, later submission as well as the negotiations at COP29 and the interview call for a finance goal that exclusively speaks to the support of developing countries. In the interview, this shift in position is explained by the fear that a broader scope of the goal would allow developed countries to focus on domestic finance and other finance that does not benefit developing countries in the goal, at the cost of support to developing countries.

AILAC's early positions call for an operationalisation of article 2.1c in the NCQG, while stressing that this should not substitute developed countries' obligation to provide support. The operationalisation should speak to all private and state actors in developed countries and enable a transformation of the global economy to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. This should address all levels of financial flows and align all financial portfolios with net-zero by 2050. AILAC calls for a special focus on the redirection of harmful financial flows and for policies that improve private sector mobilisation and send a clear signal to all actors to align their financial flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement. AILAC further stresses the necessity of radical changes to the global economic system in order to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and calls on developed countries to support developing countries in this transition. In this regard AILAC emphasises the existence of sufficient global capital to close the climate investment gap, blaming a lack of political will for the current misallocation of finance. Throughout the process, AILAC keeps demanding for inequalities and disenabling environments in international finance to be addressed in the NCQG. They see this demand partly achieved though negotiating the Baku to Belem Roadmap, which is supposed to advance these discussions until COP30, into the final NCQG text.

AILAC further calls for a quantified support layer in the climate finance goal, which becomes the sole demand in the later stages of the workstream. This support should be provided exclusively by developed countries with the responsibility lying on governments and not private actors. AILAC calls on developed countries to establish a burden sharing arrangement based on historical emissions and the polluter pays principle. The support goal should support all developing countries in their effort on mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and a just transition and should be based on article 9 of the Paris Agreement. AILAC stresses that climate finance is needed for developing countries to reconcile sustainable development and fulfil their obligations under the Paris Agreement.

> "Without the climate finance support, developing countries cannot go beyond the main priorities of their population, which are getting out of poverty, eliminating hunger and education, that are the main political priorities for any democracy. Those necessities come before climate action."

AILAC further underscores that climate finance needs to be available to all developing countries, including middle-income countries, and for a wide range of transition challenges such as nature-based solutions, the energy transition, action for climate empowerment and infrastructure. Finance should further be climate specific to be accounted for and should also finance cross-cutting issues such as capacity building and technology transfer. AILAC criticises the lack of climate finance for Latin American and Caribbean countries and stresses that all developing countries are vulnerable to climate change and that no developing country should be left behind.

AILAC puts a major emphasis on the need for climate finance to support developing countries in a just transition. Therefore, climate finance should not heighten inequalities while enabling a 1.5 degrees aligned transition. It should address employment risks through climate action and enable a long-term low-emission development strategy. AILAC criticises that this is not possible in the current climate finance regime that is heavily reliant on debt inducing instruments such as loans. These force developing countries to choose between climate action or sustainable development and strain national capacities.

AILAC further underlines the positive impact of urgent and ambitious climate finance compared to the economic effects of a worsening climate crisis. It highlights the positive implications of a just transition for the economy and employment while warning of developing countries' increasing needs with rising temperatures. AILAC stresses that the costs of inaction now are much higher than current needs and underscores the severe impacts of the climate crisis on development.

According to AILAC, the climate finance goal should support developing countries through a focus on public, grant-based and concessional finance that is complemented by innovative sources. Only international finance that flows from developed to developing countries and that supports the implementation of the goals of the Paris Agreement should be accounted for in the goal. Here, AILAC calls for increased finance flows through multilateral climate funds and problematises the difference between the amount of money disbursed and the amount of money reaching the ground due to high administrative and transaction costs.

Concerning the quantum of the NCQG, AILAC demands a goal adequate for the needs of developing countries and that enables them to contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. It calls for a quantum based on the best available science through bottom-up and top-down reporting, emphasising that the annual needs are in the trillions. The quantum should be updated periodically, reflecting evolving needs and priorities as well as inflation. AILAC also stresses the need for balance between mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage in the provision and mobilisation of finance, suggesting quantified subgoals for these thematic areas.

AILAC presented itself as a strong advocate for the inclusion of justice in the NCQG, understanding it twofold. On the one hand, they repeatedly advocated for climate justice to be reflected in the decision and called for the goal to be human-rights based, gender- and child-responsive and to consider and benefit frontline and vulnerable communities, as the interviewee describes:

> "On the climate justice side, it's also important to recognise that vulnerable communities need to benefit from climate finance."

On the other hand, AILAC stresses that they understand the support of developing countries through climate finance not only as an obligation of developed countries, but as a matter of climate justice. AILAC outlines the injustice of developing countries having contributed the least to climate change and yet being the most vulnerable, referencing a vast body of scientific literature on the significant vulnerabilities of AILAC countries. In this context AILAC calls attention to the increasing debt crisis of developing countries due to the effects of climate change and criticises its amplification through the reliance on loans in climate finance.

7.3 Alliance of Small Island Developing States

AOSIS describes its vision of climate finance in the NCQG as finance that is provided from developed countries to all developing countries, set in the context of article 9 of the Paris Agreement and with special considerations of the special circumstances of SIDS and LDCs.

In line with the responsibilities outlined in article 9 of the Paris Agreement, AOSIS calls for developed countries to honour their obligation of providing public finance to developing countries and take the lead in mobilising climate finance. This responsibility should be reaffirmed by a clear reference to the framework convention in the decision on the climate finance goal. AOSIS calls for private finance that is mobilised through public intervention to complement the climate finance provided by developed countries. AOSIS further stresses the importance of accountability in climate finance, underlining the need for transparency and reporting to hold developed countries accountable.

The responsibility around climate finance should further be based on the principles of CBDR and equity and AOSIS demands the establishment of a burden sharing mechanism between developed countries based on their historical emissions. Economic capabilities should not play a role in measuring responsibility for climate finance as the metrics on this are often skewed and could lead to a wrongful inclusion of certain countries. AOSIS generally opposes a renegotiation of the contributor base in the negotiations on the NCQG but is open to the possibility of developing countries voluntarily assuming responsibility in providing finance. This self-determination of developing countries would, according to AOSIS, best reflect the more flexible principles of the Paris Agreement.

AOSIS furthermore argues that the Paris Agreement clearly establishes who should benefit from climate finance, as it is a legal framework established for the protection of the most vulnerable. Climate finance should hence always be a finance flow from developed to developing countries and the needs of developing countries need to be in the centre of the goal.

According to AOSIS, the purpose of the NCQG should be to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement, set in the context of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. AOSIS underlines the need for urgent climate action to be reflected in the climate finance goal and recalls the scientific evidence on the dangerous effects of the climate crisis. AOSIS warns that the 1.5 degrees threshold is critical to the survival of SIDS and must remain intact. The NCQG should hence support developing countries in fulfilling their obligations under the Paris Agreement and enable urgent climate action. The goal in its entirety should be based on the objective of fulfilling the goals of the Paris Agreement. To achieve this, AOSIS demands that the NCQG addresses near-term needs due to the urgency of the crisis while working towards achieving net-zero by 2050. The NCQG should support developing countries across all sectors of climate action, including mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and cross-cutting issues such as capacity building and technology transfer.

During the work program, AOSIS advocates for the need of a shared understanding of climate finance. According to AOSIS this should include climate finance consisting of provision and public mobilisation while excluding investment layers of private finance, which should be addressed in the workstream on article 2.1c, not in the negotiations on the NCQG. Furthermore, climate finance should be primarily grant-based and there should be minimum standards for non-grant finance such as the exclusion of non-concessional loans. Climate finance should also be predictable and additional to other finance, stressing the need for strong transparency to ensure that financial commitments of developed countries from other regimes, such as biodiversity or official development assistance, are clearly separated without possibilities of double counting.

Moreover, AOSIS calls for a definition of eligible climate finance channels as well as benchmarks for improved quality of finance to guarantee that responses to the climate crisis do not hinder the ability to sustainable development. It additionally stresses the need to exclude any finance flows to fossil fuels from climate finance.

In addition to the direct provision of support to developing countries, AOSIS would like the NCQG to also address wider issues in the international financial architecture. The climate finance agreement should be embedded in a wider reform of the IFA, stressing the need to address disenablers of climate finance in developing countries such as debt, high costs of capital and necessary trade-offs with development. These systemic injustices disproportionately affect SIDS which are in a disadvantage when it comes to attracting private investment in climate action due to their small markets and high vulnerabilities to climate risks. Embedding the NCQG in broader reforms to the IFA should further open it up to innovative sources through taxation or similar instruments.

In the negotiations, AOSIS stresses the central significance of the quantum for the climate finance goal and calls for setting the quantum early on. AOSIS call for the quantum to show a high level of ambition and for it to be adequate for the urgent actions required to stay within the 1.5 degrees temperature goal. To achieve this, the goal should be informed by the best available science through bottom-up and top-down reporting on the needs of developing countries. Instead of achieving this, the interviewee from AOSIS voiced disappointment in the numbers in the final decision:

> "The number 300 we ended up on was a politically negotiated number. But even the 1.3 trillion that the Group of 77 in China put forward only represents needs that have been articulated. It was a compromise position in itself, because the action that could be taken with 1.3 trillion won't get us to 1.5 degrees […]. 1.3 trillion are the articulated needs as opposed to scientifically based needs and projections."

Accordingly, AOSIS demands that the identified needs should be used as the floor of the goal and it should be acknowledged that without urgent mitigation, these needs will rise and could increasingly only be met through grant-based finance. The quantum of the mitigation needs should be based on the needs of developing countries to contribute to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. The finance needs for adaptation and losses and damages should however be informed by the worst-case temperature scenarios of current global climate action. Finance for adaptation and losses and damages should further be fully grant-based and there should be a balance between finance for mitigation and adaptation in the goal. Furthermore, AOSIS calls for regional balance in the distribution of climate finance as well as a minimum allocation floor for small island developing states.

The quantum of the NCQG should additionally be flexibly adapted to the changing needs of developing countries reflecting the increasing urgency of the climate crisis. These periodic updates should go hand in hand with an annual quantum that would have to increase in higher temperature scenarios in line with increasing needs. The review should further be complimented by a tracking of the implementation of the goal based on sub-goals or sub-targets and enabled through high levels of transparency and accountability.

AOSIS emphasises the important and interconnected role of vulnerability and justice in climate finance. Firstly, it points out the low responsibility of SIDS and LDC for climate change and their disproportionately high vulnerability and limited capabilities. Based on these special circumstances, AOSIS calls for high quality finance, enhanced access and considerations of debt sustainability in climate finance to SIDS and LDCs, stressing that these are a matter of justice in the climate crisis. Looking at the current climate finance regime, AOSIS criticises a lack of finance for SIDS and LDCs, stressing the need for increased bilateral climate finance for these groups.

Secondly, AOSIS underlines the need to recognise the special vulnerabilities of certain groups. Enabling these groups direct access through regional institutions and local civil society for locally-led action is also described as a matter of justice by AOSIS.

Additionally, AOSIS demands for equity and justice to form the basis of the climate finance goal and calls on the international community to show solidarity. The interviewee points to frustrations in the AOSIS team due to a lack of scrutiny for developed countries in the media and local populations during the negotiations on the NCQG:

> "The media then assists us with conveying that message to different other stakeholders, which would hopefully then influence the decision makers in the UNFCCC. But it was tough. It was tough this year because a lot of the electorates around the world really don't care to be quite frank. They don't care about climate change as much."

In the negotiations, AOSIS recalls that SIDS are often considered a moral compass in the UNFCCC but feel excluded from decision and end up losing and losing in every compromise. They remind the room that it is a matter of justice to make sure that SIDS are not left behind in a global just and equitable transition.

7.4 Arab Group

The Arab Group understands climate finance as an obligation of developed countries to finance the needs and priorities of developing countries in mitigation, adaptation and losses and damages.

The Arab Group's position on the responsibility for the provision of climate finance is very clear. It stresses that it is already agreed upon through article 9 of the Paris Agreement that providing climate finance is the obligation of developed countries and climate finance should be flowing towards all developing countries based on their needs and priorities. Hence, the Arab Group criticises discussions on the contributor base as attempts to renegotiate the principles of the Paris Agreement. The Arab Group further argues that the new climate finance goal needs to be a continuation of the 100bn goal with the same contributors based on CBDR, historical responsibility and equity. Therefore, it also opposes any mention of evolving capacities in the language on contributors and any reference to article 2.1c which would expand the goal to a global obligation. The Arab Group understands the NCQG as being solely based on article 9 of the Paris Agreement. Additionally, it calls for the inclusion of a burden sharing mechanism between developed countries in the NCQG.

The Arab Group further accuses developed countries of trying to dodge their historical responsibility that is at the core of the Paris Agreement, the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention. In light of the 200 years of historic responsibility of developed countries for the climate crisis, the Arab Group calls for an indefinite renewal of the new climate finance goal. In this context, the Arab Group also emphasises the immense broken promises by developed countries in both climate action and climate finance. It criticises the developed countries' failure to deliver on the 100bn goal in time and calls for back payment of the shortfalls before 2030. The Arab Group would further like the secretariat to produce an independent report on the activities under the 100bn goal, only accounting for the grant-equivalence of finance and for finance that was used for activities outlined in the receiving country's NDCs or NAPs. Moreover, it demands increased ambition in climate action from developed countries in the new round of NDCs.

In general, the Arab Group exercises criticism of the developed countries' behaviour in the negotiations and beyond, pointing out a retreat from multilateralism and cooperation by developed countries. It criticises, among others, unilateral trade measures and condemns discussions around the contributor base as well as around a global goal as attempts to divert from developed countries' obligations.

According to the Arab Group, the purpose of climate finance is to address the needs and priorities of developing countries in reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement through the implementation of their NDCs and NAPs. In this regard, the amount of climate finance would directly determine the possible level of ambition. The Arab Group however argues, that in spite of the present lack of finance the Arab Group and other developing countries have already taken immense and ambitious climate efforts. It therefore calls on developed countries to fulfil their part of the Paris Agreement in providing the means of implementation, as developing countries are already keeping up their commitment in climate action.

The Arab Group also stresses the need for climate finance to better address the needs and priorities of developing countries as it observes a mismatch between where finance is needed and where it is delivered. In this context it also calls for an increase in adaptation finance and generally an even thematic distribution of finance between mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage. Climate finance should also recognise developing countries' rights to development.

Regarding the sources and instruments of the NCQG, the Arab Group underlines that providing and mobilising climate finance is an obligation of the developed countries and cannot be offloaded to the private sector and philanthropy. The Arab Group emphasises that there clearly exists sufficient public finance in developed countries as was observable in the pandemic response measures to the covid virus, and that using this finance is only a question of political will. Moreover, the Arab Group doubts that the goal of increased private sector investment in climate finance in riskier markets is realistic and calls for reporting on climate finance to only include private finance when there is a direct link to a public intervention mobilising it.

Furthermore, climate finance should be new, additional and concessional with an exclusion of any form of debt-increasing loans to prevent any further burden on developing countries' economies. The Arab Group also criticises any reference to a phase out of fossil fuel subsidies as this would interfere in national planning. However, it argues for the NCQG to address unilateral trade measures that are considered harmful to development in developing countries or the creation of enabling environments in developed countries through subsidies that might negatively affect trade partners in developing countries.

The Arab Group also has a clear position on the scope of the mandate of the NCQG, which should not only exclude references to article 2.1c, but also any references to domestic finance or the IFA. Furthermore, the Arab Group calls for reporting on the goal to be reviewed by independent third parties and to include the alignment of finance with developing countries' NDCs and NAPs as well as on negative effects of unilateral trade measures.

When it comes to the quantum of the goal, the Arab Group wants it to be based on the needs and priorities of developing countries determined through bottom-up need reports. The quantum should further be updated periodically according to evolving needs and should include any shortcomings of the 100bn goal. The Arab Group stresses the central importance of the quantum for the NCQG and criticises the lack of suggestions on this topic by developed countries over the three-year negotiation period.

Lastly, the Arab Group criticises perceived injustice in the process of the production of the draft text before COP and denounces its unbalanced content, reminding developing countries that they should not be treated as inferior and should not be forced into accepting the developed countries terms in the unbalanced playing field at COP.

7.5 European Union

The European Union presents its view of climate finance as a global effort to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement through all possible sources and channels with a support layer of public finance that gives special considerations to most vulnerable countries and communities.

The EU understands mobilising climate finance as a global effort by all capable parties and private sources. The climate finance goal should constitute a global effort to mainstream climate in finance decisions in order to contribute to achieving article 2.1c of the Paris Agreement, calling on all actors to increase climate finance. This global interpretation of responsibility for climate finance is further explained through the NCQG decision at COP21 that calls on a global effort in the climate finance goal.

The EU also stresses that providing climate finance is an act of support, while recalling that the support layer of provision and mobilization of climate finance should be led by developed countries. To maximise the support through public finance, the EU emphasises the need to expand the contributor base while questioning today's validity of separating the world into developed and developing countries. The EU demands a dynamic contributor base, based on evolving economic capabilities and greenhouse gas emissions. This should be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities of the Paris Agreement, stressing that there is no mention of historic responsibility in the agreement.

In the interview, the EU understands the purpose of climate finance in general very broadly as

> "finding means and ways to support countries in achieving the Paris Agreement goals."

In line with the dual structure of the goal, the EU argues for two main purposes to be incorporated. Regarding the global effort, the EU envisions a transformative approach to climate finance as a means to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement with an emphasis on operationalising article 2.1c. In this context the EU recalls the sufficient availability of finance globally, but laments barriers to its channelling to net-zero. When it comes to the support part of the goal, the EU calls for an effective, achievable and ambitious NCQG which enables ambitious climate action through emission reduction and climate resilience in developing countries. This support should enable developing countries to contribute to reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. According to the EU, the support goal should only encompass finance for mitigation and adaptation and not for losses and damages. The EU also calls for global reporting on the impact of climate finance to monitor the progress in reaching the intended outcomes.

This broad understanding of a global climate finance effort is also apparent in the EU's understanding of what should be included in the accounting of climate finance:

> "In general, climate finance is any kind of finance that is either being rechannelled to being climate neutral in line with article 2.1c or money that is globally spent on mitigation or adaptation efforts."

This understanding of climate finance hence encompasses both resource mobilisation and rechannelling of finance, as well as all countries and all sources including public and private finance, domestic and international finance, innovative finance instruments, philanthropy and the broader IFA. To depict a complete picture of climate finance the EU stresses the importance of including domestic actions in all countries that contribute to the goals of the Paris Agreement. This broad definition of climate finance by the EU is based on their legal understanding of climate finance being defined as coming from a wide variety of sources and in a wide variety of actions in article 9.3 of the Paris Agreement. In light of difficult political and economic times, the EU warns against limiting climate finance as stressed in the interview:

> "To try to limit climate finance to a number of instruments, especially at a time when it's very clear that we need to maximise the amount of money available, with a difficult budgetary situation in a number of countries, that motivates us to say: let's not close the options, but let's extend the options where we can, in order to be smartest about what we do."

To reach the purpose of climate finance, the EU argues for a strong inclusion of policies in the climate finance goal. This could include reducing harmful financial flows and creating enabling environments for green investment. The effects of policies should also be reported on under the NCQG.

Concerning the support layer of the goal, the EU stresses the insufficiency of public finance to meet all needs of developing countries and calls on the inclusion of public and innovative sources to supplement public finance. In an effort to maximise the efficiency of public finance the EU stresses the need to use it as a lever for mobilising private finance.

While the global effort should, according to the EU, facilitate a global transformation towards reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement, the support through public climate finance should be targeted at the most vulnerable countries and communities with a special focus on financing adaptation. The special considerations of most vulnerable countries should further include consideration of debt sustainability and limited fiscal space. Climate finance support should also go hand in hand with ambitious climate action through emission reduction and improved climate resilience, rewarding those countries with the most ambitious climate plans.

Reflecting the proposed dual structure of the goal, the EU argues for different principles behind setting the quanta of the two parts of the goal. When it comes to the global effort, the EU states that

> "We want to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement and that means that the global community needs to provide the amount of resources that is necessary for these kind of aspects and the right frameworks."

Hence, according to the EU the objective of reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement should inform the quantum of this part of the goal. In line with this outcome-based approach, the EU stresses that the number is not the central aspect of the goal but the qualitative elements that make it possible to reach the purpose. However, the global effort should take into account the needs and priorities of developing countries while keeping in mind that those have to be met primarily through domestic resource mobilisation.

Looking at the support part of the goal, the EU strongly opposes the idea that public finance of developed countries can meet the climate finance needs of developing countries.

> "What I do want to push back on is, is this idea that the entire financial need of developing countries will be financed by grant-based budgets of developed countries only consisting of the traditional donor base. Then we can already say that we failed the Paris Agreement completely because that's not going to happen. It's not necessary, but it's also an entirely unrealistic way of conceptualising the world."

Instead, the EU calls for a realistic and viable agreement that has to balance what is achievable in these difficult economic times and makes a meaningful contribution that is effective in supporting countries to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Lastly, the EU argues that discussions on the quantum should start from the floor of 100bn USD and can only be done in a political process, not on the technical level. Furthermore, for the EU the quantum highly depends on other aspects of the goal such as the contributor base, the sources and instruments included and the time frame.

Reflecting the outcome-based approach to climate finance, the EU also looks beyond the state and argues for strong language in the NCQG on the rights and inclusion of marginalised groups and frontline communities. Among others, the EU calls for the need for gender-responsive climate finance and meaningful participation and leadership of women in climate action, the need to respect and promote the rights of Indigenous People and human rights in climate action and the need to give special considerations to groups such as children, youth and civil society.

In the interview, the EU finance negotiator stresses that the EU does

> "not just want to provide money to foreign governments to prop up their budget and to let them do what they want with it. We want to make sure that the money that we provide actually has an impact in the communities and actually has an impact for the people that we support. So that includes indigenous people,

> vulnerable communities, women. That includes making sure that that we're not contributing with our money to violations of human rights.”

Finally, the EU-negotiator also stresses that to the EU justice in climate finance also means that this needs to go hand in hand with ambitious mitigation so that vulnerable countries such as the SIDS have a way to survive.

7.6 Norway

In the negotiations around the NCQG, Norway promotes the creation of a layered goal that includes a global investment layer and a support layer.

The global investment goal should be inclusive of all parties as well as the private sector to mobilise the finance needed for reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. In this context, the submissions by Norway call on the developing countries to ensure enabling conditions domestically. When it comes to the support layer of the goal, Norway stresses the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities as the basis of the contributor base. Based on this principle, Norway argues for the developed countries to take the lead in providing and mobilising finance in accordance with article 9.3 of the Paris Agreement. Additionally, Norway calls for a broadening of the contributor base, determined by current and evolving economic capabilities. This demand is based on the assessment that the world has changed since 1992 and that there now are developing countries with high capacities who should also be responsible for providing climate finance. This way the goal would also paint a more accurate picture of the climate finance landscape, as there already exists a significant amount of climate finance from developing countries.

Norway would like the NCQG to operationalise both article 2.1c and article 9 of the Paris Agreement to achieve its long-term goals. The main purpose of climate finance is hence a global economic transition towards a Paris-aligned pathway as the interviewee from Norway outlines:

> “We wanted to have the goal broader than just for developing countries, as a global goal for all parties because we see that you need to get the finance right across all countries in order to have that transition to realise the Paris Agreement.”

In this context Norway stresses that the support layer of the goal cannot achieve this goal due to the limited capacities of public finance and is not meant to achieve it. The support layer should support developing countries in their efforts in mitigation and adaptation while also taking into account evolving losses and damages. The climate finance support should in turn lead to more ambitious NDCs that succeed in limiting global warming. In rating the success of both layers of the goal, the focus should then not primarily be on the quantum of finance provided and mobilised but rather on the outcomes that are produced through the finance.

When it comes to the different kinds of finance that should be part of the NCQG, Norway's position is that the Paris Agreement already outlines what climate finance is and that excluding certain instruments would be in conflict with the agreement. Additionally, the proposal of defining what sources and channels constitute climate finance top-down is called in question by Norway due to the complexity of the issue with different sectors and areas. While Norway understands the global investment part of the goal very broadly, the support layer is defined as international publicly provided and mobilised finance for developing countries. Norway stresses the need for increased flows of private finance towards developing countries and in general a stronger mobilisation of private finance under the goal. At the same time there is a strong mandate for public climate finance for most vulnerable countries and a call for an inclusion of innovative sources in Norway's submissions. In the negotiations, Norway also repeatedly called for the inclusion of principles such as gender responsiveness, human rights, children's rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights in the climate finance goal.

Norway positions itself clearly on the question of who should be eligible to receive climate finance. The global investment goal should mobilise climate finance globally while the support goal should be targeted at developing countries only. In this regard, Norway calls for special considerations of most vulnerable countries, prioritising public finance for them especially in the area of adaptation. In the interview, the Norwegian representative also stressed that there are no expectations on the most vulnerable countries to contribute to the climate finance goal.

In its submissions, Norway acknowledges that the climate finance needs of developing countries are in the trillions. Furthermore, the quantum of the global investment goal should be informed by the best available science on climate finance needs for a global economic transition, although there are questions raised around the quality of data. In this context it is stressed again by Norway that the support layer of the goal cannot and must not reflect all needs of developing countries but its quantum is set politically:

> "It is clear that a support goal cannot meet all needs of developing countries. Many needs are also related to investments. The actual number of the support goal was always going to be a political decision in terms of what is both realistic and ambitious enough."

As public finance is limited, the goal should be set ambitiously but realistically while taking into account needs and priorities of developing countries. To maximise the quantum of the support goal, Norway calls for an expansion of the contributor base and stresses the interdependency of those two aspects of the goal. The interviewee from Norway further underscores that the agreed upon support layer of 300bn USD constitutes a massive progression from the 100bn goal and will be challenging to reach.

7.7 United States of America

The USA argues for a global effort in the climate finance goal that encompasses all contributors and sources and that enables urgent climate action to limit global warming.

According to the USA the climate finance goal should be divided into a global investment goal and a support goal, based on article 2.1c and article 9.3 of the Paris Agreement. The global investment goal should encompass all parties and all sources including domestic and international finance and public and private finance. As part of the global goal, the USA calls on all parties and non-party stakeholders to increase domestic climate finance and establish enabling environments for green investments. This global effort should reflect the immense needs of climate finance for reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement and address a broader transformation of the global economy.

The support part of the goal should be based on the 100bn goal with additional contributors. The USA calls for new contributors based on their observation of a changed world compared to the 1990s where the distinction between developed and developing countries was made in the convention. The contributors to the support goal should reflect current and evolving economic capabilities to allow for new sources of finance. In this context the USA stresses that being a contributor to the support goal is not a legal obligation, but a voluntary support. This is also a reason why the USA strongly opposes any mention of burden sharing mechanisms that regulate how much each party should contribute to the climate finance goal. Additionally, the USA opposes any mention of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities or other principles such as historic responsibility in the text.

In line with this division, the USA proposes a broad understanding of what sources and types of finance should be understood as climate finance. Reflecting the claim of addressing a global economic transformation through the climate finance regime, the USA views both domestic and international finance as constituting climate finance. Additionally, the USA stresses the important role of the private sector and philanthropy in reaching the climate finance goal, calling on all actors to scale up the mobilisation of private finance, especially in the developing countries. The USA also argues for an expansion of the understanding of climate finance, calling for the inclusion of more indirect sources of finance. These encompass policies that lead to mobilisation of climate finance through phasing-out insufficient fossil fuel subsidies or enabling net-zero investment. Nonetheless, the USA stresses publicly mobilised and provided finance as a core component of the climate finance goal. In this regard they again argue for a broader understanding of publicly mobilised climate finance than under the 100bn goal.

When it comes to setting the quantum of the climate finance goal, the USA acknowledges the immense needs of climate finance for mitigation and adaptation action while stressing that needs do not inform the quantum of climate finance support. The USA argues that due to its limited availability, public finance cannot enable the fulfilment of the goals of the Paris Agreement. For this reason, the support goal has to be set ambitiously but realistically, warning that a too ambitious quantum might disincentivise climate finance. In this regard the USA takes the position that the support goal should be set from a floor of 100bn USD as decided upon in the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Lastly, the USA stresses that the quality of the climate finance goal should not be measured by the quantity but by the quality. The USA supports this position by calling for more effectiveness in climate action and pointing out the decreasing costs of climate action.

The USA sees the purpose of climate finance as an enabler of ambitious climate action to limit global warming and build resilience, hence fulfilling the Paris Agreement. The global part of the goal should facilitate a broader economic transformation to a Paris-aligned economy and channel all financial flows towards net-zero as outlined in article 2.1c of the Paris Agreement. The support layer in the goal should be used to support developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation efforts. In this context the USA positions itself in opposition to any inclusion of losses and damages as well as to quantified subgoals on mitigation and adaptation.

Furthermore, the USA attaches receiving support through climate finance to ambitious climate action. By calling for ambitious nationally determined contributions as enablers of climate finance, the USA stresses the need for ambitious climate plans to incentivise receiving climate finance.

The USA also reflects on the special circumstances of most vulnerable countries such as SIDS and LDCs, calling for considerations of debt sustainability and improved access for these recipients. Additionally, the USA demands the inclusion of vulnerable groups, including women, girls, youth, Indigenous Peoples, people with disabilities, workers and people in conflict settings, in climate finance efforts.

7.8 ENGO

For ENGO, the central determinant in understanding climate finance is justice. Justice is understood as a cross-cutting determinator of who should pay, who should decide and who should benefit when it comes to climate finance.

ENGO stresses that developed countries have a legal obligation to provide support for the implementation of the Paris Agreement in developing countries. This legal obligation should be informed by the principles of historical responsibility, equity and climate justice, meaning that those countries with the highest historical emissions and the greatest economic capabilities should bear the brunt of climate finance. ENGO further calls out the overall failure of developed countries to live up to those obligations under the 100bn goal, emphasising that individual countries fell short of contributing their fair share. ENGO therefore underscores the need to introduce a burden-sharing arrangement in the NCQG. ENGO also invites non-developed countries with capabilities as well as the private sector to contribute voluntarily and additionally to the goal but underlines their demand for accountability to lie on developed country parties:

> "There is space for the private sector to engage but the responsibilities are not clearly defined. We had a demand for the Global North to take accountability and lead; to take responsibility for the damage that they have done historically."

ENGO hence understands climate finance as a debt owed by developed countries due to their emissions and failure to provide adequate support leading up to the negotiations on the NCQG. This debt is increasingly incalculable due to the loss of life, culture and community, but climate finance should nevertheless be a way to repay the debt owed to developing countries. In this context, ENGO stresses the injustice of the strong effects of climate change on those countries who have contributed the least to it and blames developed countries for the losses and damages that are already occurring.

Moreover, ENGO stresses that there are sufficient public funds in developed countries to provide the necessary support. These funds could be tapped by implementing taxes on polluters including the wealthiest, the fossil fuel industry and the military complex. Through the inclusion of tax justice in climate finance, the polluter pays principle could be operationalised and the cost of climate finance could be put on those who have historically profited from causing the crisis.

In line with the focus on justice, ENGO stresses that developing countries and their communities should not only be the beneficiaries of climate finance but should have ownership of it. Developing countries and affected communities should be represented in any decision making on climate finance and should always benefit from it. The demand for inclusion of local communities in climate finance is backed by the argument that these communities know best what benefits them:

> "The money should be used in a way that is most beneficial for the communities, because they also have the knowledge that is local, that is indigenous and that is really valuable as well, even though often times disregarded."

ENGO criticises that the current climate finance regime falls short of addressing these needs and is oppressive to communities from developing countries. ENGO further emphasises that the impacts of the climate crisis are felt unequally between countries and within countries. Therefore, the climate finance goal should give special considerations to the most vulnerable countries but also ensure that climate finance indeed flows into the impacted communities.

> "This approach aligns with the principles of justice and equity. At the core of climate justice, we're looking to really act in solidarity with marginalised groups and with people that are at the front lines of the climate impacts such as Indigenous

> Peoples, local communities, women. Groups that are often excluded from traditional states centric models of finance distribution."

For this reason, ENGO stresses the need for direct access to climate finance for regional and local actors, especially for the most vulnerable communities. This should for example also include access to support in the just transition of phasing out fossil fuel energy, so that this transition does not have negative consequences for local communities. The climate finance regime should more generally follow a rights-based approach, safeguarding human rights, being gender responsive, protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and integrating generational equality.

When it comes to the question of what climate finance should be used for, ENGO argues that it should enable all people and countries in the global south to mitigate, adapt and address losses and damages. It should support all climate action in developing countries, stressing the urgency of scaled up climate finance from developed countries to limit global warming.

ENGO additionally calls for the establishment of sub-goals for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage and a balance of financing for mitigation and adaptation in the NCQG. There is a special emphasis on the need to include loss and damage in the climate finance goal, as this is understood as an obligation laid out in the Paris Agreement. Thus, ENGO calls for loss and damage to also be included in the reporting structure of the NCQG, stressing that the needs for loss and damage are results of the lack of prior support for mitigation and adaptation.

Based on the outlined principles of historical responsibility and justice, ENGO understands the provision of public grant-based finance as the core of the NCQG, which can be complimented by the mobilisation of climate finance and a wider transformation of the IFA.

ENGO stresses the need to rebuild trust between parties through a grant-based and transparent climate finance goal that is additional to official development assistance and humanitarian finance. The public finance core should hence be accounted for in grant-equivalent terms with loss and damage and adaptation being financed exclusively through grants. The climate finance goal should further exclude non-concessional finance as well as philanthropic money. This strong commitment to accountability and grant-equivalence is however not reflected according to the interviewee from ENGO:

> “Our main demands were that it would be public, grant based and concessional finance and we haven't seen a decision where this is put in place”

The mobilisation of finance in the outer layer should also be part of the goal, but according to ENGO the focus should clearly be on public finance. The goal should further be linked to a wider transformation of the IFA that addresses systemic injustices, such as the large financial flows from developing countries to developed countries that hinder both development and climate action. While the climate finance goal could contribute to rechannelling finance flows in accordance with article 2.1c, ENGO stresses that this, as well as discussions on innovative sources, should not be addressed in the NCQG but in other forums such as the Sharm el-Sheikh dialogue on article 2.1c. This is underscored, as the global mandate of article 2.1c should not take away from the responsibilities that developed countries have in the NCQG.

Another point of emphasis for ENGO is debt justice in climate finance. ENGO recalls the injustice of vulnerable countries having to take on more debt to address the effects of climate change, thus calling for debt cancellation to free up fiscal space in developing countries for climate action. ENGO further stresses the structural inequality that is responsible for the indebtedness of developing countries and recalls the demand for a strong focus on non-debt inducing climate finance.

ENGO also calls for a common definition of climate finance to ensure that greenwashing, false solutions and dangerous distractions are excluded from climate finance, with an emphasis on excluding all fossil fuel finance. Furthermore, climate finance should be channelled primarily through dedicated climate funds under the UNFCCC to improve access and concessionality of climate finance.

Moving from the scope of climate finance to the quantum, ENGO underscores that the quantum must reflect ambition and be based on scientific evidence on the evolving needs of developing countries. Stressing the potential underestimation of needs due to a lack of data, the goal should be adjusted responding to the articulated needs. The needs should however not only be matched to a quantum but also to the appropriate instruments to accommodate them.

7.9 YOUNGO

YOUNGO promotes the idea of a climate finance goal provided by developed countries, based on historical responsibility and complemented by a strong enforcement of accountability.

According to YOUNGO's position, the NCQG should be based on article 9 of the Paris Agreement and situate the responsibility of providing public finance with developed countries. Climate finance should be a way of counterbalancing the injustice surrounding the climate crisis:

> "This goes back to what climate finance actually means in terms of international multilateral politics. It is reparations. It is acknowledging that there is a lot of unevenness around climate change, both in terms of who contributes to it and to the effects of it."

Responsibility for providing climate finance is further strongly rooted in principles such as polluter pays, historical responsibility, CBDR and climate justice in YOUNGO's position as the interviewee goes on to describe:

> "I always saw climate finance as historical polluters who have benefited from fossil fuel capitalism giving back money to those who are most impacted. So it is reparations despite it not being acknowledged as such in the negotiations."

Based on this position, YOUNGO repeatedly calls out observed efforts of developed countries to dilute their responsibility in the climate finance goal, laid out in article 9, by shifting the negotiations to topics such as the contributor base or the operationalisation of article 2.1c. YOUNGO further stresses the loss of trust that derived from the developed countries' broken promises under the 100bn goal and criticises a lack of will on the side of developed parties to deliver an ambitious and sound climate finance goal.

In line with the outlined principles, YOUNGO argues that contributions beyond developed country governments can only be complementary and not substitute their responsibility. Furthermore, while there needs to be climate related investment, the UNFCCC is a party driven process and the responsibility of the climate finance goal should not be shifted to the private sector. The countries' responsibility should be enforced through a transparent burden sharing arrangement with penalties in case of non-compliance with the agreed upon goal.

YOUNGO further stresses the need for the beneficiaries of climate finance to be centred in the design of the goal. The ownership of climate finance, hence deciding what is being done with it, should lie with and serve the interest of recipient countries and local affected communities. Including local communities and vulnerable groups in climate finance is a point of emphasis for YOUNGO. Thus, climate finance should not serve governments and local elites but affected and vulnerable communities everywhere, highlighting existing inequalities not only between countries, but also within.

Based on the recipient country's ownership of the goal, YOUNGO understands the intended purpose of climate finance in a broad way. Climate finance should commit to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees and safeguard both the environment and the economy for future generations. It should effectively and truly reflect the needs of developing countries and address mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage while more generally supporting climate resilient development. In this, climate finance should be aligned with the just transition principles and support developing countries in meeting their climate plans and NDCs.

Climate finance should furthermore contribute to process on implementing the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement outlined in article 2.1c and be embedded in fundamental reforms of the IFA. Here, YOUNGO calls for reforms through e.g. international tax governance to raise funds for climate finance.

To achieve these objectives, YOUNGO demands the establishment of a layered goal with a core of public finance provided and mobilised by developed countries as well as private and innovative sources as an outer layer. Concerning the public finance core, this should include thematic sub-goals that are accounted for in grant-equivalent terms and are made up of a substantial share of grants. Finance should furthermore be new and additional and include a redirection of public funds from fossil fuel subsidies and military spending towards climate finance.

Concerning the outer layer of the goal, YOUNGO underscores the need for all countries to support sustainable business and spotlights the importance of excluding philanthropic money in this layer. Climate finance should further address the limited fiscal space in developing countries and draw funds from high-emission sectors though innovative sources. Moreover, YOUNGO stresses the need for climate finance to only fund climate related projects and calls for safeguards that exclude harmful financial flows, fossil fuel spending and scientifically unproven solutions from eligibility for climate finance.

The outer layer of the climate finance goal should however not commodify the climate crisis and give more power to the financial institutions that have created the crisis and profited from it, as the interviewee from YOUNGO warns:

> "If we're not careful with what kind of money goes into this whole hodgepodge of NCQG, then you end up commodifying this whole agenda. You end up giving power to the very financial institutions that profited from this crisis and created this crisis in the first place."

To make sure that these standards are upheld, YOUNGO proposes intensive reporting on climate finance. This should include subgoals for the different layers and sources of the goal as well as reporting on the impact of climate finance. This reporting should be transparent, easily accessible and publicly available for reviews from independent stakeholders.

In agreement with the principles, outlined in the beginning, YOUNGO calls for the quantum of the NCQG to be based on the needs of developing countries and their communities in mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage with quantified subgoals for each thematic area. The assessment of these needs should be based on the best available science and be reviewed periodically. The quantum should furthermore not be understood as a limit but at a floor for ambition and it should be measured in grant-equivalence. Reflecting on the highly politicised debate around the quantum and YOUNGO's self-perception of limited power in the process, the interviewee spotlights that the quantum itself was never the focus of YOUNGO's advocacy:

> "For us it wasn't about pushing for a number, it was about getting a few words into the text that we can refer to and use for accountability later on. Because if we get the word intergenerational equity into the text, that sets huge precedents later on."

Accordingly, a major spotlight in YOUNGO's position is the inclusion of justice in the goal. This was already described as a basis for establishing the responsibility in climate finance and for the strong inclusion of local communities, but it is a point of emphasis throughout YOUNGO's submissions and statements.

Beyond those two aspects of justice, YOUNGO calls for a strong inclusion of vulnerable groups throughout the goal. Among others, YOUNGO stresses the need to recognise the special needs of Indigenous Peoples for protection, security and economic stability as well as the need to include children and youth responsiveness and intergenerational equity in the NCQG. This should be complimented by a recognition of the need for safety for climate defenders globally. Additionally, YOUNGO argues that there should be specific reporting on these qualitative aspects within the transparency mechanisms of the goal.

Another aspect of justice that YOUNGO highlights is the need to address wider inequalities in the international financial system. Addressing these and acknowledging the historical background of colonialism and injustice in the IFA is a key justice demand for YOUNGO. From a point of intergenerational equity there is a special emphasis on the need to address the debt crisis within the climate finance goal, as it originates from a colonial and neocolonial system that challenges intergenerational justice.

Lastly, the interviewee from YOUNGO reflects on the injustice of youth representation within the UNFCCC:

> "I think that our voices as YOUNGO get infantilised a lot. So even if we speak with such technical integrity, we can still be seen as more frivolous, less technical, more activist. The integrity and the weight of the meaning we try to create with the NCQG is often seen less than from other constituencies, from other parties, from other voices in the room because we also have less of a stake in the capitalist system. […] So, it's almost like a system designed to keep us out."

This unequal power in the highly professionalised space of the UNFCCC is understood as another injustice that is being reflected and felt around the negotiations on the NCQG.

8. Climate finance framings and their contestation

Looking at the data collected of the different actors, it becomes apparent that they constitute starkly contrasting understandings of climate finance. They all frame climate finance very differently by focusing on or relegating certain parts of the problem domain and hence constructing and contesting the meaning of climate finance in a variety of ways. In the workstream on the NCQG, this led to the emergence of different framings and counter-framings, through which the meaning of climate finance was contested until the last hours of COP29 and beyond. In the negotiations on the NCQG we can observe how previously hegemonic discourses on climate finance are challenged from different sides and how some framings become suppressed, hardly making it into the final agreement.

The framings that I have inductively produced out of the collected data do not necessarily appear in an ideal state, but are used very differently by the actors in a strategic manner to advance their specific positions on the negotiation item. I will also outline how framings that appear to be very similar on the surface can be used to advance different and sometimes contesting positions.

Table 4. Actors' use of climate finance framings

Framing	**Actors**	**Used in**
Evidence Framing	AGN	Submissions, negotiations
	AILAC	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	AOSIS	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	Arab Group	Submissions, negotiations
	ENGO	Submissions, interview
	YOUNGO	Submissions, interview
Doability Framing	EU	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	Norway	Submissions, interview
	USA	Submissions, negotiations
Blame Framing	AGN	Submissions, negotiations
	AILAC	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	AOSIS	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	Arab Group	Submissions, negotiations
	ENGO	Submissions, interview
	YOUNGO	Submissions, interview
Global framing	AILAC	First two submissions
	EU	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	Norway	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	USA	Submissions, negotiations
Development framing	AGN	Submissions, negotiations
	AILAC	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	AOSIS	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	Arab Group	Submissions, negotiations

	YOUNGO	Submissions, interview
Climate specificity framing	AILAC	Submissions, interview
	AOSIS	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	EU	Submissions, interview
	Norway	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	USA	Submissions, negotiations
	ENGO	Submissions
	YOUNGO	Submissions, interview
Vulnerability framing	AGN	Submissions, negotiations
	AILAC	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	AOSIS	Submissions, negotiations, interview
	EU	Submissions, interview
	Norway	Submissions, interview
	USA	Submissions
	ENGO	Submissions, interview
	YOUNGO	Submissions, interview

Note. The data for this table is derived from the positions outlined beforehand and will be outlined in-depth in this chapter. The data on the negotiations is limited to the negotiations that were open to observers.

In this chapter I will first contextualise the summit COP29 as a stage for framing climate finance. I will then identify three frame conflicts with a framing and a counter framing as well as one framing that is used by multiple actors but with differing objectives through which the meaning of climate finance was constructed and contested by the actors. These framings at times overlap concerning the position that is strategically pushed through them and they are not meant to cover all aspects of the negotiations. They rather focus on central conflict lines and framings that are dominantly used by the different actors to construct and contest the meaning of climate finance in the NCQG negotiations.

8.1 COP29 as a stage for framing climate finance

COP29 took place in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku. The Blue Zone (UN-Zone) was situated in Baku Stadium with the Green Zone (Host-Country Zone) being in a venue nearby. The conference opened on the 11th of November 2024 and was scheduled to conclude on the 22nd of November 2024. It was however extended until the early morning hours of the 24th of November as negotiations did not conclude on time (own observations). 193 states participated in the conference and 1.947 observer organisations were accredited. Furthermore 940 media organisations were accredited. Overall, 54.148 participants were on the ground at COP29, supplemented by 2.411 virtual-only participants (UNFCCC, 2024b).

At COP29, different bodies of the UNFCCC held their meetings. It was the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties, the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, the 6th session of the Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, the 66th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the 66th session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (UNFCCC, n.d.-e). The NCQG, which was at the centre of attention at COP29 was negotiated under the Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement while other items such as the Global Stocktake decision from COP28, mitigation, the Global Goal on Adaptation and the Gender Action Plan were also agenda items of the different bodies at COP29 (ibid.).

The conference began with a day of disputes over the agenda, therefore negotiations could only start on the second day of the conference. In the first round of negotiations on the NCQG, both the USA and developing countries opposed the draft text produced by the presidency out of the two-year work program on the issue, on the ground of it not being balanced and not fully capturing their positions (own observations). After a new text was produced which was back up to 34 pages, parties engaged in informal negotiations (UNFCCC, 2024a). Those were however mostly focussed on procedural questions and the repetition of known positions instead of engaging with the text at hand (own observations). While negotiators were able to engage on the issue of transparency and some other minor text elements, technical discussions in the first week of COP29 did not lead to any breakthrough on controversial issues, hence leaving ministers with a complex and long text for the second week (own observations).

This deadlock in negotiations was supposed to be lifted by moving them to a higher level and behind closed doors. Observers were no longer allowed in the rooms but the draft texts that got published did not show any major changes until the last day of the conference when developed countries for the first time proposed a quantum (own observations). After negotiations that according to negotiators lasted all night, the COP presidency convened all parties on the 23rd of November, the day after the conference was supposed to end, to propose a new text on the NCQG (own observations). This text was however rejected by SIDS and LDCs who protested both the content and the mode of work by staging a walk out, out of the negotiation room (own observations).

They criticised the lack of climate finance that this compromise would mobilise for them as well as their exclusion from the final rounds of negotiations to which the presidency did not invite them (own observations). After further hours of negotiations behind closed doors, the presidency convened the closing plenary in the early morning hours on Sunday the 24th, with a lot of uncertainty in the room if the final agreement, with the support quantum increased from 250bn USD to 300bn USD, would be adopted. After an unusually quick gavelling by the presidency, the draft text was adopted although a number of developing countries opposed and condemned the agreement in their statements after the gavelling (own observations).

Picture 1. Civil society protest in the blue zone on the last day of COP29 (own picture).

Outside the negotiation room, media and civil society also played a part in setting the stage for the framing of climate finance. Civil society organisations used the designated protest areas all summit for actions on different topics. In the last days of COP these actions were more and more focussed on addressing justice in climate finance and increasingly challenged the strict policing of protest (own observations). Protests left designated zones, illegally distributed pamphlets and disregarded noise restrictions, leading to numerous investigations by UN security and the de-badging of activists (own observations). In the last 48 hours of the conference, civil society members furthermore regularly convened as a plenary to discuss how to move forward. In these discussions, a number of people argued for a walk out by civil society and to abandon the COP29 summit (own observations). This was however rejected by a majority and the assembly was instead used to formulate letters to the COP presidency and developed countries urging them to find an ambitious and just NCQG agreement (own observations).

Picture 2. SIDS and LDCs giving a joint statement to the media after their walk out (own picture).

Media furthermore plays a key role for both state and non-state stakeholders in communicating their framings of climate finance. As side events, exhibitions and pavilions closed on the 21st, media attention concentrated on the NCQG as the last unresolved issue. The heightened media attention was visible after the walk out by the LDCs and SIDS with international news outlets competing for space to get a statement from the country groups. The representatives of ENGO also used the immense media interest in the walk out by SIDS and LDCs to communicate their narratives and framings of what was transpiring at the late hours of COP29.

Picture 3. ENGO giving a media statement on the walk out of SIDS and LDCs (own picture).

8.2 Evidence framing vs. Doability framing

The actors analysed in this research give very different meanings to the quantum of the climate finance goal. In this meaning making, two central framings become apparent, which in turn show very different understandings of what the purpose of climate finance support is.

8.2.1 Evidence Framing

The evidence framing is mainly used by the developing country party groups as well as the civil society constituencies. AILAC, AOSIS, AGN, the Arab Group, ENGO and YOUNGO all frame the quantum of the NCQG as based on the best available science on the needs and priorities of developing countries. These needs should be identified by both scientific reporting on needs by UN bodies as well as through bottom-up reporting of developing countries. Moreover, the quantum should be updated periodically to accurately reflect evolving needs of developing countries. AOSIS furthermore demands that the needs that are scientifically identified should only be used as a floor of the quantum as they might lack data. Adding to that, the Arab Group underlines that the urgency of the needs is so great that incomplete data cannot be a reason to postpone addressing them. In its submissions, the African Group stresses that any other method of setting the quantum would be against scientific evidence. This evidence framing of the quantum however shows a very specific understanding of what the support through climate finance should be aiming to achieve.

According to the evidence framing, the quantum of climate finance provided and mobilised by developed countries should address all climate change related needs that emerge in developing countries. Following the logic of many developing countries, that would not only cover mitigation and adaptation but also loss and damage and more generally climate resilient development, as I will show in more depth in the development framing. This framing of the quantum hence contains a notion that developing countries should not be responsible for addressing their climate related needs domestically, but that addressing those needs is an obligation of developed countries. Using scientific evidence as a framing for the quantum legitimises this claim by presenting it as the only logical and objective mode of setting the quantum. The evidence framing accordingly goes beyond discussing the number that will be in the centre of the goal by inexplicitly contesting the underlying questions of responsibility and scope of climate finance.

There are however nuances in how the needs of developing countries are framed in their respective submissions. While all actors routinely reference the goals of the Paris Agreement as well as climate action in their positions on climate finance, of the actors named above, only ENGO, AIALC and AOSIS directly frame the needs informing the quantum as related to this. ENGO stresses that the amount of climate finance provided and mobilised must enable developing countries to implement climate action and directly links the scaling up of climate finance to limiting global warming. AILAC and AOSIS both directly demand for the quantum to be based on the needs of developing countries to contribute to the goal of limiting global warming to below 1.5 degrees. In these submissions the quantum is thus framed as being based on needs of developing countries in reaching the goal of limiting global warming and not only on the needs and priorities for domestic responses to the climate crisis.

This dual framing of addressing needs and advancing the goals of the Paris Agreement is well visible in AILACs demand to account for climate finance as net finance that subtracts any harmful finance flows from climate finance provided. AOSIS however is the most outspoken actor on this connection of scientific evidence on needs and the link to limiting global warming. AOSIS does not only frame the quantum scientifically but also uses science to warn of the urgency and danger of the climate crisis itself. In the interview, the representative from AOSIS criticises that even the quantum of 1.3 trillion, that was collectively demanded by developing countries at COP29, was a compromise for them. The interviewee criticises that the 1.3 trillion will not suffice in reaching the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement and thus the quantum was not actually based on the relevant science.

> "1.3 trillion was articulated needs as opposed to scientifically based needs and projections."

For AOSIS the evidence that should inform the quantum should hence not only be what needs developing countries articulate in their NDCs and NAPs, but also what level of support developing countries would need to limit global warming. This urgency in addressing the needs to an extent that limits global warming is further backed by stressing that climate finance needs will rise drastically with a worsening climate crisis. AOSIS and to a lesser degree AILAC and ENGO thus frame the quantum of climate finance as based on the needs and priorities of developing countries in limiting global warming in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

8.2.2 Doability Framing

While the urgency of limiting global warming is very important to the developed country parties analysed in this research, it is not prominently being linked to the setting of the quantum of the NCQG. The EU and Norway however both acknowledge the needs of developing countries and underscore that those should be taken into account in setting the quantum. The USA also stresses the immense needs for climate action and for reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement, but it links this to global needs and not only to those of developing countries.

All three actors strongly reject the idea of the evidence framing that the quantum of finance provided and mobilised should be based on the needs of developing countries. They all stress that public funds in developing countries cannot achieve the task of addressing developing countries' needs due to their limitations, among others stating that "many needs are also related to investment" (interview Norway) and criticising the "idea that the entire financial need of developing countries will be financed by grant-based budgets of developed countries" (interview EU). Instead, the three actors call for a quantum that is ambitious yet realistic and doable in the current difficult economic situation. The constraints of public budgets are a key point of emphasis for developed countries in the discussions around the quantum. The USA warns of an unrealistic quantum that could disincentivise scaling up climate finance and claims that it is already decided upon by the mandate that the quantum should be set at a floor of 100bn USD in continuance of the 100bn goal. The EU and Norway both stress in the interviews that the politically negotiated quantum of 300bn is already a large progression that will be difficult to reach, especially considering the likely fallout of the USA under president Trump.

According to the EU, Norway and the USA, the quantum should thus be large enough to meaningfully support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries while being achievable for developed countries. The key dimension for developed countries is consequently the doability of the quantum. Through this framing they construct the purpose of climate finance support very differently compared to the evidence framing. Climate finance support is not meant to be scientifically calculated to meet the needs of all developing countries, but it is framed as a politically decided act of support that should be both effective and doable. The EU further highlights that according to their point of view, the needs and priorities of developing countries related to climate change need to primarily be met through domestic resource mobilisation and not international climate finance support. Climate finance in general thus gets constructed very differently by developed countries in the deliberations on the quantum. By shifting the focus to domestic resources in developing countries they contest the idea that developed countries should bear the sole responsibility of addressing the climate crisis and shift the obligation on each country individually.

Consequently, the quantum of the goal is not understood as the most important aspect but rather complementary to qualitative aspects and dependent on other elements of the goal, such as the contributor base, the sources and instruments included and the time frame, as both Norway and the EU point out. Additionally, the USA underscores that the success of the climate finance goal should not be measured by the amount of money provided and mobilised, but by how effective it is in contributing towards the goals of the Paris Agreement. In light of increasing the efficiency of climate finance the EU frames public finance as a means to unlock and mobilise private climate finance to reach the biggest possible impact.

Looking beyond the support goal of climate finance, Norway also makes use of the evidence framing when it comes to their proposed global investment goal. In the interview, the representative from Norway calls for this layer to be informed by the best available science, while at the same time questioning the quality of existing scientific data on global needs to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement. Thus, Norway directly links the quantum to scientific evidence but uses a different understanding of who should be responsible for providing climate finance and what climate finance's purpose should be. These meanings will further be contested through the following framings.

The evidence framing vs. doability framing highlights very well how the entire problem domain of climate finance is being contested through every aspect of the negotiations. By framing the quantum differently, the actors give contrasting meaning to the responsibility, the purpose and the scope of climate finance. While there is a division between developed and developing countries in the basic framing of the quantum, the positions within these blocks show significant differences in how the meaning of climate finance is being contested through the deliberations on setting the quantum of the goal.

8.3 Blame framing vs. Global framing

While the contestation of responsibility for providing climate finance already becomes visible in the negotiations on the quantum, it becomes the central point of contention in the frame conflict between the blame framing and the global framing. In this frame conflict we can again identify the blocks of developing countries and civil society against developed countries, with significant nuances within the blocks.

8.3.1 Blame framing

The basis of the blame framing is that climate finance must always be understood in relation to historical responsibility and the polluter pays principle. The responsibility for providing climate finance is hence directly being linked to the historical responsibility for the climate crisis. In line with the framing of the quantum, climate finance is again understood as a responsibility of developed countries that is meant to support developing countries. Therefore, according to the blame framing, only finance that is being channelled from developed to developing countries should be considered as climate finance while excluding domestic finance as well as south-south cooperation.

The most outspoken and direct in framing climate finance through blame are the civil society constituencies. ENGO frames the responsibility for providing climate finance as lying with those who are most to blame for the crisis and those who profited the most from it. It calls on developed countries with the highest historical emissions as well as other high emitting stakeholders to increase their climate finance. As the responsibility for the climate crisis is understood to clearly lie with developed countries, both ENGO and YOUNGO frame climate finance as a debt that developed countries owe to developing countries for the damage they have caused. The representative of YOUNGO frames climate finance as reparations while ENGO stresses in its submissions that climate finance must always be understood as a debt repayment by developed countries. For these two actors, the responsibility for climate finance consequently arises out of the responsibility for the climate crisis and is deeply rooted in questions of justice. This blame framing is also used by ENGO to argue for the inclusion of loss and damage in the NCQG. As the pollution of developed countries is to blame directly for the losses and damages that occur in developing countries, they should also be required to pay for these.

Both ENGO and YOUNGO additionally extend their blame framing beyond state actors and directly address high emitting and harmful private sectors. They call for climate finance to be raised through making the polluting industries pay, calling out the fossil fuel industry, the military complex and the richest parts of the populations. In this blaming of the private sector the responsibility for climate finance however stays with the developed country governments as they should be held accountable for raising the money.

The developing country party groups' positions follow similar logics although not always being as radical in the wording. The Arab Group is the most outspoken in this regard, blaming developed countries for centuries of historic responsibility for the climate crisis, which should keep them responsible for providing climate finance indefinitely. AGN also underscores that climate finance should never be understood as an act of charity by developed countries, but as an obligation that is a precondition for ambition in climate action and the survival of developing countries. The Arab Group further blames the developed countries for the climate crisis in calling not only for more climate finance, but also for more ambitious climate action in developed countries, as this also should be part of their obligation as well.

AGN, AOSIS and the Arab Group are also very firm in their framing of responsibility and accountability lying with governments and not the private sector. AOSIS calls for any investment goals to be discussed outside the NCQG in other work programs and warns of a disadvantage for SIDS in receiving private sector finance. This sentiment is echoed by the Arab Group that warns of high hopes in private sector engagement in developing countries that they consider unrealistic. The country groups further stress that increased private sector engagement is not necessary as there are sufficient public funds in developed countries. The Arab Group points to the response to the covid crisis in developed countries and the apparent abundance of public money. It rather highlights a lack of political will as the problem in raising climate finance.

AILAC plays a special role in this framing as their position has shifted significantly over the course of the work program. In the beginning, they framed the purpose of the NCQG as being both a support goal and a global goal to align all financial flows with the Paris Agreement. Accordingly, they also framed the responsibility differently for these two purposes. They framed the global layer as encompassing international, domestic, public and private finance and addressing all stakeholders from governments to households globally. While they called on developed countries to take the lead and support developing countries in reaching this goal, they did not situate the responsibility exclusively with developed country governments.

As they shift their position to framing the purpose of the NCQG as only providing support to developing countries, their framing of the responsibility also shifts. The interviewee from AILAC explains that they realised in the work program that developed countries were using the global layer of the goal to divert from their responsibility to support developing countries. Therefore, AILAC shifted its focus on framing climate finance as a responsibility of developed country governments to support all developing countries in fulfilling their obligations under the Paris Agreement.

The blame framing is further underlined by developing countries and civil society in their criticism of developed countries in not delivering the climate finance that they should, neither in the past nor in the present. Both the Arab Group and YOUNGO blame developed countries for breaking their promises under the 100bn goal, stressing the loss of trust that resulted from it as well as demanding backpay for the finance that was failed to deliver. ENGO also directly blames high emitting developed countries for failing to pay their fair share of climate finance. The Arab Group further claims that developing countries have been meeting their obligations in climate action under the Paris Agreement but that developed countries have not met theirs in providing sufficient financial support. Additionally, they criticise the discussions of developed countries on expanding the contributor base as an attempt to dodge their responsibility under the Paris Agreement.

Learning from these broken promises, the responsibility of developed countries to provide and mobilise climate finance is attached to the demand for improved accountability in the NCQG. The key demand that is shared by all analysed developing country party groups as well as civil society constituencies is the demand for a burden sharing mechanism between developed countries based on historical responsibility. Additionally, AOSIS underscores the need for transparency in climate finance to ensure that developed countries can be held accountable for their financial commitments.

Another important aspect of the blame framing is the demand to centre the beneficiaries in climate finance in line with climate finance being understood as a reparation to those who contributed the least but suffer the most from the climate crisis. The interviewee from YOUNGO stresses that according to their understanding, climate finance should be "historical polluters who have benefited from fossil fuel capitalism giving back money to those who are most impacted". Therefore, climate finance should always serve the interests of the recipient countries and communities so that they have the ownership over climate finance and what it is used for. YOUNGO further stresses that climate finance needs to reflect debt sustainability, as they blame developed countries for the colonial and neocolonial principles of the international financial system.

This again underlines that the meaning of climate finance is constructed as a form of debt and reparation that is owed to developing countries and their communities due to the blame for creating the climate crisis being put on developed countries. This meaning is a contestation of the notion that climate finance is a voluntary act of support or charity that developed countries can form to their liking.

8.3.2 Global framing

The global framing, that is used in slightly different ways by the EU, the USA and Norway, frames the responsibility in climate finance very differently to the blame framing. All three actors frame the responsibility for climate finance as a global responsibility encompassing not only governments but also non-state stakeholders. They stress that public money from developed countries cannot and should not meet all needs of developing countries, but rather frame climate finance as a global effort towards reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. The global framing extends responsibility to both the private sector and developing countries, echoing the notion of the doability framing that private finance is needed and contesting the idea that developed countries are solely to blame for the climate crisis. It therefore contests the idea that historical responsibility should be taken into account when discussing climate finance. The EU argues in its submissions that the principle of historical responsibility is not part of the Paris Agreement and can thus not be a basis for discussions on climate finance. The interviewee from Norway echoes this understanding and points out ambiguity around the concept that makes it hard to apply in the NCQG.

Through the global framing, developed countries further contest the idea of the blame framing, that the responsibility and accountability should lay exclusively with developed country governments. The USA stresses that in order to reach the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, all actors, including non-state actors and philanthropists need to increase their efforts. Norway recognises that the private sector does not have obligations under the Paris Agreement but calls for the tracking of private climate finance flows to be included in the NCQG. Through this contestation developed countries expand the idea of climate finance not only geographically but also conceptually. Whereas under the 100bn goal, only climate finance that was directly provided or mobilised from developed to developing countries was accounted for, developed countries argue for a broader understanding of climate finance in the NCQG. Developed countries for example demand for climate finance aligned or mobilised through policies to be reflected in the goal. They also ask for domestic finance to be included in order to have a more transformative approach.

This idea of not limiting the sources and channels of climate finance but rather mainstreaming climate protection in all financial decisions globally is at the heart of the global framing. Climate finance is hence primarily framed as a means to reach the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement on a global scale and is not exclusively targeted at supporting developing countries in this. Therefore, developed country parties call on all state and non-state actors to increase their efforts globally. As the interviewee from the EU describes it:

> "We want to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement and that means that the global community needs to provide the amount of resources that is necessary for this and the right frameworks."

According to the EU and Norway this approach becomes increasingly relevant as the USA is not expected to contribute to climate finance under Trump's presidency and the developed countries alone could therefore not stem the responsibility of providing sufficient climate finance. Additionally, the developed countries stress that climate finance needs to be understood globally, as this is the only way to reach the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

The demand for an expansion of sources and channels in climate finance goes beyond the inclusion of non-state actors, also focusing on an expanded contributor base for climate finance support to be provided and mobilised. All analysed developed country parties argue for an expansion of the contributor base that includes countries that are recognised as developing countries. They argue that all actors that are able to, should contribute to the goal in order to maximise its effectiveness and its quantum. This geographic expansion of the contributor base to climate finance is reasoned for with a drastically changed world order compared to the 1990s when countries were classified in the UNFCCC. The interviewee from the Norwegian climate finance team highlights that there is already a lot of climate finance happening outside of developed countries and that this should also be recognised in the NCQG to reflect the actual reality of climate finance.

Norway and the USA call for a contributor base that is regularly updated and reflects the economic capabilities of all countries to contribute to climate finance. The EU also calls for a dynamic contributor base reflecting both economic capabilities and current emissions. Contrary to the logic of the blame framing, historical responsibilities for the climate crisis would not play a role in determining responsibility for climate finance in the global framing. This shows a different understanding of which principles should govern climate finance and contests the idea of a world that can be divided in developed countries that are to blame and developing countries that need and deserve support. However, the EU and Norway both underscore that according to their understanding of responsibility, developed countries should continue to take the lead in providing support to developing countries through public finance.

The global framing of climate finance contests the hegemonic meaning of responsibility that was the basis of decisions on climate finance in the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the 100bn USD goal and that was already being challenged in the Paris Agreement. Developed countries shift the responsibility in mobilising climate finance onto every country individually. Through the global framing of climate finance, it becomes every country's responsibility to establish enabling environments for climate investment and increase the domestic mobilisation of climate finance. They are made at least partially responsible by the USA for scaling up the mobilisation of private finance both globally and in developing countries, while the EU urges for all actors globally to stop harmful financial flows. In the global framing, providing the means of implementation for reaching the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement and mobilising sufficient climate finance becomes an obligation of all countries, with a higher responsibility the higher the economic capabilities.

Lastly, both the EU and the USA stress in their submissions to the work program on the NCQG that providing and mobilising climate finance is not a legal obligation but an act of voluntary support by developed countries. According to the USA, this understanding of responsibility should incentivise other countries to start contributing to climate finance and it is also the reason why the USA firmly rejects any burden sharing mechanism in the NCQG.

8.4 Development framing vs. Climate specificity framing

In the blame framing and the global framing, I already touched on how the question of ownership and purpose of climate finance are being constructed and contested in the negotiations on the NCQG. These central conflicts are further framed through the development framing and the climate specificity framing. While on the surface these framings create meaning around the purpose of climate finance, they also construct more hidden meaning around the question of who has the right to decide in climate finance and who should benefit from it. In these two framings, the blocks of developed countries on the one side and developing countries and civil society on the other side are less clear cut and some actors mix the two framings while weighting them differently in their argumentations. Very loosely, the following actors could be categorised as (mainly) using the climate specificity frame: the USA, the EU, Norway, AOSIS and ENGO. AGN and the Arab Group could be categorised as (mainly) using the development framing while YOUNGO and AILAC use a mix of both framings in their submissions.

8.4.1 Climate specificity framing

The common denominator of the climate specificity framing is the understanding of the central purpose of climate finance as reaching the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global warming through mitigation and building climate resilience through adaptation. Beyond this, the positions of the actors differ. For the EU and the USA, finance for losses and damages that occur due to the climate crisis is outside of the purpose of the goal. For Norway, loss and damage should be considered in climate finance while ENGO and AOSIS frame it as an equal part of the goal next to mitigation and adaptation. ENGO argues that climate finance needs to include losses and damages as they are the result of a lack of earlier support for developing countries in mitigation and adaptation.

Another important difference in the construction of the meaning of climate finance through the climate specificity framing lays in the geographical dimension. The developed country parties frame climate finance as all money that is globally spent on mitigation and adaptation or rechannelled to climate neutrality. AOSIS and ENGO, however, while agreeing with the climate specificity, contest this notion by limiting the scope of climate finance to the support that is provided and mobilised by developed countries to developing countries. The purpose of climate finance can hence be framed through both the global and the blame framing within the climate specificity framing.

In the climate specificity framing, the EU, AOSIS and Norway frame the NCQG as an outcome-based goal. The central purpose of the NCQG should therefore be to have a certain impact on reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement. AOSIS and the EU moreover underscore that the climate specificity of climate finance is a question of survival for SIDS who are dependent on a global effort to halt global warming. Climate specificity is thus framed as a question of justice by the EU as it must enable the global community to safeguard those countries that are most vulnerable to climate change. To reach the envisioned outcomes ENGO, Norway, AOSIS and the EU demand the explicit exclusion of finance that is harmful to the climate from climate finance. For the EU, AOSIS and Norway this demand is focused on the exclusion of finance for fossil fuels. ENGO goes a step further by additionally calling for the exclusion of greenwashing, false solutions and dangerous distractions.

The EU furthermore argues for climate specificity in climate finance as it would be impossible to address all forms of global injustices within climate finance or more broadly the UNFCCC.

> "The challenge here is that we're not going to be able to solve all justice issues in the climate room. […] If I want to solve trade imbalances and colonialization and historical wrongs that have been done across the world, I'm probably not going to resolve all of them in the climate room."

While not arguing against addressing broader issues, the interviewee stresses that according to the EU, climate finance has a very specific purpose in addressing the climate crisis and should be focused on this particular issue.

Climate specificity also plays a key role for the EU in the negotiation dynamics of climate finance at COPs. The interviewee describes the typical negotiations on climate finance as following:

> “We're very well used to building up a number of very big walls on finance that we say we will never cross, only for politicians then in the last couple of days to trade them in for successes on mitigation, which is what we're here for. This is the understanding that every climate finance negotiator from developed countries knows. We're willing to provide concessions on a number of things in order to get successes on mitigation.”

The EU hence also understands climate finance as a bargaining chip to leverage for more ambitious outcomes on mitigation. Consequently, climate finance is not understood as a purpose in itself but a means to an end for ambitious mitigation. In this regard, the interviewee criticises the presidency for not being able to propose an ambitious outcome in mitigation at COP29 that could have been used to bargain for more ambition in the NCQG.

> “If we wanted to have an ambitious outcome in the NCQG, we needed to have an ambitious outcome on mitigation and they failed to do that completely.”

How actors use the climate specificity framing influences how they construct the ownership of decision making in climate finance. ENGO demands that developing countries and their communities should own the process of climate finance and be represented in all decision making within climate finance, giving them ownership of the use of climate finance. The EU and the USA, on the contrary, stress that the ownership should lie with the countries that provide climate finance. Both argue that ambitious climate action has to go hand in hand with climate finance, with the USA proposing ambition in climate action as a precondition for the eligibility to receive climate finance. The USA frames ambitious NDCs as an enabler of scaled up climate finance and calls for criteria that determine which countries are eligible to receive climate finance. The EU further stresses that for them climate specificity means that they exercise control over the use of climate finance:

> “We do not just want to provide money to foreign governments to prop up their budget and to let them do what they want with it. We want to make sure that the money that we provide actually has an impact.”

Through the framing of climate specificity, the EU and the USA hence situate the ownership of climate finance with the providers alone, framing this as a way to ensure that finance has an impact in reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Within the climate specificity framing, there are also differences in the understanding of the scope of use of climate finance beyond the inclusion or exclusion of loss and damage. While the EU, the US and Norway, as mentioned, demand that climate finance should only be used on mitigation and adaptation, AOSIS and ENGO reference the need for climate finance to not hinder sustainable development. ENGO demands for climate finance to respect the principles of a just transition as well as to follow debt sustainability in order to not hinder developing countries’ sustainable development. AOSIS points out that the goals of the Paris Agreement should be reached in the context of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty as laid out in the Paris Agreement. Therefore, climate finance should also be available for broader cross cutting issues in developing countries, such as capacity building and technology transfer. Lastly, AOSIS criticises that the low quality of climate finance hinders developing countries’ ability to sustainable development due to an increasing debt burden and high costs of capital. Therefore, climate finance too often forces developing countries into a trade-off between climate action and sustainable development.

AILAC and YOUNGO use both the framing of climate specificity and the framing of development in their position on the NCQG. In line with the climate specificity framing, both actors stress that climate finance should be climate specific, with YOUNGO additionally calling for reporting on the impact that climate finance has. AILAC underscores that climate finance should have the purpose of enabling developing countries to fulfil their obligations under the Paris Agreement and transition in a way that corresponds to the 1.5 degrees goal. AILAC further explicitly calls for finance for nature-based solutions and the energy transition to facilitate this while YOUNGO demands the exclusion of financing that is irrelevant or harmful to climate protection. However, both actors also put an emphasis on the development objective of climate finance.

8.4.2 Development framing

YOUNGO calls for climate finance to not only finance mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage but also general climate resilient development aligned with just transition principles. This way, climate finance should aim at safeguarding both the environment and the economy for future generations. Similarly, AILAC stresses that climate finance should go beyond not hindering development to actively stimulating it. AILAC underlines that combating climate change and fostering sustainable development are interdependent and thus have to be thought together. Climate change negatively impacts development opportunities for developing countries, making these issues inseparable. Climate finance should allow developing countries to combine the realisation of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement with sustainable development. Therefore, AILAC emphasises the issue of debt and limited fiscal space in developing countries, as these circumstances often force countries to choose between development and climate action. This most often goes one way only, according to the interviewee:

> "Without the climate finance support, developing countries cannot go beyond the main priorities of their population, which is getting out of poverty, eliminating hunger, education and stuff like that. […] Those necessities come before climate action, so developing countries cannot afford to get in debt to pay for climate action."

In line with this understanding, AILAC demands of climate finance to go beyond financing only directly climate related issues and include finance for infrastructure, capacity-building, transparency mechanisms, action for climate empowerment and gender mainstreaming. Through this broader understanding of the purpose of climate finance, the NCQG should support developing countries in a just transition towards sustainable development that includes low-emission and resilient development pathways.

YOUNGO and AILAC thus frame climate finance as being both climate specific and actively supporting sustainable development by interconnecting the two issues. For YOUNGO the combination of climate action and development is framed as necessary to achieve the long-term goal of intergenerational equity that is at the heart of their position. Concerning the question of ownership in climate finance, both AILAC and YOUNGO share the position of ENGO that clearly situates the ownership with developing countries and local affected communities.

As a last group of actors in these two framings, we have AGN and the Arab Group that frame climate finance predominantly in the context of overall development in developing countries. The way they create the relation between development and climate finance however differs significantly.

The African Group of Negotiators frames climate finance as a tool to support developing countries in their efforts towards sustainable development. While AGN draws a direct link between climate action and climate finance, it does so by stressing that there cannot be climate action in developing countries without climate finance. Therefore, AGN calls for sufficient climate finance for mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage in line with the principles of a just transition. On top of that, climate finance should respond to the overall costs of a green transformation in developing countries to strengthen the broader development progress. It should not only be a counterbalance to the negative effects of the climate crisis on development, but it should finance different development strategies, including strengthening institutional capacities, sustainable development and poverty eradication. AGN further stresses that climate finance should never increase the debt burden as this would hinder development. Consequently, AGN frames climate finance as a means to support the overall sustainable development that should be financed by developed countries. To ensure that climate finance does not contradict development, AGN demands ownership over climate finance to be with developing countries. Country ownership in choosing paths of development and climate action should always be respected in climate finance.

The Arab Group goes a step further in framing climate finance through development. It stresses that every developing country has a right to development with which climate finance and climate action should not interfere. It frames climate specificity as a risk to country driven development that needs to be reduced to a minimum. While the Arab Group acknowledges that climate finance should contribute to the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, it stresses that it needs to do so through supporting nationally set climate plans. Climate finance should not interfere with a country's right to develop by excluding certain development pathways such as fossil fuels. The Arab Group therefore criticises any interference in the country ownership of development pathways through climate finance. It further criticises that current climate finance does not respect this and does therefore not address the actual needs of developing countries. Climate finance should not just be increased but it should be directly targeted at the needs and priorities identified by developing countries. Thus, the Arab Group calls for reporting on the level of alignment of support with national climate and adaptation plans under the NCQG.

In its position, the Arab Group therefore frames climate specificity as a risk to country driven development that interferes with the right to development of developing nations. Ownership over what is financed through climate finance should lie exclusively with developing countries that need to be allowed to decide by themselves which development pathways and climate action plans they choose to implement.

8.5 Vulnerability framing

Climate finance is framed through vulnerability by all actors but by the Arab Group. It is the only actor that does not mention vulnerability even once in its submissions and interventions. The other actors use the framing of vulnerability in different contexts. The vulnerability framing of climate finance is predominantly used regarding the question of who should receive climate finance.

The developed country parties Norway, EU and USA frame vulnerability as a key indicator to determine the recipients of climate finance. They all call for special considerations of most vulnerable countries including SIDS and LDCs, with Norway and the EU stressing that supporting the most vulnerable countries is a key objective of climate finance for them. The special considerations should not only lead to a quantitative focus of climate finance on most vulnerable countries but should also increase the quality of the finance they receive. Both Norway and the EU call for a prioritisation of most vulnerable countries in the disbursement of public climate finance support. The USA further calls for enhanced access for most vulnerable countries in climate finance. Vulnerability is hence used by developed countries as a framing to determine who should be prioritised in receiving climate finance.

Although ENGO and YOUNGO do not use the vulnerability framing to limit the recipients in any way, they also call for special considerations of vulnerable countries. For them, this mainly entails a qualitative requirement of giving special considerations to debt sustainability, limited fiscal space and enhanced access for vulnerable countries. Their focus is however much more on vulnerable communities, as I will outline further down.

AOSIS, AGN and AILAC also all use the vulnerability framing in discussing the reception of climate finance. They all stress the importance of vulnerability while highlighting their respective groups special vulnerabilities. AGN underscores the special circumstances of African countries with exceptionally high vulnerabilities but a severe lack of consideration in current climate finance. AOSIS highlights that the Paris Agreement has to be understood as a framework for the protection of the most vulnerable, thus calling for special considerations and minimum allocation floors for SIDS and LDCs. Furthermore, AOSIS underlines the need for high quality finance also in mitigation for most vulnerable countries and calls on international solidarity for SIDS in the climate crisis. AILAC also stresses its member countries' high vulnerability to climate finance, referring to the existence of an extensive body of scientific literature on the matter, while at the same time lamenting a lack of climate finance to Latin American and Caribbean countries. AILAC however strongly rejects the idea of framing the eligibility to receive climate finance through vulnerability. It underscores that supporting all developing countries, including middle-income countries, with climate finance is not only an obligation of developed countries but also a question of justice, as they as well are highly vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis that they have not caused.

This statement by AILAC shows how the vulnerability framing is connected to the blame framing by some actors. AILAC, AOSIS, ENGO, YOUNGO and AGN all frame the right to receive climate finance through connecting high vulnerabilities with a low responsibility for the climate crisis. Norway also connects those two issues of vulnerability and responsibility, clarifying in the interview that the special considerations of most vulnerable countries include that there are no expectations for them to contribute to climate finance.

Most actors also frame the need to directly address local communities in climate finance through vulnerability. AILAC, ENGO, YOUNGO and the EU call for climate finance to directly support local communities with a special emphasis on protecting the rights of vulnerable groups such as Indigenous Peoples, women, children and youth. AOSIS, ENGO and YOUNGO further call for direct access for local communities to climate finance. YOUNGO puts a special emphasis on safeguarding local communities and vulnerable groups within climate finance by calling for recognition of the need for safety by climate defenders and the need for protection, security and economic stability for Indigenous Peoples. YOUNGO and ENGO stress that in their point of view climate finance does not mainly have the purpose of supporting governments but of supporting affected people everywhere. ENGO further points out that through the vulnerability framing, one should not only recognise the unequal impacts of the climate crisis between countries but also within them. Money therefore needs to flow directly into impacted communities.

> "At the core of climate justice, we're looking to really act in solidarity with marginalised groups and with people that are at the front lines of the climate impacts such as Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women. Groups that are often excluded from traditional states centric models of finance distribution."

YOUNGO and ENGO do not only call for climate finance to target vulnerable communities, but they also stress the need to include them in all decision making in climate finance. This is supported in parts by the USA that calls for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in all climate finance efforts and the EU that underscores the importance of ensuring meaningful participation and leadership of women in climate action and climate finance. YOUNGO stresses the need to improve the participation of children and youth in decision making in climate finance and give ownership to frontline communities by including a sub-goal on direct access for locally-led action in the NCQG. ENGO shares these demands, also calling for more power in decision making for local communities and more broadly calling for a new conceptualisation of climate finance that gives ownership to the affected communities.

For ENGO and YOUNGO, framing climate finance through vulnerability therefore includes looking beyond countries and making sure that those people and communities most impacted are explicitly targeted and included in decision making in climate finance. This can be understood as a contestation of the idea that climate finance should always be decided by and aligned with government priorities in developing countries as those might not necessarily be in line with the interests of vulnerable groups. For both civil society constituencies, the vulnerability framing shows that reaching those who are most impacted is a priority in their framing of climate finance.

On a very different note, the vulnerability framing is also used by AOSIS, the Arab Group and YOUNGO to criticise their representation in the work program on the NCQG. The Arab Group criticises that developing countries in general are treated unfairly in the negotiations and calls out an uneven playing field between the different nations. At

COP29, it urges developing countries to not accept inferior treatment and reject any agreement that is unbalanced in favour of developed countries. YOUNGO criticises that its positions do not have the same weight as those of other actors in the process. The interviewee criticises that the voice of children and youth is often neglected in the process as they have little power to push their positions into the text.

> “I think that our voices as YOUNGO get infantilised a lot. So even if we speak with such technical integrity, we can still be seen as more frivolous, less technical, more activist. The integrity and the weight of the meaning we try to create with the NCQG is often seen less than from other constituencies, from other parties, from other voices in the room because we also have less of a stake in the capitalist system. […] So, it’s almost like a system designed to keep us out.”

The vulnerability of YOUNGO as an actor that speaks on behalf of global children and youth is seemingly reinforced through a system that does not give weight to the voice of vulnerable groups in the negotiation process.

For AOSIS, there is a similar sentiment when reflecting on the multi-year work program of the NCQG. AOSIS also does not see its positions reflected well in the final decision and criticises that they as a group lost in every compromise made on the NCQG. Although AOSIS feels respected as a moral compass in the climate negotiations, its members often end up being excluded from informal spaces where compromises and decisions are being made, as the interviewee describes with frustration:

> “There are these kinds of informal settings, in our legitimate space like the UNFCCC, where meetings happen with only those two big sets, the G7 and then the BRICS, coming together to try and decide on certain things without really consulting the rest. Which primarily leaves LDCs and SIDS out of the discussion. After being quite steadfast and trying to negotiate in good faith over the last three years for this goal it came as a quite a shock. It came as a surprise to us that these backroom discussions moving forward the texts are being held without us in the room. I think that was a symptom of three years and beyond of absolute frustration with being sidelined. Oh yes, SIDS and LDCs will agree to whatever in the end, which wasn't the case.”

The interviewee describes the feeling of having less power in the rooms due to SIDS and LDCs small economic and military power although they as the most vulnerable groups should play a key role in the decisions.

For YOUNGO and AOSIS, vulnerability in climate finance is also a question that is reflected in their representation in the negotiations. Both actors represent most vulnerable groups and still feel excluded and marginalised in the process due to their lack of economic power. Framing climate finance through vulnerability thus also opens up the question of how power is distributed in the decision-making processes under the UNFCCC.

9. Connecting climate finance framings to environmental governance discourses

These framings and frame conflicts illustrate how actors construct and contest the meaning of climate finance in fundamentally different ways. However, through these framings, they also challenge broader questions of how climate governance should be organised. Returning to the work of Bäckstrand & Lövbrand on environmental governance discourses, the construction of meaning analysed in this chapter can be linked to the broader discourses they identify. While the specific framings and their content differ significantly from Bäckstrand & Lövbrand's analysis, given this work's focus on climate finance, the underlying meaning they generate can nonetheless be situated within wider environmental governance discourses.

Table 5. Environmental governance discourses and climate finance framings

Discourse	Actors	Framings
Ecological modernisation	EU	Doability framing Global framing
	Norway	Doability framing Global framing Climate specificity framing
	USA	Doability framing Global framing
Green governmentality	AGN	Evidence framing
	AILAC	Evidence framing
	AOSIS	Evidence framing Climate specificity framing
	Arab Group	Evidence framing
	EU	Doability framing Climate specificity framing Vulnerability framing

	Norway	Doability framing Vulnerability framing
	USA	Doability framing Vulnerability framing
	ENGO	Evidence framing Climate specificity framing
	YOUNGO	Evidence framing Climate specificity framing
Civic Environmentalism (where fitting reform-oriented / radical resistance)	AGN	Blame framing
	AILAC	Blame framing Climate specificity framing / Development framing Vulnerability framing
	AOSIS (radical resistance)	Blame framing Climate specificity framing Vulnerability framing
	Arab Group	Blame framing
	EU (reform-oriented)	Vulnerability framing
	USA (reform-oriented)	Vulnerability framing
	ENGO (radical version)	Blame framing Climate specificity framing Vulnerability framing
	YOUNGO (radical resistance)	Blame framing Climate specificity framing / Development framing Vulnerability framing

Note. The data for this table is derived from the framings outlined in the prior chapter and the literature on environmental governance discourses by Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2006.

The discourse of ecological modernisation challenges the notion that economic growth is inherently at odds with environmental protection. Instead, it asserts that technological innovation, regulatory frameworks and market-based solutions can drive a transition towards sustainable development (Bäckstrand & Lövbrand, 2006, p.52f.). This discourse advocates for the gradual transformation of state and market institutions, prioritising flexible, cost-effective policies and market logics over radical structural change (ibid., p.53). It emphasises private sector engagement and positive trade-offs, framing climate protection as a business opportunity. (ibid., p.61). However, it largely neglects social justice concerns, particularly those related to poverty and equity in developing nations (ibid., p.53).

The discourse of ecological modernisation is particularly prominent in the way developed countries frame issues of quantity, scope and responsibility within the doability framing and the global framing. The doability framing is predominantly based on economic arguments concerning flexibility and private sector engagement. Developed countries oppose a large public climate finance goal, arguing that it is economically unfeasible, and instead advocate for a flexible and decentralised target. In both the doability and global framings, climate finance is portrayed as a decentralised responsibility, shared across a broad spectrum of public and private actors, both domestically and internationally. The discourse of flexibility and economic efficiency also underpins developed countries' calls for a flexible contributor base, determined solely by economic capability and excluding historical responsibility. This emphasis on market-based solutions and incremental transformation closely aligns with the core tenets of ecological modernisation.

The discourse of green governmentality conceptualises environmental governance as an extensive system of knowledge and power, in which scientific expertise plays a central role in defining, measuring and managing environmental risks (ibid., p.54). It is grounded in the belief that climate change and ecological degradation can be controlled through rigorous monitoring, regulatory mechanisms and the application of eco-scientific knowledge. This discourse reinforces a model of stewardship, treating nature as an infrastructure that must be protected, managed and regulated by states and expert authorities (ibid.). More broadly, green governmentality represents an effort to rationalise human and natural conditions of life and exert control over the natural world (ibid., p. 55).

Elements of the green governmentality discourse are present across multiple framings, used by different actors to advance their positions. The principles of scientific evidence, monitoring and transparency are particularly central to the evidence framing. In their deployment of this framing, developing countries and civil society actors place significant emphasis on the role of reporting bodies, scientific knowledge and transparency mechanisms. Through this framing, actors delegitimise alternative framings of the NCQG by portraying them as unscientific. Reports and the knowledge they generate regarding the financial needs of developing countries are presented as objective truths, marginalising competing perspectives on the quantum of climate finance. A similar logic of green governmentality is used by Norway, which also stresses the importance of scientific evidence in setting the quantum. Norway, however, relates this not to climate finance support but to a global goal.

The discourse of quantification and monetisation of climate change impacts further reinforces the idea of managing and protecting nature as a form of infrastructure. This is evident both in the evidence framing and in the doability framing. In the latter, developed countries use elements of the green governmentality discourse to contest the central importance of the quantum, instead emphasising scientific evidence on the effectiveness of climate finance as the primary measure of success. The discourse of measurable impact as an indicator of success is further advanced by a coalition of developed and developing countries, alongside civil society actors, within the climate specificity framing. Furthermore, developed countries use evidence-based management approaches to restrict eligibility for climate finance, basing access on measurable vulnerability. This strong focus on evidence-based management of climate change and its impacts shows the dominance of the green governmentality discourse in multilateral policy responses to climate change. It is the only discourse used by all actors analysed in this research.

The discourse of civic environmentalism challenges the optimistic, win-win rhetoric of other discourses, instead emphasising the fundamental tensions between economic growth and ecological sustainability (ibid., p.57). It prioritises participatory governance, advocating for the inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including marginalised groups, NGOs and businesses, in environmental decision-making. This discourse highlights the importance of bottom-up engagement to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of global environmental governance (ibid., p.55). Additionally, it foregrounds issues of social and environmental justice and draws attention to global inequalities (ibid. p.64). Within civic environmentalism, two competing strands exist: a reform-oriented approach that views civil society participation as a means of complementing state-led governance and improve policy outcomes, and a more radical resistance perspective that criticises existing power structures, such as capitalism and neoliberalism, as the root cause of the ecological crisis. While reformists endorse cross-sectoral cooperation and multilateral partnerships, radicals argue that meaningful change requires a fundamental restructuring of economic and political institutions to achieve a truly just and sustainable world order, asserting that multilateral institutions are inherently biased towards neoliberalism at the expense of environmental protection (ibid., p.56).

The discourse of civic environmentalism is primarily used by civil society and developing countries but also features in developed countries' deployment of the vulnerability framing. The blame framing represents the most explicit use of this discourse, centring on global injustice by highlighting the uneven distribution of historical responsibility. Civil society actors adopt the most radical position within this framing, portraying climate finance as a form of reparation owed to developing countries and their communities due to historic and ongoing imbalances. YOUNGO further applies the civic environmentalism discourse in its critique of the international financial system, accusing it of colonial and neo-colonial practices and advocating for fundamental structural change.

Developing countries and civil society furthermore reject the ecological modernisation discourse, particularly its tendency to shift responsibility for climate finance onto the private sector and frame the climate crisis as an investment opportunity. AILAC, AOSIS, ENGO and YOUNGO instead stress the importance of social and climate justice as the foundation of climate finance, again drawing on the civic environmentalism discourse. These actors further employ a justice discourse to underscore their focus on debt sustainability within climate finance.

The influence of civic environmentalism is also evident in how most developing countries and civil society actors utilise either the development framing or the climate specificity framing. They collectively call for bottom-up engagement and participatory governance that ensures ownership of climate finance by developing countries and their local communities. This corresponds to the demand for local communities and vulnerable groups to benefit from climate finance and be involved in decision making. This perspective is shared by a broad coalition of actors including AILAC, AOSIS, the EU, the USA and civil society organisations. However, civil society organisations take a more radical stance, arguing that inequalities within countries should also be reflected in the vulnerability framing. In doing so, they challenge the power of existing elites and call for a more just and equitable distribution of climate finance.

Developing countries and civil society actors further highlight the stark inequalities in responsibility for the climate crisis. They argue that in the pursuit of justice addressing climate change, largely caused by developed countries, should never come at the expense of development in developing countries but should actively support it. Finally, YOUNGO utilises the climate specificity framing to advance a more radical civic environmentalism discourse, rejecting what it considers to be false solutions in climate finance and criticising the neoliberal, fossil fuel-dependent world order. This more critical discourse is also present in YOUNGO's and AOSIS's critique of persistent injustices within the multilateral system. It shows a more radical discourse that questions the underlying injustices of the current system and their responsibility for the socio-ecological crisis.

10. Discussion

These framings and frame conflicts show how actors have constructed and contested the meaning of climate finance in the negotiations on the NCQG. All actors give meaning to the issue of climate finance by selectively including and excluding aspects of the problem complex, focusing on or relegating certain aspects and embedding the selected aspects in the overarching problem domain. The conflicting ways in which the actors do so have led to the emergence of frame conflicts within the negotiations on the NCQG. The framings not only contest the specific elements of the new climate finance goal but the very principles that inform the meaning given to climate finance. The construction and contestation of meaning furthermore gives insight into how sites of multilateral agreement-making matter in the power to shape meaning beyond the negotiation rooms as well as in the performative nature of summit theatre.

10.1 Creating meaning in framings and environmental discourses

The NCQG is the first extensively negotiated framework for the operationalisation of climate finance. Although climate finance played an important role in prior negotiations, the reality of climate finance was still very much contested, as the strongly diverging positions of the drivers of the work program show. In the work program, the analysed actors contest every part of the finance goal, including purpose, responsibility and ownership through the different framings. The highly contentious nature of all parts of the goal highlights the lack of a common understanding of climate finance, which is already widely discussed in the literature on climate finance, as shown in the literature review. Due to this uncertainty around the nature of climate finance the outcome of the NCQG is likely to shape the understanding of climate finance for times to come, as it will be referenced to legitimise the hegemonic meaning of climate finance.

The framings used by the drivers, however, go beyond the specific issue of climate finance and challenge the very basis of multilateral climate change governance. In the framings actors contest fundamental truths, such as who is to blame for the crisis and who should be held responsible for combatting its effects. Actors contest how power should be distributed between actors in combatting climate change, both between countries as well as between governments and local communities. The dominant framings emerging in the answers to these questions in climate finance are likely to impact the overall meaning of climate governance.

The overarching meanings that are contested in the framings are the interconnected themes of responsibility and ownership. The framings contest whose obligation it is to provide and mobilise climate finance and if climate finance is a means of voluntary support or a debt to be repaid. These contestations also implicate whether the governance of climate finance should be controlled and owned by developing countries and affected communities responding to their needs and priorities or by donor countries reflecting their interests.

The central piece of meaning that is being contested around responsibility is the question if developed countries alone can be blamed for the climate crisis or if a changed world order obliges all countries to contribute to climate finance. How this question is answered is elemental in constructing the meaning of climate finance and it has been highly contested on the way from the Convention to the Paris Agreement and now in the NCQG work program. The use of justice and historical blame in framing climate finance situates all responsibility with developed countries due to them causing the crisis and profiting from it. Framing climate finance as a global effort and limiting support to most vulnerable countries, however, shifts the responsibility to each country individually.

The ownership of climate finance is constructed and contested in the framings in multiple ways. It is at the core of both the discussions around the quantum and around the purpose of the climate finance goal. Developing countries and civil society strategically use scientific knowledge to advance their objectives within the evidence framing, not only framing the desired quantum but also its ownership. Determining the quantum of the goal through scientific evidence would give them ownership, as their needs would determine the goal opposed to what developed countries declare doable. Power is thus at the core of the question if the quantum should be set in a political negotiation or through a scientific assessment. Developed countries do not contest climate related needs but rather its relevance in deciding on a climate finance goal. They contest the idea that climate finance should cover all needs of developing countries but rather frame it as a support for the most vulnerable. The quantum of this support is in turn not informed by science but by a political negotiation. This is very visible in the EU's understanding that climate finance support is a leverage for progress on other issues such as mitigation action. Understanding climate finance support as leverage in the negotiations underscores the position of power of developed countries while fundamentally disregarding the understanding of climate finance as reparations or a debt owed. Through creating this politicised meaning of climate finance, developed countries keep ownership and therefore the decision-making power over the meaning of climate finance. The contestation of ownership is hence also a struggle for power in climate finance governance. If developed countries are dictated by science to provide and mobilise finance for all needs, this gives developing countries the power to set the quantum.

Similarly, the frame conflict between climate specificity and development can be understood as a contestation of ownership. In it is the question of decision-making power in the on-ground operationalisation of climate finance. The Arab Group opposes any language on climate specificity, understanding it as a means to circumvent national priorities and country driven strategies. Actors such as ENGO, on the other hand, warn of climate finance being used in ways that are harmful to the protection of the environment. The fragmented frame coalitions which do not follow a clear North-South divide could indicate different priorities for the different actors, with some countries prioritising climate action and hence approving of climate specificity and other countries prioritising development and thus arguing for a focus on country driven strategies and ownership. Additionally, if climate finance is understood as a debt or reparation to be repaid for a historic responsibility, it could be questioned whether attaching conditions to it is justified.

With the climate crisis and its effects intensifying worldwide, the dominant framings of these fundamental issues will directly influence which policy responses are pursued and to what extend the global community can effectively tackle the issues through multilateral environmental agreement-making. This shows very well how framings and discourse create meaning at sites of multilateral agreement-making that then have direct consequences for international policy responses and affected communities.

The dominance of the doability framing and the lack of binding language on the blame framing in the final agreement of the NCQG indicate that climate finance is increasingly governed by market-based logics and that developed countries have successfully contested their sole responsibility in the issue. Direct consequences from this are for example the need for developing countries to improve their domestic investment environment and a dominance of the green governmentality discourse and the ecological modernisation discourse. The discourse of civic environmentalism, although being used by all actors, only plays a rather small role in the final agreement, with no or non-binding language on participatory governance, social and environmental justice and global injustices.

The dominance of the green governmentality discourse in the climate finance framings underscored in the previous chapter further corresponds to the technocratic and depoliticised nature of multilateral summits that is observed by Death. Connecting the different framings to broader environmental discourses furthermore highlights that there are significant overlaps in how actors frame climate finance beyond traditional negotiation blocks. These synergies, however, do not seem to have been used to facilitate an agreement between blocks on major issues in the negotiations during COP29. Why this has not been successful is a question which invites future research on the dynamics of the negotiations at COP29.

The connection between the framings and the environmental governance discourses additionally gives insight into attempts of challenging the existing order in the work program on the NCQG. The radical version of the civic environmentalism fundamentally challenges the existing order of climate change governance. It is however only used by civil society and AOSIS, the actors that appear to be least powerful and successful in integrating their climate finance framings into the NCQG's final outcome. Hence, the creation of meaning that is part of the radical version of civic environmentalism, did not achieve proper representation in the final outcome of the NCQG.

10.2 Discussing the creation of meaning against the theory

Hughes et al. observe that the struggle over reinforcing or disrupting the existing order is at the heart of environmental agreement-making. This constant struggle is very much at the core of the framings that I have identified and prominently observable throughout the work program on the NCQG. As I have shown, there is a struggle over the very principle of climate change governance that is apparent in the climate finance negotiations. This struggle furthermore reflects the power structures between the actors, as is shown most clearly in the positions of AOSIS and YOUNGO but also more generally in an outcome that does not align with the core demands of developing countries and civil society. The unequal power relations in multilateral agreement-making have clear implications on the process's potential to challenge the existing world order, as the voices that are most outspoken in challenging it appear to be the ones with the least power in the system.

The concept of sites of environmental agreement-making furthermore shifts the focus to spaces beyond the negotiation room and actors beyond states in order to understand its inherent struggle. In this research a strong influence of non-state actors in the creation of the meaning of climate finance is not observable in the final outcome. To fully understand the role that these spaces and actors played in shaping the meaning of climate finance over the course of the work program, more explicit research on these questions would be needed. However, a wide range of actors emphasised the damaging role of the presidency in finding an agreement at COP29. This could be a promising avenue for further research on diverse actors in the NCQG negotiations.

The findings in this research additionally give promising insight into Death's theorisation of multilateral policy making as performative summit theatre. The NCQG negotiations at COP29 very well show the theatrical nature of summits. They included all possible drama with going into overtime, finding a dramatic last second agreement after all had seemed to fall apart, relieved shaking of hands and congratulating one another on stage as well as angry protest off stage.

Death describes a typical plot curve of summits with seemingly inevitable failure being followed by a sudden declaration of success, a performance that was very well visible at COP29, especially within the NCQG negotiations. The conference started with a day of agenda fights, followed by countries opposing the draft text produced out of the two-year work program on the NCQG. After a new text had been produced which was twice as long, informal negotiations followed but could not produce any meaningful progress. This deadlock was supposed to be lifted by negotiations switching to a political level in the second week but the draft texts negotiated behind closed doors barely showed progress. When the presidency convened all parties and observers that were still present to propose a new draft text on Saturday in the second week, SIDS and LDCs protested against both the content and the mode of work by staging a walk out, out of the negotiation room. After further hours of negotiations behind closed doors the presidency convened the closing plenary in the early morning hours on Sunday, with a lot of uncertainty in the room about whether the final agreement would be adopted. After a remarkably quick gavelling by the presidency, it was adopted to a long applause, although a number of states strongly criticised the agreement as well as its quick adoption in their statements afterwards. The summit therefore followed the theatrical plot curve described by Death. It remains questionable however if it succeeded in performing a successful response by the elites. Nevertheless, Death’s theory that summit theatre favours the announcement of voluntary initiatives over legally binding treaties cannot be supported by this specific case study as parties did agree on a treaty text in the end.

The visible increase of the quantum of climate finance from the 100bn USD pledge in 2009 to the NCQG’s target of the 300bn USD in 2035 can be understood as a successful performance of elites tackling the climate crisis. The quantum, which was a very widely discussed aspect, shows a clear increase but at the same time remains so small that it cannot challenge the status quo. The agreement on the NCQG, however, was criticised much more loudly and often than it was celebrated.

On the one hand, developed countries in their statements in the closing plenary and in the interviews for the research emphasised that they were not completely happy with the content of the agreement, as many of their priorities were not fully represented. They however pointed to the difficult geopolitical times and celebrated the fact that there was an agreement as a valuable success of the process that reaffirms its capability to tackle the climate crisis on a global scale. Developing countries and civil society on the other hand were very outspoken in their criticism of the agreement, calling out a lack of ambition that fails to support developing countries in fulfilling their obligations under the Paris Agreement. Through the walk out, the statements in the closing plenary and press statements in the last days of COP, they repeatedly criticised the compromise reached, something that was reported on also in media in developed countries (Noor & Carrington, 2024). This questions the success of the summit theatre in reaffirming meaningful action by political elites and showing this to a global audience.

Death moreover argues in his understanding of summits, that civil society and media legitimise and strengthen the summit theatre through their protest and coverage, arguing that the very transparency and openness enhance the performative nature of summits. The important role of media in communicating the actions at the summit became visible in the walk out by SIDS and LDCs. While the media coverage might have increased the legitimacy of the summit, it can be questioned if it conveyed a credible impression of successful action. At a COP which was very close to ending without an agreement, media coverage was far from exclusively positive. The positive effect of media on communicating symbolic politics of political elites is thus questionable. To understand to what extend media covered this summit as a successful response to the climate crisis, more research would be needed.

Media is however a key tool in shaping the framing of climate finance, not only for parties but also for civil society. The interviewee from AOSIS reflected on the importance of media to communicate the envisioned meaning of climate finance to a broader audience and exert influence on decision makers this way. Media is also key for civil society in conveying their framing of climate finance, especially when being excluded from the negotiation room. The representatives of ENGO used the immense media interest in the walk out by SIDS and LDCs to communicate their narratives and framings of what was transpiring at the late hours of COP29. This shows that the norms that are communicated through symbolic politics are highly contested, as Death argues in his theory.

According to Death, the role of civil society in summit theatre is double-edged, as its protest both challenges the hegemonic order-making and legitimises it. This dual role is something that civil society reflected on very much in the last hours of COP, convening regular general assemblies of all civil society present, where it was debated if civil society should abandon the process for the last days due to the complete discontent with the conference and the lack of progress in climate protection and justice. At the same time civil society actively tried to challenge the hegemonic order-making at COP29 through protests and their participation in the negotiations, as I have shown in ENGO's and YOUNGO's more radical framings of climate finance. This supports Death's theory on the dual role of civil society.

The findings overwhelmingly support Death's theorisation of the performative nature at COP29 and its finance negotiations. The question however is if the NCQG reinforce the existing world order or at least fail to challenge it, as should be the case according to Death's theory.

The final outcome of the NCQG reinforces the existing world order by heightening power imbalances between developed and developing countries. It does so by largely ignoring historical responsibility and shifting the burden of climate finance on developing countries themselves. It moreover excludes central demands of developing countries such as high-quality finance, an adequate quantum and evidence-based assessments of how much should be paid and who should pay. Furthermore, the outcome fails to address questions of ownership, leaving developing countries in a competition for funds and in a dependency relationship from developed countries.

Additionally, Death claims that the technical and depoliticised structure of summits purposely fails to challenge existing orders and leaves no room for visions of alternative orders. This also corresponds to the dominance of the green governmentality discourse in the framings, which reinforces a technocratic approach to climate finance that prioritises expert control over systemic transformation, limiting climate governance in its potential to challenge the status quo. The NCQG with its multiyear work program and innovative and inclusive mode of work can be understood as an attempt to give room to alternative orders. Parties and non-party stakeholders entered the program with a wide variety of innovative ideas that did construct alternative realities to the status quo of climate finance governance. The work program was however also highly technical, with high level political engagement only playing a central role in the last week of COP29. The technical and depoliticised structure of the process clearly failed in addressing the central underlying conflicts in climate finance, not being able to produce a coherent draft text with clear options for policy makers. The structure of the work program was moreover unfit to accommodate innovative meanings of climate finance, due to their political nature. Thus, the depoliticised nature clearly failed to challenge the existing world order.

The final agreement on the NCQG is undeniably unsuccessful in challenging the existing order in a way that would meaningfully combat the climate crisis. While it does further disrupt the order of climate finance governance created by the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, it does not challenge the order of environmental degradation and unequal distribution of power. In the NCQG, the responsibility for climate finance is further diluted and power structures did not change in a way that gives more power to developing countries or impacted communities. On the contrary, it continues to change the framing of climate finance from an obligation of developed countries to a global effort, something that was already apparent in the Paris Agreement.

Further research would be needed to explore why the final agreement prioritises some framings while marginalising others. It is apparent though, that the contestation of meaning in the negotiations on the NCQG was not fought on a level playing field but within a system that is based on multiple forms of inequality between the different actors. Being able to frame the meaning of an issue, is above all, a question of power. As texts do not exist in a vacuum but always in reference to one another, the power of shaping meaning can also increase over time as countries that once successfully created meaning can reference it to legitimise meaning in following contestations.

The power of this can be well observed in the developed countries' arguments against the inclusion of loss and damage and their attempt at further diluting responsibility. It is also apparent in the failure of developing countries to include mentions of the Convention, burden sharing or article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement in the outcome. Nevertheless, developing countries were successful in blocking the inclusion of new language regarding the contributor base. This apparent power of existing text puts in question whether the multilateral climate governance system is meant to transform the status quo at all, if introducing new language and principles is this challenging.

In general, positions that would have challenged existing climate finance governance were not strongly reflected in the final agreement, independent of who raised them. Demands such as an evidence-based quantum, minimum standards for climate finance, a dynamic contributor base or limiting the beneficiaries of climate finance all failed to make it into the final agreement. This general lack of transformation in contentious issues further questions the ability of the system to challenge the status quo and reaffirms Death's theory.

This research cannot go into depth on how power is created in the negotiations, it is however a question that has to be acknowledged. Actors such as AOSIS and YOUNGO openly reflect on the limits to their power in a traditional sense. They seem to rely more heavily on power through performative acts such as the walk out and protests that can have a more direct influence and rely heavily on normative power. This again underscores that the theorisation of summits as performative should in no way be understood in a demeaning way but as a conceptualisation that enables the examination of summits in a more holistic manner.

Lastly, developing countries, especially those most vulnerable to the effects of climate finance, had the most to lose in these negotiations. They rely on climate finance to reduce their emissions and build climate resilience. Therefore, they were in a position where any agreement that showed progress to what existed beforehand would be difficult to oppose. This position might have pressured them into an agreement that barely increases support, but according to all science falls far from safeguarding their survival.

11. Conclusion

The drivers of the NCQG work program construct and contest the meaning of climate finance using a wide variety of framings and counter framings. Through the frame conflict between the evidence framing and the doability framing they construct their meanings of the quantum of the climate finance goal, in the process contesting questions of ownership and the role of scientific knowledge. In the frame conflict between the blame framing and the global framing, the drivers contest the responsibility of climate finance and its implications for climate finance governance. Through the frame conflict between the development framing and the climate specificity framing, the drivers contest the purpose and ownership of climate finance while breaking up the North-South divide that dominates frame coalitions in other frame conflicts. Lastly, the drivers use the vulnerability framing to contest different meanings of justice and equity in climate finance. This research furthermore underscores how the contestation of meaning in the work program is not limited to the governance of climate finance but also extends to the very principles that inform multilateral climate change governance.

In the research I explore how the concept of framings can successfully be employed to analyse meaning-making at sites of multilateral agreement-making. I moreover highlight how actors contest the purpose, the scope, the responsibility and the ownership of climate finance through the way they frame climate finance in their submissions and statements, in the interviews I conducted and through my personal observations. This includes the meaning making of both state actors and civil society constituencies.

The research gives clear indications into how frame coalitions can change between different framings within one negotiation item, showing that there were partial overlaps between negotiation blocks in how they constructed the meaning of climate finance. The research however did not clearly identify a potential for using these to form agreement on more contentious issues. On the contrary, the case of AILAC showed how actors might abandon a more balanced position to form a frame coalition that strengthens their core objectives.

My findings furthermore give insight into the connection between the framing of climate finance and broader discourses of environmental governance. They show both the dominance of the green governmentality discourse and the marginalisation of more critical discourses such as radical civic environmentalism. The connection between the framings I developed and existing findings on environmental governance discourses additionally explore the continuity of certain discourses throughout different issues.

This research validates the theory of summit theatre by Carl Death, highlighting the typical plot curve, the dual role of civil society and media in challenging and strengthening summit theatre as well as the contestation of the norms that are being communicated though the performative acts of politics. The NCQG can however not be understood as a successful showcase of elite responses to the climate crisis, therefore failing its main point according to Death. Corresponding to his theory, the NCQG nevertheless reinforces the existing world order by perpetuating imbalanced power dynamics and failing to challenge the status quo that is at the root of the climate crisis. The negotiations on the NCQG at COP29 and leading up to the summit were furthermore highly technical and largely depoliticised, something that coincides both with Death's theory and the dominance of the green governmentality discourse.

Due to the limits of the research project, I could not fully explore how the spaces outside the negotiation room influenced the framing of climate finance in the negotiations on the NCQG. The actions outside of the negotiation room are not fully represented in this paper as I could not review the material of all of them or attend them all, but they were nevertheless crucial in forming narratives and framings that construct and contest the meaning of climate finance. Similarly, the contestation of knowledge began far in advance of COP29 through publications, events and advocacy. A much larger and longer research project would be needed to capture all of these activities and draw a more complete picture of the evolution and materialisation of actors' framings.

Additionally, the question of why certain positions were reflected in the outcome more dominantly than others and how power dynamics play a role in this could be a fruitful starting point for further analysis of the NCQG negotiations. Future research could furthermore explore the role of other potentially influential actors such as the COP29 presidency or the secretariat. The role of expert knowledge in informing the actors' positions over the span of the work program could be another promising perspective for future research.

In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates that climate finance is not merely a technical issue of resource allocation but a deeply contested political arena where power dynamics, strategic framing, and discourse shape the outcomes of multilateral negotiations. The findings highlight that the way climate finance is constructed and contested within the NCQG negotiations has significant implications for the effectiveness and equity of global climate governance. They furthermore question the climate governance structure's ability to meaningfully address the structural causes of the climate crisis and underlying global injustices.

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Annex I

Exemplary interview questions

- To what extend is the position of AOSIS reflected in the final outcome?
- What is the main purpose of climate finance to AOSIS?
- Which underlying principles should inform the goal according to AOSIS?
- What role should historical and current responsibilities for climate change as well as current capabilities play in climate finance?
- Why is transparency and accountability such an important aspect to AOSIS?
  - How does that reflect on your understanding of the role of public and private money?
- Why do you think that vulnerability should play an important role in climate finance?
- AOSIS calls for justice as basis of goal. What does justice mean in climate finance to AOSIS?
- Climate finance was framed very differently by the different actors in their respective submissions. How did AOSIS try to advance their point of view and try to have it reflected in the text?
- How would you describe the process that led to the final text? Are you content with it?
- Is there anything else you would like to share on AOSIS position on climate finance?

Annex II

Exemplary coding

Exemplary coding of an interview – excerpt from the interview with the EU

Speaker 1 According to the EU, what should be or is the main purpose of climate finance? What do we have climate finance for? *Speaker 2* As always, I'm very, very **careful not to say all developing countries**. We have to acknowledge that this whole term developing countries; in the climate finance negotiations, is it is a **bit of an old term**. Because, you know, AILAC has a **very different opinion** then AOSIS or the LDCs and the African Group and the Arab Group. And the idea of certain aspects by certain groups are definitely different to others. So let me just make that clear.	Calling for differentiation between developing countries Stressing complex positions beyond country blocks	Responsibility for CF Responsibility for CF
Well, I mean, what is climate finance for? **Climate finance very clearly tries to enable us to achieve the Paris Agreement**. We've got, you know, 3 targets of the Paris Agreement in article 2. One of them is a mitigation goal, one of them is an adaptation goal, the other one is a finance goal. So climate finance is, as it very clearly says in the Paris Agreement, one to**ol to enable us to achieve those targets** and that's what they're there for.	CF purpose to achieve PA CF as a means to achieve long-term goals on mitigation, adaptation	Purpose of CF Purpose of CF
Now **we can discuss widely about how that should be done**, through which **channels**, **by who**... All of these elements around the discussions around climate finance, you know, when should it happen? In which ways with **which conditions to which topics**? All of these aspects. But fundamentally, climate finance is one of the missing links to us **globally achieving the Paris Agreement objectives**.	Form of CF can be discussed Purpose of CF is not up for discussion Lack of CF as barrier to achieving PA goals	Delimitation of CF Purpose of CF Purpose of CF
Speaker 1 So in general, climate finance is any kind of finance that is either being re channelled to climate neutrality within Article 2.1c or money that is globally spent on mitigation and adaptation efforts?	CF is anything that support PA goals	Scope of CF
Speaker 2 I'm not sure I could bring it down to those two. The EU's **conceptualisation** of what climate finances is,	Calling for the inclusion of	

is **very broad**. It's about **finding means and ways** to **support countries in achieving the Paris Agreement goals**. Now that **includes domestic finance**, that **includes international climate finance**, that includes levels of support from what we normally call **means of implementation**. That includes **technology transfer capacity building.** But really, I mean, **you've got this entire huge spectrum**. From the very **grant-based adaptation** finance to a little bit **more innovative elements** of finance that, for example, the GCF has done. So there's a w**hole wide range of options and instruments**, but fundamentally they should all be **motivated by us achieving the objectives of the Paris agreement**.	domestic finance in CF Stresses the need for broad understanding of CF Stressing different finance needs for different purposes Calling for wide range of instruments CF should always support reaching PA goals	Delimitation of CF Delimitation of CF Recipients of CF Delimitation of CF Purpose of CF

Exemplary coding of a submission – excerpt from a submission by AOSIS

AOSIS further recalls that 'the efforts of all Parties will represent a progression over time, while recognizing the **need to support developing country Parties for the effective implementation of this Agreement.**' Therefore, the NCQG needs to be framed in way that **will address what would be needed in the near term** to ensure: • **higher ambition in developing country Party actions** in order for all Parties to collectively and effectively **pursue efforts of limiting the global average temperature increase to below 1.5 °C** [mitigation] • **developing countries have increased abilities** to adapt and foster climate resilience to the **worst-case projected temperature scenario** [adaptation] • **enhanced support for developing countries** on a cooperative and facilitative basis to **address loss and damage** associated	CF to support GS in fulfilling PA CF to address near-term needs CF as a mean to enable climate action in GS CF as a mean to limit global warming CF to enable adaptation in GS CF to be oriented at worst-case CC scenarios CF to support GS with L&D	Purpose of CF Purpose of CF Scope of CF Purpose of CF Scope of CF Scope of CF Scope of CF

with the adverse effects of climate change [loss and damage] • **efficient access to financial resources** through enhanced readiness support for developing country Parties, in **particular for the least developed countries and small island developing States** [readiness] • support for the implementation of Article 13 of the Paris Agreement and for the building of **transparency-related capacity of developing country Parties** on a continuous basis [transparency] • enhanced support for **strengthening the capacity and ability of developing country Parties**, in particular countries with the least capacity, such as the least developed countries, and those that are **particularly vulnerable** to the adverse effects of climate change, such as small island developing States, to **take effective climate change action** [capacity building] • strengthened cooperative **action on technology development and transfer** at different stages of the technology cycle, with a view to achieving a **balance between support for mitigation and adaptation** [technology] A near term focus will allow for the **integration of urgency** in the NCQG, and periodic as well as other **reviews of the adequacy of the new goal based on the best available science** and knowledge, and the needs **and priorities of developing countries**. Since what will be needed will depend on varying factors and how countries implement their commitments under the Paris Agreement, there must be a **recognition of some level of flexibility built into the new goal**. This can be done through **framing a goal as a floor**. In short, we must aim for a **new goal that is responsive to the urgent needs required for limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 °C** and can **flex**	Stressing need for enhanced access to finance, especially for LDCs and SIDS Calling for CF to support transparency capacities Calling for strengthening capacities in GS to combat cc CF goal to support technology transfer Calling for balance between mitigation and adaptation in CF Calling for urgency to be reflected in CF Calling for reviews of goal for adequacy CF goal based on sciences on needs and priorities of GS Calling for flexibility of goal to adapt to changing circumstances	Vulnerability in CF Scope of CF Scope of CF Scope of CF Scope of CF Purpose of CF Scope of CF Recipients of CF Scope of CF Scope of CF

to respond to needs as emission reductions and impacts progress. It is clear from the Convention and the Paris Agreement that this **burden is not that of developing country Parties**. The **provision of climate finance from developed countries to developing countries is enshrined** in these treaties.	Framing quantum as a floor Calling for goal adequate to urgent actions for temperature goal CF as responsibility of GN	Purpose of CF Responsibility for CF

Annex III

Data overview

Category	Data point	Actors involved	Date
Submission	Submission by the Republic of Zambia on behalf of the African Group of Negotiators: Views on the new collective mobilization goal on climate finance	AGN	21 February 2022
Submission	Submission by the Republic of Zambia on behalf of the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN) on New Collective Quantified Goal 2023 Workplan	AGN	8 March 2023
Submission	Submission by the Republic of Zambia on behalf of the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN) on New Collective Quantified Goal 2023 Workplan for TED6	AGN	28 May 2023
Submission	Submission by the Republic of Zambia on behalf of the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN). On 7th Technical Expert Dialogue - New Collective Quantified Goal	AGN	13 September 2023
Submission	Submission by the Republic of Zambia on behalf of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Finance	AGN	21 February 2024
Submission	AGN's position on the NCQG. Interventions made during the 1st meeting of the Ad hoc Work Programme	AGN	23 May 2024
Submission	Submission by the Republic of Kenya on behalf of the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN) on elements of the New Collective Quantified Goal	AGN	8 August 2024

Submission	Submission by Chile on behalf of the AILAC group of countries composed by Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. New collective quantified goal on climate finance	AILAC	23 February 2022
Submission	Submission by Colombia on behalf of the AILAC group of countries composed by Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. New collective quantified goal on climate finance	AILAC	23 August 2022
Submission	ABU, AILAC, AOSIS. Joint Submission New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	AILAC, AOSIS	10 June 2022
Submission	Submission by Costa Rica on behalf of the AILAC group of countries composed by Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru	AILAC	6 February 2023
Submission	Submission by Costa Rica on behalf of the AILAC group of countries composed by Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru	AILAC	16 May 2023
Submission	Submission by Guatemala on behalf of the AILAC group of countries composed by Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru	AILAC	31 August 2023
Submission	Submission by Honduras on behalf of the AILAC group of countries composed by Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru	AILAC	22 February 2024

Submission	Submission by Honduras on behalf of the AILAC group of countries composed by Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru	AILAC	18 April 2024
Submission	AILAC. New Collective Quantified Goal First ad hoc work programme meeting – Inter-sessional submission April 25-26, 2024 Cartagena, Colombia	AILAC	2 May 2024
Submission	AILAC. New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance Written inputs	AILAC	23 August 2024
Submission	Alliance of Small Island States. Submission Topic: New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	AOSIS	6 March 2022
Submission	Alliance of Small Island States. Submission Topic: New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance Workplan 2024	AOSIS	19 February 2024
Submission	Alliance of Small Island States. Submission Topic: New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance – Draft Elements	AOSIS	4 June 2024
Submission	Joint Statement & Submission by the Least Developed Countries and Alliance of Small Island States Groups. On the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)	AOSIS	11 June 2024
Submission	Alliance of Small Island States. Submission Topic: New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance – Draft Elements	AOSIS	6 August 2024
Submission	Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group Submission on the 2023	Arab Group	21 February 2023

	workplan for the Ad Hoc Work Programme of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)		
Submission	Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group Submission on the Seventh Technical Expert Dialogue under the Ad Hoc Work Programme of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)	Arab Group	15 May 2023
Submission	Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group Submission on the Sixth Technical Expert Dialogue under the Ad Hoc Work Programme of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)	Arab Group	11 September 2023
Submission	Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group. In response to the invitation to submit views on the eight technical expert dialogue	Arab Group	22 November 2023
Submission	Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group Submission on NCQG Workplan for 2024	Arab Group	15 February 2024
Submission	Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group Intervention NCQG Ad Hoc Work Programme Meeting 1	Arab Group	6 May 2024
Submission	Arab Group Draft Decision Text NCQG	Arab Group	6 June 2024
Submission	Final outcome of the Ad Hoc Work Programme	Arab Group	6 August 2024
Submission	Submission by France and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: Submission on New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	EU	8 March 2022

Submission	Submission by the Czech Republic and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: EU submission on Views on the new collective quantified goal as specified in paras. 15 and 16 of decision 9/CMA.3	EU	3 November 2022
Submission	Submission by Sweden and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: EU's views on the 2023 work plan for New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance	EU	6 February 2023
Submission	Submission by Sweden and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: sixth Technical Expert Dialogue (TED6) under the ad hoc work programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)	EU	11 May 2023
Submission	Submission by Spain and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: Seventh Technical Expert Dialogue (TED7) under the ad hoc work programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)	EU	31 July 2023
Submission	Submission by Spain and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: Eighth Technical Expert Dialogue (TED8) under the ad hoc work programme on the New	EU	9 November 2023

	Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)		
Submission	Submission by Belgium and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: EU's views on the 2024 work plan for the New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance	EU	30 January 2024
Submission	Input to Co-Chairs after 1st MAHWP	EU	11 May 2024
Submission	Submission by Hungary and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States Subject: Eleventh Technical Expert Dialogue (TED11) and third Meeting under the Ad Hoc Work Programme (MAHWP3) on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG).	EU	13 August 2024
Submission	Submission from Norway on new collective quantified goal on climate finance: Objectives and elements to be considered.	Norway	3 March 2022
Submission	Submission from Norway on the 2023 workplan for the work programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)	Norway	17 February 2023
Submission	New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG): "Quantity, mobilisation, and provision of financial sources"	Norway	16 May 2023
Submission	New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG): Quallity and transparency arrangements	Norway	6 September 2023
Submission	Submission by Norway on the 2024 work plan for the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance	Norway	20 February 2024

Submission	Written comments from Norway on the New Collective Quantified Goal	Norway	10 May 2024
Submission	Submission of the United States of America: New Collective Quantified Goal	USA	13 March 2022
Submission	U.S. Submission - New Collective Quantified Goal 2023 Workplan	USA	6 March 2023
Submission	U.S. Submission on the 2024 Work Plan for the New Collective Quantified Goal	USA	12 February 2024
Submission	U.S. Submission on Topics for the 9th Technical Expert Dialogue and 1st Meeting of the Ad Hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal	USA	30 March 2024
Submission	Submission to the Ad Hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal. United States of America	USA	9 August 2024
Submission	Climate Action Network Submission: New Collective Quantified Goal - Working towards a equitable new global goal on Climate Finance	ENGO	14 August 2022
Submission	Climate Action Network Submission: Seventh Technical Expert Dialogue (TED7) of the ad hoc work programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance	ENGO	21 August 2023
Submission	Climate Action Network Submission: Eighth Technical Expert Dialogue (TED8) of the ad hoc work programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on Climate Finance	ENGO	14 November 2023
Submission	NCQG MAHWP1 Cross constituency statement	ENGO, YOUNGO	30 Apr 2024

Submission	Joint Statement by Women and Gender Constituency (WGC), Climate Action Network International (ENGO), Trade Unions (TUNGO), Indigenous Peoples (IPO) and Children and Youth Constituency (YOUNGO) during the first session of the 2nd Meeting of the Ad Hoc Work Programme (AHWP2) on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) during Bonn SB 60	ENGO, YOUNGO	07 Jun 2024
Submission	Climate Action Network (CAN) submission on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG)	ENGO	6 August 2024
Submission	YOUNGO's Submission for the 6th Technical Expert Dialogue under the Ad hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	YOUNGO	16 May 2023
Submission	YOUNGO TED 7 Submission for the NCQG	YOUNGO	14 August 2023
Submission	YOUNGO's Submission for the 8th Technical Expert Dialogue under the Ad hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	YOUNGO	16 November 2023
Submission	YOUNGO's Submission for the 9th Technical Expert Dialogue and 1st Meeting under the Ad hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	YOUNGO	10 April 2024
Submission	YOUNGO Submission for the Tenth Technical Expert Dialogue and Second Meeting under the Ad Hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance	YOUNGO	20 May 2024

Submission	YOUNGO. In response to the request from the co-chairs of the Ad-Hoc Work Program on the New Collective Quantified Goal	YOUNGO	9 August 2024
Interview	Interview with a representative of Norway	Norway	11 December 2024
Interview	Interview with a representative of AILAC	AILAC	12 December 2024
Interview	Interview with a representative of YOUNGO	YOUNGO	19 December 2024
Interview	Interview with a representative of the EU	EU	10 January 2025
Interview	Interview with a representative of AOSIS	AOSIS	14 January 2025
Interview	Asynchronous interview with a representative of ENGO	ENGO	16-21 January 2025
Own observations (Negotiations)	Second meeting under the ad hoc work programme on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance (including the "Tenth technical expert dialogue under the ad hoc work programme on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance")	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA, ENGO, YOUNGO	03-11 June 2024
Own observations (Negotiations)	New collective quantified goal on climate finance - Contact group: CMA 11 (a)	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	12 November 2024
Own observations (Negotiations)	New collective quantified goal on climate finance - Informal consultation: CMA 11 (a)	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	13 November 2024
Own observations (Negotiations)	New collective quantified goal on climate finance - Informal consultation: CMA 11 (a)	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	14 November 2024

Own observations (Negotiations)	New collective quantified goal on climate finance - Informal informals: CMA 11 (a)	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	14 November 2024
Own observations (Negotiations)	New collective quantified goal on climate finance - Informal informals: CMA 11 (a)	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	15 November 2024
Own observations (Negotiations)	New collective quantified goal on climate finance - Informal consultation: CMA 11 (a)	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	15 November 2024
Own observations (Negotiations)	New collective quantified goal on climate finance - Contact group: CMA 11 (a)	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	16 November 2024
Own observations (Negotiations)	Presidency consultations on the texts	AGN, AOSIS, AILAC, Arab Group, EU, Norway, USA	23 November 2024
Own observations (Side Event)	Side Event "Financing Loss & Damage at the Local Community level"	ENGO	11 November 2024
Own observations (Side Event)	Side Event "Ensuring Intergenerational Equity in Climate Finance: Youth-led dialogue on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG)"	AILAC, EU, YOUNGO	13 November 2024
Own observations (Side Event)	Side Event "Promoting Integrity in Climate Action through Youth Engagement"	YOUNGO	14 November 2024
Own observations (Side Event)	Side Event "Closing the climate finance gap: Investing in climate action for children"	AGN, EU, YOUNGO	16 November 2024

Own observations (others)	Observations at the conference incl. overall atmosphere, civil society actions, civil society strategy meetings, pavilions	All actors	11-24 November 2024