Takeaways from the Bonn Conference - CoP 23

What is the issue?

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- The 23rd Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change concluded recently.
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- While minor advances have been made, there are still some concerns with financing and the review mechanism.
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What are the key outcomes?

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- The Conference seems to have left some room for satisfaction with the following:
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i. alliances were formed for phasing out coal
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ii. decision to putting up green buildings and accelerating eco-mobility
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iii. recognising gender in dealing with the issue, in a Gender Action Plan
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iv. decision to get indigenous people (adivasis) have a say in climate talks
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v. decision to look into the greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture
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- Above all, the developing countries stood as a solid bloc demanding a balanced deal.
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- The key demands centred on getting agreed upon and including in the official agenda the ‘pre-2020 actions’.
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- This is mainly in reference to the obligations of the developed countries under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol that still has three years to run.
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- There was also a demand for fixing a deadline for the ratification of 2012 Doha amendments to the Kyoto Protocol to give a legal shape to the ‘pre-2020’ commitments.
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- An important outcome of CoP 23 is the 'Talanoa Dialogue'.
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What is the 'Talanoa Dialogue'?

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- The countries put in place a road-map for 'Talanoa Dialogue' which is a year-long process to assess the countries' progress on climate actions.
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- Under this, it was agreed that the next two climate conferences, in 2018 and 2019, will have special ‘stock-taking’ sessions.
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- This stock-take would focus on the ‘pre-2020 actions’ being taken by different countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
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- It would also include the progress made by developed nations in their obligations to provide finance and technology support to the developing countries.
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- This brings a strong message to developed countries that post-2020 climate action as part of the Paris Agreement cannot be divorced from pre-2020 commitments.
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What are the shortfalls?

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- Viewed in isolation, the above developments mean satisfactory progress towards implementation of the Paris Agreement.
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- However, relative to what needs to be done, these are less significant to make a substantial impact.
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- Expecting that all countries keep up their Nationally Determined Contributions promises is far from reality.
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- This is because national actions require cross-border funding and technology flows.
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- However Paris agreement, in its overall approach, is not very specific about funding and technology support.
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- Worsening the matters is US's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement despite being the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter.
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- And China, despite being the second biggest emitter, while making a show of shutting down coal plants on its soil, is building more elsewhere in the world.
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What lies ahead?

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- Developing countries need money and technical know-how for dealing with climatic effects that are already upon them.
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- The developed countries which are singularly responsible for the climate mess should be made to commit to funding and technology.
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- India, being a developing country and being vulnerable to climate change should lead the fight against the skewness in approach to fighting climate change.
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- The negotiators still have to do a lot of work on finalising the rules which would be adopted during the next Conference of Parties (COP24) in Poland in 2018.
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Source: Indian Express, Economic Times

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