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REFLECTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS:
FROM COP19 TO COP21 - WORKING
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By: Bryan Jacob | Dec 3, 2013

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Recently, I had the privilege of representing [The Coca-Cola Company](#) at the [United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) (Conference of Parties, COP19) in Warsaw, Poland. Now that I've had time to digest the events and information, I would like to share some reflections.

The meetings began just days after Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines. Emotional remarks from the Philippines lead negotiator, Yeb Saño (@yebzano), during the opening session resonated throughout the conference as a constant reminder of the types of events that will become more prevalent with [climate](#) change. Regardless, not everyone is taking aggressive steps toward addressing our climate reality.

Perhaps the most favorable discussions in Warsaw surrounded the role of women in [climate](#) mitigation and adaptation. In fact, most of the women-focused sessions occurred Tuesday of the second week, which was the designated Gender Day.

COP19 represented a step forward for business. There were two opportunities for the business community to engage more directly with the U.N. Delegates, one hosted by the COP19 President, Marcin Korolec and one convened by the U.N. Global Compact: Caring for Climate (C4C) leadership platform, where [Coca-Cola](#) was the beverage sponsor and had the opportunity to showcase our [HFC-free coolers](#).

Both events offered the business community venues to express a progressive point-of-view directly to the Ministers and Heads of State, with for example, President Kikwete from Tanzania and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Mon in attendance at the UNGC/C4C Executive Forum. This interaction was critical as the United Nations and country leaders feel they are getting mixed signals from business. While companies may be adopting voluntary emission reduction commitments and exhibiting leadership in this space, others still need to come to the table.

On that note, a coalition of NGOs, including UNGC, WWF, CDP, released a report, "[Guide for Responsible Corporate Engagement on Climate Policy](#)." The report asserts

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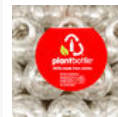
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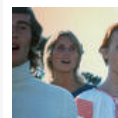
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that businesses need to align their actions and words, and claims that only around 30 percent of companies are doing so.

Taking it to the streets, around 800 people from environment and development groups returned their registration badges to the United Nations the last day and walked out of Poland's national stadium where U.N. **climate** talks were being held, protesting the slow speed and lack of ambition at Warsaw negotiations.

I believe we were able to demonstrate action and word alignment during COP19 by emphasizing our leadership in the HFC-free refrigeration space, with **the Coca-Cola system** close to having 1 million units of HFC-free cold drink equipment—a tangible example that this is a commercial reality. I expressed our leadership posture both through participation on a panel with the **Climate and Clean Air Coalition** and the introduction of a **Refrigerants, Naturally!** statement sharing that the organization's member companies, of which we are a founding one, support the proposed "phase down" of HFCs through the existing mechanisms of the Montreal Protocol—a treaty already proven extremely successful at controlling other types of emissions.

As a largely procedural year for the COP, expectations were (and should have been) somewhat minimal. Certainly there are those who would prefer less business engagement, but business absolutely must be part of the solution and consequently help inform the framework. I am encouraged by the engagement between the official proceedings of the COP and the business interactions taking place on the margins. These engagements should lead to progress at COP20 next year in Lima and the grand finale at COP21 in Paris (2015), where countries are expected to agree on the next treaty to govern climate emissions and limit temperature increase to no more than 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures. Let's hope those expectations are met. Life as we know it depends on it.



Bryan Jacob is **Climate Protection Director** at **The Coca-Cola Company**.



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