



**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

**UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK ON CLIMATE CONVENTION**

**AGENDA – REVIEWING FACTORS LIMITING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE PARIS AGREEMENT**

## **Letter from the Executive Board**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Amity International Model United Nations Conference 2019. We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Agenda for this simulation shall be Reviewing Factors Limiting the Implementation of the Paris Agreement.

This committee is unparalleled in its importance to the future of our posterity and planet. This committee affords you the opportunity to discuss some of the main subjects of the 2015 Paris Agreement and determine the best possible response to key issues. I hope that you come to this committee with an open mind and leave with hope for a sustainable future.

The success of this committee shall depend on each delegate. A council is defined by its delegates more than by its executive board. It is you, the participating delegates, who shape the outcome of this journey. You must therefore be prepared to participate for a truly rewarding experience. Apart from the research on the agenda, Delegates should be aware about their country's historical background and current situation in the global politics and international relations. Delegates should come into the committee with a clear foreign policy as the representatives of the governments of their countries.

We are unaware of your individual credentials / experience with Model United Nations however, no matter what that may amount to, it is a given that there can be no productive simulation in the absence of substantial research. There are multiple approaches to preparing for a simulation such as this and we shall not dictate to you which of these you must adopt, that is upon you to decide, however we can assert with confidence that the commonality among all these approaches is that research constitutes their first step.

So once the research process is initiated it needs to be coupled with proactive attempts to understand. Application of the information acquired through research always requires understanding. There is not particular point at which research concludes and analysis thereof begins, these are two intermittent processes which may continue till the last minute of the simulation.

Besides research, both on the agenda and the mandate of the committee the participants are required have a firm grasp on diplomatic conduct. Diplomatic conduct can be general and country specific, what constitutes general diplomatic conduct (which includes language, gestures and any other kind of expression) can be gauged from the definition of the term diplomacy. There is no precise definition of the term but an appraisal of various definitions shall help formulate a reasonably accurate notion thereof.

Country specific diplomatic conduct can be determined by a study of past actions of your country (country allotted which a participant is called the delegate of) in the international fora. Speeches, statements, voting records, instances of walk-outs, boycotting of meetings et cetera can contribute to building an understanding of the same, apart from these sources, video graphic recordings of these sessions and meetings can greatly help this understanding. It is expected of all participants to conduct themselves impeccably, the concept of MUN's wasn't created simply to get to students to talk about

things diplomats would usually talk about, but to also hone their conduct, their reasoning, logic, negotiation and lobbying skills, all of which can be referred to as 'soft skills'. Diplomatic conduct harmoniously links speech and body language, it is a bridge between verbal and non verbal communication thereby making it an important criterion for us to assess your performance and effectiveness on.

Manipulation of procedure of the committee to gain extra floor time or to stall the statement/comment/speech of another delegate or to cause disruption therein shall not be tolerated.

Delegates must also keep in mind that lobbying is of core importance to the success of any acting delegate. No country in the world would wish to be isolated, the interface between countries at a diplomatic, political, economic, scientific level is what makes this modern world, without this, we would recede back into our past where nations barely had any interaction beyond their territorial boundaries. Speeches, statements and research play a major role in according a delegate supremacy in council, but an equally important role is also played by lobbying, an eloquent, word smart delegate is of no use if he/she cannot put his/her words into action or convince others to follow his/her lead.

Given the nature and complexity of the agenda, it is impossible to deliver an authoritative document on the subject. The substance of this guide is therefore intended only to help you in developing basic background, context, vocabulary and familiarity with the subject area of substantive discussion in this simulation. Most of the information disseminated in this guide is freely available on the internet with a simple web search. Therefore, please use this guide only as a basic refresher and not as a substitute for actual research and policy parsing, understanding and construction. Having said that, this Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference

Siddhant Bajaj – Chairperson

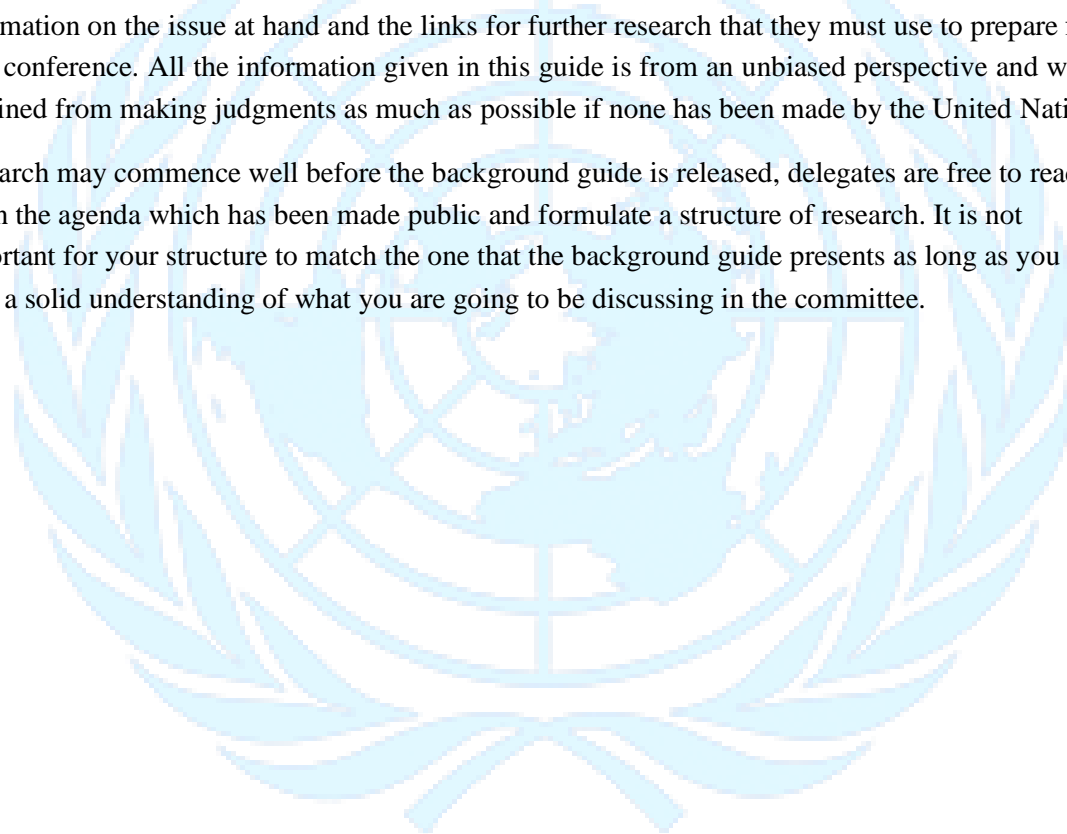
Karishma Kharbanda – Co-Chairperson

## **Purpose of a Background Guide**

Having stated the above, it is now prudent to explain the purpose and nature of the background guide summarily. The background guide is a preliminary research brief pertaining to the committee and the agenda. It is NOT meant to provide participants with exhaustive information. The primary purpose of a background guide is to ensure that all participants are at a level playing field, thus it ensures that every participant possesses a modicum of information from which further information can be drawn. It serves as a base upon which the research is built. Nothing in the background guide has any evidentiary value; it can never be used as conclusive proof in the committee. It is necessary for delegates to dig deeper from where the background guide leaves them.

**Study Guides are, contradictory to popular belief, not supposed to contain all the information on a certain topic.** A good study guide consists of information that a delegate can use to gain basic information on the issue at hand and the links for further research that they must use to prepare for the final conference. All the information given in this guide is from an unbiased perspective and we have refrained from making judgments as much as possible if none has been made by the United Nations.

Research may commence well before the background guide is released, delegates are free to read up on the agenda which has been made public and formulate a structure of research. It is not important for your structure to match the one that the background guide presents as long as you have a solid understanding of what you are going to be discussing in the committee.



### **Remarks about Procedure**

Parliamentary procedure lays the foundation on which negotiation can take place and solutions be deliberated. Without the benefit of civility that procedure affords, it would be impossible to steer a simulation of a body like the COP to the UNFCCC. However, it is also true that a pedantic and tunnel-lensed view of procedure often hinders debate instead of facilitating it. It is these facts that form the basis of the Executive Board's view about procedure – procedure shall be enforced to the degree that it is conducive to debate. We shall not enforce procedure for the sake of procedure and procedure will be recognized for what it is – a means to an end and not an end in itself.

One additional remark about procedure is in order – procedural entities are not vehicles of debate and the Executive Board will strongly penalize the usage of procedure to make substantive points (like using a Point of Order to make substantive arguments).



## Proof / Evidence in Council

Evidence or proof is acceptable from sources:

### 1. News Sources:

a. **REUTERS**– Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.

b. **State operated News Agencies** – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any Country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are, RIA Novosti (Russia), IRNA (Iran), BBC (United Kingdom) and Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China)

**2. Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that the Executive Board as credible information can still accept a report that is being denied by a certain country. Examples are,

a. **Government Websites** like the State Department of the United States of America or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.

b. **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** of various nations like India, People's Republic of China, France, Russian Federation.

d. **Multilateral Organisations** such as NATO ,ASEAN ,OPEC ,etc.

**3. UN Reports:** All UN Reports are considered are credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the Security Council.

**NOTE** - Notwithstanding anything listed above as a source of proof / evidence, it is important to understand that this body does not serve an adjudicatory purpose. It is not within the mandate of the Committee to approve or negate the credibility of anything that a sovereign nation State may assert as fact. What a nation believes to be fact is intrinsically linked to its foreign policy, an example thereof can be found in the contradictory narratives pertaining to Syria presented by the Western and Eastern blocs within the United Nations. These narratives are presented as being grounded in fact by both the blocs and it is not the job of the executive board to lend credence to or discredit anything said by nations in furtherance of such narratives.

Within the Model UN framework, presenting sources to bolster any claims made by delegates is considered necessary in order to keep the debate from drifting towards fiction. Discussions in such simulations have to be insulated from the imagination of role playing participants. There is room for innovation and creativity, only in so far as it pertains to solutions and diplomatic manoeuvres. Innovation and creativity which leads to an imagination based departure from actual occurrences or from the positions maintained by countries on various issues shall not be encouraged and delegates

shall be negatively assessed in lieu of statements to that effect.

## Introduction

### Committee Overview

The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) is a treaty that provides a framework for international efforts to combat climate change. All 197 parties to the UNFCCC are represented at the Conference of the Parties (COP), which is the UNFCCC's decision-making body.

In December 1990, as part of a longer process in the international debate on the impact of human activities on the Earth's environment and climate, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to begin work on a treaty on climate change. The resultant *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) was opened for signature in 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, and it entered into force in 1994 after having received the required 50 ratifications. As of August 2017, 197 parties have ratified the UNFCCC: all UN Member States, the State of Palestine, Niue, the Cook Islands, and the European Union. All parties to the UNFCCC are represented at the Conference of the Parties (COP), which meets annually and serves as "the supreme decision-making body of the Convention."

The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is the "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." This is to happen within a timeframe "sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner." The UNFCCC was "remarkable for its time" in acknowledging a connection between climate change and human activities, as scientific evidence of climate change and its effects was still limited. Parties to the UNFCCC agreed, "lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason" to postpone "precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects."

The UNFCCC recognizes that the responsibilities of parties would vary depending on their respective capacities, development priorities, and historical contribution to greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. This important principle is described in article 4 of the UNFCCC as "common but differentiated responsibilities," and it informs the UNFCCC and all related agreements. As developed countries have more resources to commit and are the largest producers of greenhouse gas emissions, they "are expected to do the most to cut emissions on home ground" and to provide assistance to developing countries. In contrast, as developing countries must prioritize socioeconomic development and poverty eradication, their ability to implement their UNFCCC commitments depends on the assistance they receive from developed countries. Accordingly, Annex I of the UNFCCC lists developed countries, all of which are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in addition to 12 countries with "economies in transition," and assigns them additional responsibilities to "demonstrate that [they] are taking the lead in modifying longer-term trends in anthropogenic emissions." Annex II of the UNFCCC lists certain Annex I countries that are further expected to support developing countries in the implementation of UNFCCC provisions, including by providing financial resources and promoting access to and transfer of technology.

On its own, the UNFCCC is non-binding. In 1995, during its first session, the COP agreed that the UNFCCC was therefore "inadequate" and commenced a negotiation process on "additional commitments." These efforts resulted in the *Kyoto Protocol*, which was adopted by the COP in 1997

as an adjunct, binding agreement; it entered into force in 2005 and currently has 192 parties. In accordance with the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities,” the *Kyoto Protocol* sets specific and measurable reduction targets for the emissions of 37 industrialized countries, as well as the European Union, to be achieved over the initial five-year commitment period of 2008 to 2012. In 2012, the parties to the *Kyoto Protocol* adopted the *Doha Amendment*, which specified further targets for certain countries over a second commitment period of 2013 to 2020. The *Doha Amendment* has yet to enter into force, having received only 80 of the required 144 ratifications.

In 2015, the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the COP adopted the *Paris Agreement*, which seeks “to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change,” including by preventing global temperature rise from exceeding 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.<sup>21</sup> Opened for signature in April 2016, the *Paris Agreement* entered into force in November 2016 and has been ratified by 160 parties.<sup>22</sup> All parties to the *Paris Agreement* are required to “prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions” to the overall goal and to implement domestic measures to achieve them.<sup>23</sup> The *Paris Agreement* also includes provisions on enhancing adaptation measures, promoting technology development and transfer, and raising public awareness of climate change.<sup>24</sup>

### **Governance Structure and Membership**

The UNFCCC created numerous bodies to oversee and facilitate its implementation. Established by article 7, the COP is the governing body of the UNFCCC and includes all 197 parties; it meets once per year. The COP also serves as the meeting of the Parties to the *Kyoto Protocol* and the meeting of the Parties to the *Paris Agreement*. The 192 parties to the *Kyoto Protocol* are represented at the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the *Kyoto Protocol* (CMP), and the 160 parties to the *Paris Agreement* are represented at the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the *Paris Agreement* (CMA); non-parties have observer status. The CMP and the CMA oversee implementation of the *Kyoto Protocol* and the *Paris Agreement*, respectively. The Bureau of the COP, CMP, and CMA is comprised of 11 members elected to ensure equal representation among regional groups, including Small Island developing states; it is responsible for organizational duties and process management.

Other entities in the UNFCCC system support the work of the COP, the CMP, and the CMA. Article 8 of the UNFCCC establishes the Secretariat, which provides organizational and technical assistance to all UNFCCC bodies, including by compiling and transmitting reports, coordinating with secretariats of other international bodies, and facilitating the communication of information. Based in Bonn, Germany, the Secretariat is currently headed by Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, who took office in July 2016. Article 9 establishes the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and article 10 establishes the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

Pursuant to its mandate, the COP itself has created numerous subsidiary bodies. Among them are the Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre and Network, which facilitate the implementation of the Technology Mechanism; the Adaptation Committee, which promotes “enhanced action on adaptation,” and the Standing Committee on Finance, which assists with the management of the financial mechanism and resources of the UNFCCC.

The UNFCCC budget is proposed by the Executive Secretary every two years and submitted to the SBI, which considers the proposal and forwards a recommended budget to the COP for approval and adoption by consensus. Sources of financing for UNFCCC activities include both mandatory and voluntary contributions from parties to the UNFCCC, as well as “appropriations from previous financial periods and miscellaneous income.” To provide support to developing countries, article 11 of the UNFCCC defines a “mechanism for the provision of financial resources on a grant or concessional basis, including for the transfer of technology,” to be entrusted by the COP to one or more entities. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has served as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism since 1994, and the Green Climate Fund, which was created by the COP in 2010, also became an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism in 2011.



## **Mandate, Functions and Powers**

As set out in Article 7 of the UNFCCC, the primary purpose of the COP is to review the implementation of the UNFCCC, including any related instruments, and to make “the decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention.” Its functions include examining the obligations of parties to the UNFCCC and assessing their progress towards implementation; facilitating the exchange of information; considering, adopting, and ensuring the publication of regular reports on implementation; and making “recommendations on any matters necessary for the implementation of the Convention.” The COP may establish subsidiary bodies as necessary, and it is also empowered to work with international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

As the UNFCCC originated within the UN system, an institutional link remains between the Secretariat of the UNFCCC and the UN that is defined in decisions of the COP and in resolutions of the UN General Assembly. The Secretariat, which is “administered under UN rules and regulations,” has the ability to “call on the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of Legal Affairs and other departments, programmes and agencies on substantive matters.” The Secretary-General of the UN appoints the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, in consultation with the Bureau, and also serves as depositary for the UNFCCC and related instruments.

The UNFCCC relies on the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an intergovernmental body that was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Programme. The IPCC is an expert body that “reviews and assesses [...] the most recent scientific, technical and socioeconomic information produced worldwide.” Key findings are regularly reported in major Assessment Reports; the fifth and most recent edition was published in 2014, and the sixth edition will be published in 2022. IPCC reports provide the COP with reliable data on which to base its decisions, and “the relationship between the UNFCCC and the IPCC [has become] a model for interaction between science and decision-makers.”

Recognizing the value of partnerships to the implementation of the UNFCCC, the Secretariat actively seeks opportunities to collaborate with diverse stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, private sector entities, and subnational authorities. Examples of existing opportunities for partnerships with non-party stakeholders include Momentum for Change, a platform that recognizes successful climate action to raise awareness of ongoing initiatives, and Climate Neutral Now, which promotes climate action at the individual level. The UNFCCC also maintains Regional Collaboration Centres that “support national climate action through capacity-building, technical assistance and strategic networking.”

## **Recent Sessions and Current Priorities**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the COP was held from 15 to 18 November 2016 in Marrakech, Morocco. Important outcomes included an “extended work program” on gender and climate policy that includes civil society and the private sector; a new framework under the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts that focuses on “impacts of climate change that are not addressed through planned adaptation,” such as displacement and migration; and further work on a platform for local communities and indigenous peoples to facilitate sharing of information and best practices.

The 46<sup>th</sup> sessions of the SBI and the SBSTA, as well as the third meeting of the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the *Paris Agreement* (APA), took place from 8-18 May 2017 in Bonn, Germany. Topics addressed by the SBI and SBSTA included the impact of implementation of response measures, which refers to “social or economic effects that may result from climate activities taken by other countries.” The APA continued work on a “rule book” to guide implementation of the *Paris Agreement*, which is scheduled for completion in 2018.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the COP took place from 6 to 17 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany. Items on the provisional agenda included annual reports of subsidiary bodies, further preparations for the implementation of the *Paris Agreement*, conclusion of the sixth review of the Financial Mechanism, consideration of proposals to amend the text of the UNFCCC, and approval of the program budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

The **2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference** was the 24th **Conference of the Parties** to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24)**, also known as the **Katowice Climate Change Conference**. It was held between 2 and 15 December 2018 in **Katowice**, Poland. The conference agreed on rules to implement the 2015 **Paris Agreement**.

After the **United States** left the Paris Agreement, **China** has taken a leading role by hosting many of the preparatory meetings in the weeks beforehand.<sup>1</sup>

In November 2018, the **World Meteorological Organization** released a report stating that 2017 atmospheric carbon dioxide levels reached 405 parts per million (ppm), a level not seen in three to five million years.<sup>2</sup> In October 2018, the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** published its **Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C (SR15)**.

### **Result of CoP-24**

The conference agreed on rules to implement the **Paris Agreement**, which will come into force in 2020, that is to say the rulebook on how governments will measure, and report on their emissions-cutting efforts.<sup>3</sup>

Due to difficulty to reach agreement between parties, some difficult questions such as ways to scale up existing commitments on cutting emissions, ways to provide financial help for poor countries, wording that does not allow double counting and whether countries are doing enough to cut their emissions (in the light of the **IPCC report**) were postponed to the next conference.<sup>4</sup>

David Waskow, of the **World Resources Institute**, said the deal was "a good foundation for countries to go about implementing the Paris agreement" and added that "It sets the direction of travel and will spur countries to take action. Now countries need to go home and do their homework, by increasing their commitments [on emissions]".<sup>5</sup>

Some achievements have been made:

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie Hook (16 November 2018). "[China emerges as powerbroker in global climate talks](#)". *The Financial Times*. Retrieved 27 November 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Matt McGrath (22 November 2018). "[Climate change: Warming gas concentrations at new record high](#)". *BBC News*. Retrieved 27 November 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Fiona Harvey, "Progress and problems as UN climate change talks end with a deal ", *The Guardian*, 15 December 2018 (page visited on 16 December 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Fiona Harvey, "What was agreed at COP24 in Poland and why did it take so long?", *The Guardian*, 16 December 2018 (page visited on 16 December 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Fiona Harvey, "Progress and problems as UN climate change talks end with a deal ", *The Guardian*, 15 December 2018 (page visited on 16 December 2016).

- 50 countries signed the “**Silesia declaration**”<sup>6</sup>, which emphasised the need for emission-reducing policies to ensure “a just transition of the workforce” and create “decent work and quality jobs”.
- The **Polish** presidency declared a “forests for climate” policy highlighting the important role of forests in solving climate problems.
- COP24 welcomes “timely completion” of the **Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C** and “invited” countries to make use of the report.
- Some countries say that they will increase their climate pledges in 2020, including **India, Canada, Ukraine, and Jamaica**.
- Several dozen countries forming “High Ambition Coalition” – including the **EU, UK, Germany, France, Argentina, Mexico, and Canada** – pledged to raise their targets by 2020.
- New members join the **Powering Past Coal Alliance**; now there are around 80.
- **Germany** make a €70m contribution to the Adaptation Fund. Smaller pledges made by **France, Sweden, Italy** and the **EU** raised the total to \$129m – an annual record for the fund.
- Germany gave €1.5bn for the **Green Climate Fund** – double their 2014 contribution.
- **Norway** pledged \$516m to the Green Climate Fund.
- The **World Bank** gave \$200bn for climate programmes in 2021-2025, two times more than in 2015 - 2020. It was also one of nine banks which pledged to “align... their activities” with the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- Five other banks – **ING, BBVA, BNP Paribas, Société Générale** and **Standard Chartered** – with a capital of €2.4tn, pledged to adjust the climate alignment of their lending portfolios to achieve the “well below 2C” target.
- The **UK** say it will increase by £100m the funding for renewable energy projects in sub-Saharan Africa, and by £170m the funding to support the creation low carbon industry in the UK by 2040.
- **Maersk**, the world’s largest shipping company, said it will totally eliminate its carbon impact by 2050,
- Shell committed to link short-term carbon targets to executive pay from the year 2020.
- There were many smaller pledges from businesses.

Many say, that there is a “lack of urgency” in the COP decisions, but some good decisions have been made<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/files/Solidarity\\_and\\_Just\\_Transition\\_Silesia\\_Declaration.pdf](https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Solidarity_and_Just_Transition_Silesia_Declaration.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> EVANS, SIMON; TIMPERLEY, JOCELYN. "COP24: Key outcomes agreed at the UN climate talks in Katowice". *Carbon Brief*. Retrieved 19 December 2018.

## Conclusion

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda acknowledged climate change as “one of the greatest challenges of our time,” and the threat it poses to sustainable development was highlighted by the inclusion of SDG 13: “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.” Despite ongoing efforts from the international community, global warming “continued in 2016, setting a new record of about 1.1 degrees Centigrade above the preindustrial period.” As climate change continues to threaten “the survival of many societies” and “the biological support systems of the planet,” the COP to the UNFCCC will continue to lead international climate action.

## Annotated Bibliography

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[http://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/convention/application/pdf/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf) *Delegates should familiarize themselves with the Paris Agreement, which was adopted by the COP at its 21<sup>st</sup> session in December 2015. The landmark agreement has generated unprecedented global momentum on climate action and its implementation constitutes a priority for both the UNFCCC and the international community. The APA is continuing work on completing the rule book for the operationalization of the Paris Agreement.*

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). *Bodies* [Website].

Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <http://unfccc.int/bodies/items/6241.php>

*The UNFCCC system comprises a complex network of bodies. This website provides an overview of the functions of main UNFCCC bodies, which will help delegates understand the relationship between the COP and the rest of the UNFCCC system. Of particular importance are the Secretariat, the SBSTA, and the SBI.*

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (n.d.). *Timeline* [Website]. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <http://unfccc.int/timeline/>

*Through an interactive timeline, this website provides an overview of all significant developments in the history of the UNFCCC. Delegates should review the evolution of the UNFCCC and the genesis of the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement as binding commitments from the international community to combat climate change by reducing emissions. This website also provides infographics as helpful illustrations of important concepts and process related to the UNFCCC.*

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (1992). Retrieved 31 August 2017 from:

[http://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/convention/background/application/pdf/convention\\_text\\_with\\_annexes\\_english\\_for\\_posting.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/background/application/pdf/convention_text_with_annexes_english_for_posting.pdf)

*The UNFCCC was adopted on May 9, 1992, and entered into force on March 21, 1994. Currently, there are 197 parties to the UNFCCC, including the European Union. It aims to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that prevents human activity from negatively interfering with the Earth's climate. This document serves as the foundation of international climate policy and should be at the core of further research. It is essential for delegates to be familiar with the structure and content of the UNFCCC. Article 7 establishes the COP and describes the functions that it may exercise in support of implementing the UNFCCC.*

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2017). *Meetings* [Website]. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <http://unfccc.int/meetings/items/6240.php>

*This website collects all documents related to meetings of the COP and other UNFCCC bodies, including agendas, decisions, press releases, and outcomes. It lists all previous meetings and provides links to relevant archives. Delegates should review the documents associated with the upcoming 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the COP.*

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Third session. (1997). *Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf>

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*UN Climate Negotiators Work to Advance Paris Rulebook*. (2017, May 24). International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development. Retrieved 31 August 2017 from: <https://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges/news/un-climate-negotiators-work-to-advance-paris-rulebook>

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### **Summary of Substantive Brief**

1. The scale and pace of climate change is rapidly moving the natural systems that underpin human well being into uncharted territory, with the potential for severe and irreversible impacts. Climate change will destroy human and physical capital, and drive major changes to ecosystems. Strong climate action is not a threat to, but rather the foundation of, future economic well-being.
2. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in one part of the world affect the climate globally, so any effective response must be multilateral in nature. The Paris Agreement is an international legal instrument with the potential to measure up to the scale and urgency of the climate challenge. However, governments must overcome significant challenges if its potential is to be met.
3. In aggregate, action and commitments on GHG emissions are inadequate to limit the average global surface temperature increase to the Paris goal of well-below 2°C, let alone 1.5°C. Efforts must be scaled up and accelerated to peak global GHG emissions as soon as possible, with rapid reductions thereafter towards zero or negative emissions in the second half of the century.
4. Ambitious domestic action needs to go hand in hand with an increase in the amount and effectiveness of international climate finance and other support for developing countries, in line with international commitments.
5. Since climate impacts are already occurring and may be severe even if the Paris goals are achieved, major efforts are required now to enhance resilience and adaptive capacity. Holistic planning and coordination across ministries is needed to improve policy coherence across climate change mitigation and adaptation, food security and biodiversity conservation.

6. Governments alone cannot solve climate change. Success will depend on the transformational actions of many other organisations, institutions and individuals, including businesses, financial institutions and regulators, cities, social and labour organisations, researchers and innovators. Governments need to enable and support these efforts by sending a clear policy signal that the transition to low-emissions climate-resilient development pathways is irreversible.

7. Governments can send a powerful signal by pricing the harmful external effects of GHG emissions more coherently across all sectors of their economies, including agriculture and land- use, and at a higher level. Inefficient fossil fuel subsidies also need to be phased out.

### **Substantive Brief**

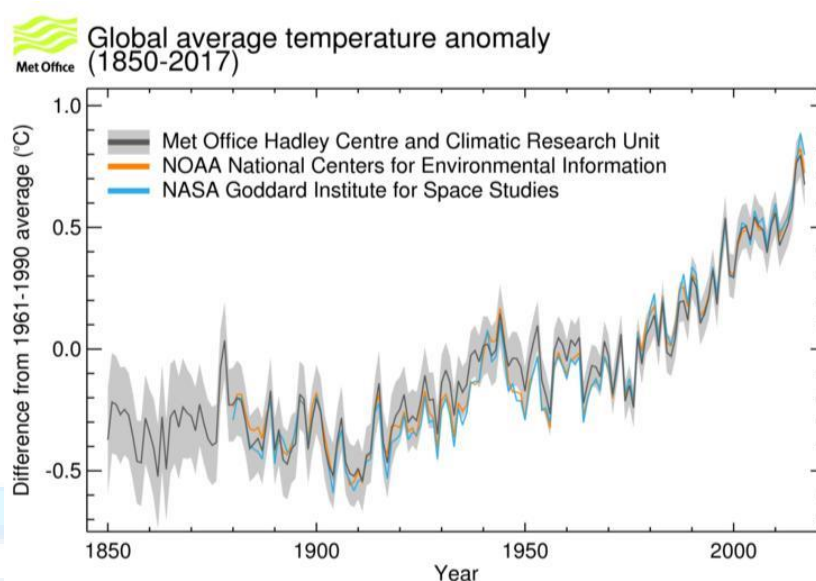
1. The scale and pace of climate change is rapidly moving the natural systems that underpin human well-being into uncharted territory, with the potential for severe and irreversible impacts. This will make it more difficult to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) have surpassed 400 parts per million (ppm) from a pre-industrial level of around 280 ppm. This concentration is higher than at any time in the last 800,000 years. Global mean temperatures are a product of a long-term warming trend due to emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and climate variability at different timescales (Figure 1.1). Temperatures reached 1°C above pre-industrial levels in 2015 as a result of both climate change and a strong El Niño that continued into 2016. Projections of end-of-century average global surface temperature are between 2.6°C and 3.1°C above pre-industrial levels, based on commitments in current nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. Without rapid and significant acceleration of mitigation action, the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting average global warming to well below 2°C, let alone the 1.5°C goal, will remain well out of reach.

2. Climate change will destroy human and physical capital and exacerbate existing pressures on biodiversity, driving major and potentially irreversible changes to ecosystems. How these changes translate into economic terms depends on complex and unpredictable interactions between climate, ecological, economic and social systems, including infrastructure networks. Climate change is therefore a risk management problem: how to find and implement the most cost-effective ways to limit climate risks to a politically agreed level, informed by the best scientific evidence. Early and ambitious action on adaptation and mitigation can significantly reduce these risks. For example, limiting the global average surface temperature increase to 2°C relative to even a 3°C scenario could bring significant benefits in terms of avoided flooding, heatwaves and cropland decline.

3. Even the "well-below 2°C" goal is insufficient to avoid major impacts from climate change. A certain amount of climate change is already locked in from past and current emissions and the extent to which countries succeed in further mitigating climate change will affect the scale of climate impacts they face. Some types of extreme weather events are projected to become more severe and frequent, especially those related to extreme heat, even if international climate goals are met. Floods, droughts and wildfires are also projected to increase. Rising seas will exacerbate coastal flooding, inundate low-lying land and lead to salinization of water supplies in some areas, while ocean



acidification will continue to drive coral mortality, with severe implications for fisheries, tourism and coastal erosion. Food insecurity will likely also worsen. Concerted action is required to build climate resilience to reduce the harm caused by climate change.



Source: UK Meteorological Office

4. Emissions in one part of the world affect the climate globally, so any effective and sufficient response to climate change must be multilateral in nature. Economically efficient action on climate requires countries to set their emission reduction efforts based on the marginal benefits of avoided climate damages globally – the so-called "social cost of carbon". Approaches to GHG emissions reduction based on purely national agendas may ignore the impacts caused in one jurisdiction by emissions in another and short-termism may heavily discount the effect of climate damages on future generations. Such approaches will not deliver policy action at the scale and pace required to meet the Paris Agreement goals. Countries may also be undervaluing both the direct and indirect (e.g. finance- and trade-mediated) economic and social costs of climate-related extreme events. Conversely, countries may be missing out on some of the domestic benefits of decisive action to reduce GHG emissions, e.g. from associated reductions in air pollution.

### Challenges Ahead

5. There are a number of challenges that must be overcome by Parties if the Paris Agreement's ambitious goals are to be met, both individually and through the Paris Agreement's transparency and review provisions. First, the international community will need to successfully reconcile the disconnect between the bottom-up ambition in current NDCs and the Paris Agreement's top-down, long-term temperature goals. The aggregate level of pledged emissions reductions specified in current NDCs is not nearly sufficient to meet the Paris Agreement's mitigation goals. Ensuring the Agreement's transparency and review mechanisms are robust and effective is critical in this respect. If Parties are to increase the ambition of their emissions reductions over time and transcend short-term national perspectives, they will need to be confident that other Parties are also doing their fair share.

The review mechanism should provide a reality-check on the adequacy of collective efforts when confronted with the urgency and severity of the challenge ahead.

6. Parties' efforts to finalise the Paris Agreement's "rulebook" by the end of the year 2018, including the development of modalities, procedures and guidelines for the Agreement's transparency framework, were therefore fundamental to the future success of international efforts, not just a minor technical exercise. Fortunately this was accomplished in the CoP-24, which was concluded in the December of 2018. The Rulebook however will become operational in 2020. The joint OECD-IEA Climate Change Expert Group (CCXG), which engages directly with Parties on technical issues within the UNFCCC process, is supporting Parties' efforts to meet the challenge of making the Paris Agreement operational. The CCXG is undertaking analytical work to identify gaps, draw lessons from existing practice, and present options for future arrangements on aspects of the proposed transparency regime and accounting for mitigation targets.

7. Ongoing efforts to improve transparency and understanding of international support represent another key challenge, with a new quantified goal for developed country climate finance in support of climate action in developing countries to be determined before 2025. The modalities for accounting for climate finance mobilised and provided are currently being negotiated within the UNFCCC process. It will be essential that these modalities are robust, avoid double counting and incentivise the best use of climate finance. In 2015, the OECD produced an estimate of climate finance to support progress on one of the most sensitive issues in the COP21 negotiations. A second report in 2016 attempted to quantify the collective impact of climate pledges announced by individual countries and multilateral institutions on the aggregate level of public climate finance in 2020, building on the 2015 report. Efforts to enhance transparency and understanding of other forms of international support for developing countries, including technology transfer and capacity-building support, are also ongoing.

### **U.S. Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and its Implications**

On June 1, 2017, United States President [Donald Trump](#) announced that the U.S. would cease all participation in the [2015 Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation](#). Trump stated that "The Paris accord will undermine (the U.S.) economy," and "puts (the U.S.) at a permanent disadvantage." During the presidential campaign, Trump had pledged to withdraw from the pact, saying a withdrawal would help American businesses and workers. Trump stated that the withdrawal would be in accordance with his [America First](#) policy.

In accordance with [Article 28 of the Paris Agreement](#), the earliest possible effective withdrawal date by the United States cannot be before November 4, 2020, four years after the Agreement came into effect in the United States and one day after the [2020 U.S. presidential election](#). The White House later clarified that the U.S. will abide by the four-year exit process. Until the withdrawal takes effect, the United States may be obligated to maintain its commitments under the Agreement, such as the requirement to continue reporting its emissions to the United Nations.

While celebrated by some members of the [Republican Party](#), international reactions to the withdrawal were overwhelmingly negative from across the political spectrum, and the decision received substantial criticism from religious organizations, businesses, political leaders of all parties, [environmentalists](#), and scientists and citizens from the United States and abroad.

Following Trump's announcement, the governors of several U.S. states formed the [United States Climate Alliance](#) to continue to advance the objectives of the Paris Agreement at the state level despite the federal withdrawal. As of February 22, 2018, 16 states and [Puerto Rico](#) have joined the alliance, and similar commitments have also been expressed by other state governors, mayors, and businesses.

## Background

The Paris Agreement was an addition to the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC), initially agreed to by all 195 countries present at the [2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#) in December of that year, including the United States then under the presidency of [Barack Obama](#). Due to the status of the United States and China as the [greatest emitters of carbon dioxide](#), Obama's support and his [cooperation with China](#) were seen as major factors leading to the convention's early success.

The main aim of the Agreement is to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels", predominantly by reducing [greenhouse gas](#) emissions. The agreement differs from the 1997 [Kyoto Protocol](#), the last widely adopted amendment to the UNFCCC, in that no annexes are established to lessen responsibility of developing nations. Rather, emissions targets for each nation were separately negotiated and are to be voluntarily enforced, leading United States officials to regard the Paris Agreement as an [executive agreement](#) rather than a legally binding [treaty](#). This removed the requirement for the [United States Congress](#) to ratify the agreement. In April 2016, the United States became a signatory to the Paris Agreement, and accepted it by [executive order](#) in September 2016. President Obama committed the United States to contributing US\$3 billion to the [Green Climate Fund](#). The Fund has set itself a goal of raising \$100 billion a year by 2020.

Article 28 of the agreement enables parties to withdraw from the agreement after sending a withdrawal notification to the depositary, but notice can be given no earlier than three years after the agreement goes into force for the country. Withdrawal is effective one year after the depositary is notified. Alternatively, the Agreement stipulates that withdrawal from the UNFCCC, under which the Paris Agreement was adopted, would also withdraw the state from the Paris Agreement. The conditions for withdrawal from the UNFCCC are the same as for the Paris Agreement.

On November 8, 2016, four days after the Paris Agreement [entered into force](#) in the United States, Donald Trump of the [Republican Party](#) was [elected](#) President of the United States. Many conservative Republicans dispute the level of human involvement in climate change. [Trump is a climate change sceptic](#), who in 2012 tweeted that he believed the concept of global warming was created by China in order to impair American competitiveness. During [Trump's 2016 election campaign](#), Trump promised to revitalize the coal industry, which he claimed has been hampered by environmental regulations. It has been argued that this contributed to the support he enjoyed from crucial [swing states](#). His opposition to climate change mitigation was unchanged in the first months of [his presidency](#), in which he issued an [executive order](#) to reverse Obama's [Clean Power Plan](#) and other environmental regulations.

In April 2017, a group of 20 [members of the European Parliament](#) from the right-wing [Alternative for Germany](#), [UK Independence Party](#), and other parties sent a letter to Trump on urging him to withdraw from the Paris Agreement. On May 25, 2017, 22 Republican Senators, including Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#), sent a two-page letter to Trump urging him to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris agreement. The letter was drafted by Senator [John Barrasso](#), the chairman of the [Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works](#), and Senator [Jim Inhofe](#), known for his longtime [climate change denial](#). Most of signatories to the letter were elected from states reliant on the burning of [fossil fuels](#) (coal, oil and gas); the group of 22 senators had collectively received more than \$10 million in campaign contributions from fossil-fuels companies in the previous three election cycles. Earlier the same week, a group of 40 Democratic Senators sent Trump a letter urging him to keep America in the Paris Agreement, writing that "a withdrawal would hurt America's credibility and influence on the world stage."

Both support for the move and opposition to it were reported among Trump's cabinet and advisers: Secretary of Energy [Rick Perry](#), Secretary of State [Rex Tillerson](#), economic advisor [Gary Cohn](#), and advisor and son-in-law [Jared Kushner](#) reportedly wanted the United States to remain committed to the agreement, while White House Advisor [Steve Bannon](#), White House Counsel [Don McGahn](#), and EPA Administrator [Scott Pruitt](#) wanted the United States to abandon it.

During the [G7 summit in late May 2017](#), Trump was the only [G7](#) member not to reconfirm commitment to the Paris Agreement. German Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#), one of the other leaders present, was publicly unimpressed with Trump's refusal to cooperate on climate change mitigation, which was seen to damage [Germany–United States relations](#). The communique issued at the conclusion of the summit stated that the United States "is not in a position to join the consensus" of the other G7 countries on policies regarding climate change and the Paris Agreement.

### **Impact**

When the withdrawal takes effect, the U.S. will be the only UNFCCC member states who is not a signatory to the Paris Agreement. At the time of the original withdrawal announcement, [Syria](#) and [Nicaragua](#) were also not participants; however, both Syria and Nicaragua have since ratified the agreement, leaving the U.S. the only UNFCCC member state intending to not be a party to the Agreement.

Luke Kemp of the [Australian National University](#)'s Fenner School of Environment and Society wrote in a commentary for [Nature](#) that "withdrawal is unlikely to change US emissions" since "the greenhouse gas emissions of the US are divorced from international legal obligations." However, he added that it could hamper climate change mitigation efforts if the U.S. stops contributing to the [Green Climate Fund](#). Kemp said the effect of a U.S. withdrawal could be either good or bad for the Paris agreement, since "a rogue US can cause more damage inside rather than outside of the agreement." Finally, "A withdrawal could also make the US into a climate pariah and provide a unique opportunity for China and the EU to take control of the climate regime and significantly boost their international reputations and [soft power](#)."

### **Potential economic impact**

The German car industry expressed concerns about its ability to remain competitive in light of the United States decision to withdraw. The president of the German auto industry lobby group [VDA](#), [Matthias Wissmann](#) said, "The regrettable announcement by the USA makes it inevitable that Europe must facilitate a cost efficient and economically feasible climate policy to remain internationally competitive."

Many of the larger auto and aviation companies had already invested billions into reducing emissions and were unlikely to change course. [General Motors](#), the largest automobile manufacturer in the United States, immediately pointed out: "Our position on climate change has not changed ... we publicly advocate for climate action," and reiterated its support for various climate pledges. Analyst [Rebecca Lindland](#) also pointed out that manufacturers of automobiles were under no specific restrictions under the Accord and that nothing had changed. Even if Trump loosened other restrictions on the car industry that allowed for the production of less environmental cars, such cars still needed to conform to standards before they could be exported to other continents or even certain states. [Jason Bordoff](#), energy-policy expert at Columbia University, agreed that withdrawing would make no difference to the economy, arguing that it would be determined by market conditions like the price of oil and gas. At the same time, airlines have been spending billions on seeking more fuel efficient ways to fly anyway –fuel is an airline's second-biggest expense after labor and so using less fuel (which means less emissions) is in their financial interest. [Kabir Nanda](#) and [Varad Pande](#), senior consultant and partner at [Dahlberg](#), respectively, argued that despite the US withdrawal the American

private sector was still committed to renewable energy and technology. Also noted was the fact that solar energy had become cheaper than coal in an increasing number of countries.

### **Petitions**

Petitions were launched across states in order to persuade state governors to join the Paris Agreement or have Trump reverse the planned withdrawal, which included a "[ParisMyState](#)" and a [MoveOn](#) petition that has received over 535,000 signatures.

### **Scientists and environmentalists**

[Piers Forster](#), the director of the [University of Leeds](#)' Priestley International Centre for Climate, called the decision to withdraw "a sad day for [evidence-based policy](#)" and expressed hope that individual Americans, businesses and states would nevertheless choose to [decarbonize](#). Climate scientist [Dave Reay](#) of the [University of Edinburgh](#) said that "The United States will come to rue this day."

The [University Corporation for Atmospheric Research](#) (UCAR), in a statement by its president [Antonio Busalacchi Jr.](#), said that the decision to withdraw "does not mean that climate change will go away" and warned that "the heightened potential for increased greenhouse gas emissions poses a substantial threat to our communities, businesses, and military." The [Information Technology and Innovation Foundation](#) called the decision to withdraw "very discouraging" and said that it would diminish confidence in international climate change efforts; the technology think tank called for federal efforts on "the smart grid, energy storage, carbon capture and sequestration, and advanced nuclear and solar power" and warned that "Without a smart, aggressive clean-energy innovation strategy, the world will not avert the worst effects of climate change."

Canadian academic and environmental activist [David Suzuki](#) stated, "Trump just passed on the best deal the planet has ever seen". [Navroz Dubash](#) of the [Centre for Policy Research](#) in New Delhi expressed bafflement at Trump's move, citing the declining costs of renewable energy sources and the increasing difficulty of obtaining investment for fossil-fuel projects.<sup>[51]</sup> Environmental scientist and risk assessor [Dana Nuccitelli](#) stated that it "now seems inevitable that the history books will view [Trump as America's worst-ever president](#)". [Bob Ward](#) of the [Grantham Research Institute](#) also described Trump's speech as "confused nonsense". [Stephen Hawking](#) criticized Trump, saying that he "will cause avoidable environmental damage to our beautiful planet, endangering the natural world, for us and our children."

Environmental groups, such as the [Sierra Club](#) and [Natural Resources Defense Council](#), condemned Trump's decision. American environmentalist and writer [Bill McKibben](#), the founder of the climate change action group [350.org](#), called the move "a stupid and reckless decision — our nation's dumbest act since [launching the war in Iraq](#)." McKibben wrote that Trump's decision to withdraw amounted "to a thorough repudiation of two of the civilizing forces on our planet: diplomacy and science." He called upon U.S. states and cities to "double down" on commitments to [renewable energy](#).

### **Domestic political response**

Republicans gave mixed reviews of Trump's decision to withdraw. Vice president [Mike Pence](#) stated that Trump administration "demonstrated real leadership" by pulling out United States of the international accords which he called "a transfer of wealth from the most powerful economy in the world to other countries around the planet". He also stated that he doesn't understand why Democrats and [liberals in the United States](#) and the [left](#) around the world care about climate change. Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#), Speaker of the House [Paul Ryan](#), Counselor to the President [Kellyanne Conway](#) and Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency [Scott Pruitt](#) praised the decision as a victory for America's middle class, workers, businesses and coal miners. [Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton](#) described Trump's decision as "courageous" and said that it lifted a burden from the American taxpayer. However, Republican Senator [Susan Collins](#) of Maine

was critical of the decision, stating that she was disappointed. Former [Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger](#) issued a video address describing Trump's decision as a retrograde step.

### **Democrats**

Former President [Bill Clinton](#) wrote: "Walking away from Paris treaty is a mistake. Climate change is real. We owe our children more. Protecting our future also creates more jobs." Former

President [Barack Obama](#) said of Trump's decision: "Even as this Administration joins a small handful of nations that reject the future, I'm confident that our states, cities, and businesses will step up and do even more to lead the way, and help protect for future generations the one planet we've got." Former vice-president [Joe Biden](#) said he believes the move imperils American security.

In his withdrawal speech, President Trump stated: "I was elected to represent the citizens of [Pittsburgh](#), not Paris." The incumbent Mayor of Pittsburgh, [Bill Peduto](#), immediately acknowledged on Twitter with a reminder that 80% of his city's voters favored [Hillary Clinton](#) during the 2016 presidential election, and wrote: "As the Mayor of Pittsburgh, I can assure you that we will follow the guidelines of the Paris Agreement for our people, our economy and future." Senate Democratic Leader [Chuck Schumer](#) condemned the withdrawal.

