

<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/nations-strike-historic-deal-on-climate-change/ar-BBnttvP>

# Nations strike historic deal on climate change

USA Today, Eric J. Lyman



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From L-R, Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, French Foreign Affairs Minister Laurent Fabius, President-designate of COP21 and French President Francois Hollande react during the final plenary session at the World Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) at Le Bourget, near Paris, France, December 12, 2015.

PARIS — Delegates from 195 countries approved on Saturday a historic climate accord that seeks to slow the rise of greenhouse gasses blamed for putting Earth on a dangerous warming path.

Called the Paris Agreement, the document is the result of five sets of grueling negotiations this year. It seeks to limit rising temperatures to within 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) compared to pre-industrial levels through the year 2100. It also keeps the door open to a more ambitious 1.5-degree (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) rise sought by some small island nations threatened by rising sea levels — one of many catastrophic consequences of global warming.

Pope Francis, who has urged a vigorous fight against global warming, endorsed the tougher target.

The final text, presented after nearly two weeks of debate, also pledges financial support from rich, developed nations to developing countries to help them confront the threats from climate change, such as the need to build seawalls and early warning systems and moving people from dangerous areas.

But the document does not specify how much aid will be made available after current financial commitments run out in 2020.



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*A couple kiss as activists demonstrate near the Eiffel Tower, in Paris, Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015 during the COP21, the United Nations Climate Change Conference. As organizers of the Paris climate talks presented what they hope is a final draft of the accord, protesters from environmental and human rights groups gather to call attention to populations threatened by rising seas and increasing droughts and floods.*

Use of fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, are principal culprits in causing greenhouse gases but they also are the fuels developing economies rely on to expand their economies. Switching to renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar power, would be very costly for them.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, president of the conference, said delegates had managed to craft a “historical turning point.” As he hammered his green gavel to close of the conference, he wiped tears from his eyes as delegates hugged each other and snapped photos to preserve the moment.

Earlier Saturday, French President Francois Hollande told delegates they had the future of the planet in their hands. "It is rare to have an opportunity to change the world," Hollande told the negotiators. "You have it and you must grasp it."

The agreement won praise from environmentalists, who said the challenge now is for nations to follow through on the commitments made here.

"By including a long-term temperature goal of below 2 degrees of warming with a reference to a 1.5-degree goal, the latest draft text sends a strong signal that governments are committed to being in line with science," said Tasneem Essop of World Wide Fund for Nature. "What we need now is for their actions, including emission reductions and finance, to add up to delivering on that goal."

With adoption of the agreement, the process moves toward getting national legislatures to approve the agreement. In the text, ratification requires approval of at least 55 countries representing 55% of the world's emissions to sign on before 2020.

A broad consensus of climate scientists predicts that global warming if left unchecked will wreak havoc on the planet, from extreme weather patterns to the extinction of many species of animals and plants.

<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/china-india-hail-hard-fought-paris-climate-pact/ar-BBntFYn>

## China, India hail hard-fought Paris climate pact

AFP



© Provided by AFP: China's Special Envoy on Climate Change Xie Zhenhua (R) chats with an unidentified man during the COP 21 United Nations conference on climate change at Le Bourget, on the outskirts of Paris, on December 12, 2015.

China and India, the world's two most populous nations and biggest developing country greenhouse-gas polluters, hailed Saturday's adoption of a universal climate pact as a step to a brighter future.

"What we have adopted is not only an agreement, but we have written a new chapter of hope in the lives of seven billion people on the planet," Indian Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said to loud applause from exhausted but elated climate negotiators.

"We have today reassured this future generation that we all together will mitigate the challenge posed by climate change and will give them a better Earth."

China's climate envoy Xie Zhenhua said the agreement saw the nations of the world "marching historic steps forward."

"All parties have made a correct choice that is beneficial for their own people, responsible for future generations and conducive to sustainable development around the world," he said through a translator.

"This indeed is a marvelous act that belongs to our generation, and all of us."

In the years-long quest for a pact to commit all the world's nations to greenhouse gas curbs, Beijing and New Delhi have often clashed with the United States and other developed nations in the UN climate forum.

Along with other developing nations, they have resisted efforts to have onerous emissions-cutting obligations placed upon them, and have insisted on assurances of finance from rich nations -- which objected in return.

These issues have caused many a fallout over the years. But on Saturday, the enmity dropped away.

"After relentless efforts, the Paris agreement that we have achieved today is an agreement that is fair and just, comprehensive and balanced, highly ambitious, enduring and effective," said Xie.



<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/obama-calls-paris-climate-pact-best-chance-to-save-the-planet/ar-BBnu1rf>

## Obama calls Paris climate pact 'best chance' to save the planet

Reuters



© REUTERS/Yuri Gripas: President Barack Obama delivers a statement on the climate agreement at the White House in Washington, December 12, 2015. None of the top Republican presidential candidates nor Republican leaders in Congress had commented on the deal on Twitter as of 6:00 pm Eastern (1100 GMT) Saturday.

WASHINGTON, Dec 12 (Reuters) - U.S. President Barack Obama on Saturday hailed the landmark climate accord reached in Paris as strong and historic, calling it the best chance to save the planet from the effects of global climate change.

"Today the American people can be proud because this historic agreement is a tribute to American leadership. Over the past seven years, we've transformed the United States into the global leader in fighting climate change," Obama said.

He said the accord shows what is possible when the world stands as one, adding: "This agreement represents the best chance we have to save the one planet that we've got."

Speaking at the White House hours after the deal was completed, Obama said that "no agreement is perfect, including this one," and that negotiations that involve nearly 200 nations are always challenging.

"Even if all the initial targets set in Paris are met, we'll only be part of the way there when it comes to reducing carbon from the atmosphere," Obama added.

Obama has made combating global climate change a top priority of his presidency but has encountered stiff resistance to his proposals from Republicans in Congress.

Republican Jim Inhofe, a global warming skeptic who heads the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said the climate deal was "no more significant to the United States" than the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the last major climate deal.

Unlike the Kyoto pact, forged with Democratic President Bill Clinton in office, the Paris agreement will not be a fully legally binding treaty, which would almost certainly fail to pass in the U.S. Congress.

Clinton's White House successor, George W. Bush, concluded that the Kyoto pact was giving big emerging economies such as China and India a free ride, and would cost U.S. jobs. Having signed the deal, Washington never ratified it.

"Senate leadership has already been outspoken in its positions that the United States is not legally bound to any agreement setting emissions targets or any financial commitment to it without approval by Congress," Inhofe said.

Besides Inhofe, few Republicans voiced their opinions on the deal.

Previously, Republican presidential front runner Donald Trump has cast doubt on science that attributes the warming of the climate to carbon emissions, saying the world's temperature "goes up and it goes down."

Democratic presidential front runner Hillary Clinton released a statement via Twitter applauding the agreement and pushing back against its critics.

"We cannot afford to be slowed by the climate skeptics or deterred by the defeatists who doubt America's ability to meet this challenge," Clinton said, vowing to make climate change a top priority if elected president.

Representative Raul Grijalva, the top Democrat on the House Committee on Natural Resources, urged quick action by the Republican-led Congress to fund and support the Paris accord.

"Too many people have spent their careers pretending that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by shadowy environmental groups and Machiavellian research scientists," Grijalva said. "The American public knows full well that's not the case."

*(Reporting by Idrees Ali, Will Dunham, Annika McGinnis and Julia Edwards; Editing by Sandra Maler and David Gregorio)*

<http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/5-things-you-should-know-about-the-historic-paris-climate-deal/ar-BBntvIi>

# 5 things you should know about the 'historic' Paris climate deal

The Washington Post, Joby Warrick and Chris Mooney



© The Washington Post

Negotiators in Paris [just approved](#) a climate accord to curb the rapid growth of greenhouse gases and prevent a dangerous warming of the planet. Here are the main elements, [based on the latest text](#):

The temperature target: The text says that nations of the world will try to limit “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.” The language represents a huge win for small island states and other developing nations that argue a temperature increase above 1.5 degrees would be devastating for them.

*[\[Up next: Disappearing glaciers, rising seas\]](#)*

How countries will get there: The countries that sign the agreement pledge to “reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible,” but the text doesn’t specify a date. It says the parties to the pact will “undertake rapid reductions thereafter in accordance with best available science, so as to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century.”



This doesn't mean emissions would go to zero. It means they would go low enough that they could be offset by natural processes or advanced technologies that are able to remove greenhouse gases from the air.

The next steps: The text pledges all countries to delivering, every five years, a new national pledge to reduce emissions. Each pledge, it says, should represent a "progression" over the prior one, and should reflect the country's "highest possible ambition." Climate watchers see this process as crucial, because current country pledges aren't strong enough to limit warming to below 2 degrees C much less 1.5 degrees C.

*[Holding warming under two degrees Celsius is the goal. But is it still attainable?]*

Adapting to the changes that are already coming: The text also states that countries will "engage in adaptation planning processes" to ensure that they're ready for the effects of climate change. For impacts that cannot be adapted to, the proposed accord contains a "loss and damage" section, suggesting that these cases will be addressed through a variety of means including "risk insurance facilities, climate risk pooling and other insurance solutions." This provision is another key win for small island states and other developing, vulnerable nations.

Who pays? The long-contested section on climate finance now says that developed countries, like the U.S., "shall provide financial resources to assist developing country Parties with respect to both mitigation and adaptation" – in other words, helping them brace for impacts but also to transition to cleaner energy systems. This suggests, though, that wealthier developing countries can also contribute such funds if they would like. Developed countries would have to communicate about their climate donations every two years.