

WHITE HOUSE FACT SHEET
U.S. LEADERSHIP AND THE HISTORIC PARIS AGREEMENT TO COMBAT
CLIMATE CHANGE

Today, more than 190 countries came together to adopt the most ambitious climate change agreement in history. The Paris Agreement establishes a long term, durable global framework to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. For the first time, all countries commit to putting forward successive and ambitious, nationally determined climate targets and reporting on their progress towards them using a rigorous, standardized process of review.

The Agreement provides strong assurance to developing countries that they will be supported as they pursue clean and climate resilient growth. The deal builds on the unprecedented participation of 187 countries that submitted post-2020 climate action targets in advance of the meeting, and establishes a framework to ratchet up ambition by driving down global emissions in the decades to come.

This new global framework lays the foundation for countries to work together to put the world on a path to keeping global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius and sets an ambitious vision to go even farther than that. This Agreement sends a strong signal to the private sector that the global economy is moving towards clean energy, and that through innovation and ingenuity, we can achieve our climate objectives while creating new jobs, raising standards of living and lifting millions out of poverty.

The Paris Agreement is also the culmination of a broader effort by nations, businesses, cities, and citizens to reorient the global economy to a path of low-carbon growth – progress that will accelerate as a result of the Agreement’s provisions on mitigation ambition, transparency, and climate finance.

An Ambitious Agreement

The Paris Agreement sets forward an ambitious vision for tackling climate change globally. This includes:

- **Strengthening long-term ambition:** The Agreement sets a goal of keeping warming well below 2 degrees Celsius and for the first time agrees to pursue efforts to limit the increase in temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius. It also acknowledges that in order to meet that target, countries should aim to peak greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.
- **Establishing a universal approach for all countries:** The Agreement moves beyond dividing the world into outdated categories of developed and developing countries and instead directs all parties to prepare, communicate and maintain successive and ambitious nationally determined climate targets. This approach – where countries set non-binding targets for themselves – paved the way for 187 mitigation contributions this year and will form the basis for a long-term, durable system to ratchet down emissions.
- **Locking in five year target cycles:** Under the Agreement, all countries will communicate their climate targets every five years, starting in 2020. Targets must be submitted 9-12 months before they are finalized, creating time for other countries and civil society to seek clarity about the targets submitted.

- **Ratcheting up ambition over time:** Each target should reflect progress from the prior one, reflecting the highest possible ambition that each country can achieve. This durable, long term framework will drive greater climate ambition as technologies improve and circumstances change.
- **Rigorous assessment of global climate action:** To help inform further domestic and global efforts, the Agreement puts in place a mechanism to assess collective progress on global mitigation action using the best available science. This process will begin in 2018 and occur every five years to help inform countries' future targets and strategies.
- **Sending a market signal on innovation and technology:** The mitigation components of the Agreement, combined with a broad push on innovation and technology, will help significantly scale up energy investments over the coming years – investments that will accelerate cost reductions for renewable energy and other low-carbon solutions. This set of actions will create a mutually reinforcing cycle in which enhanced mitigation increases investment and enhanced investment allows additional mitigation by driving down costs.

A Transparent and Accountable Agreement

The Paris Agreement establishes a robust transparency system to help make sure that all countries are living up to their commitments. This will send a market signal to the private sector and investors that countries are serious about meeting the targets they have set. These steps include:

- **Putting in place an enhanced transparency system for all countries:** A critical component of the Agreement, the transparency framework agreed to by parties ensures that all countries are on a level playing field with the United States with flexibility for those developing countries with less capacity.
- **Requiring countries to report on greenhouse gas inventories:** For the first time, the Agreement requires all countries to report on national inventories of emissions by source. This breakthrough will give unprecedented clarity to the public's understanding of emissions and pollution in countries throughout the world.
- **Requiring countries to report on mitigation progress:** Also for the first time, countries are required to report on information necessary to track progress made in implementing and achieving the targets and strategies countries have put forward.
- **Establishing a technical review process with agreed upon standards:** To help ensure countries are meeting transparency requirements, countries are subject to a comprehensive technical expert review process that analyzes whether reporting is in line with the standards adopted. Countries will also engage in a multilateral review with their peers to share their experiences and lessons learned.

An Agreement for a Low-Carbon Future

Tackling climate change will require shifting global investment flows towards clean energy, forest protection, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable, will need support from the global community as they pursue clean and resilient growth. The Paris Agreement makes real progress on this front by:

- **Providing a strong, long-term market signal that the world is locking in a low-carbon future:** The submission of ambitious national targets in five-year cycles gives investors and technology innovators a clear signal that the world will demand clean

power plants, energy efficient factories and buildings, and low-carbon transportation not just in the short-term but in the decades to come. This will make it far easier to draw in the largest pools of capital that need long-term certainty in order to invest in clean technologies.

- **Giving confidence that existing financial commitments will be met:** Many developing countries, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, came to Paris seeking reassurance that a global climate deal is not just about the big emitters but also supports their transition to a low-carbon growth path. In this regard, we are already making strong progress towards meeting the existing goal to mobilize \$100 billion from a wide variety of sources, including both public and private, by 2020. The Paris outcome provides further confidence that this goal will be met and that climate finance will continue to flow. For the first time, the Agreement recognizes the reality that countries like China are already joining the base of donor countries contributing to climate finance and encourages developing countries to contribute to climate finance, while reaffirming that the United States and other developed economies should continue to take the lead.

These components of the Agreement build on steps the United States took in Paris to demonstrate its commitment to mobilizing finance from public and private sources for both mitigation and adaptation activities in developing countries. These steps include:

- **Launching Mission Innovation:** On the first day of the conference, President Obama joined other world leaders to launch Mission Innovation, a landmark commitment to accelerate public and private global clean energy innovation, and dramatically expand the new technologies that will define a clean, affordable, and reliable global power mix. Twenty countries representing around 80% of global clean energy research and development (R&D) funding base committed to double their R&D investments over five years. In addition, a coalition of 28 global investors led by Bill Gates committed to support early-stage breakthrough energy technologies in countries that have joined Mission Innovation.
- **Doubling U.S. grant-based public finance for adaptation by 2020:** Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the United States will double its grant-based, public climate finance for adaptation by 2020. As of 2014, the United States invested more than \$400 million per year of grant-based resources for climate adaptation in developing countries. These investments provide vulnerable countries with support – through both bilateral and multilateral channels – to reduce climate risks in key areas, including infrastructure, agriculture, health and water services.

An Agreement Complemented by Subnational, Private Sector and Citizen Action

Because the Agreement should serve as a floor for future ambitious climate action, complementary actions outside of the Agreement by sub-national governments, enterprising businesses, investors and entrepreneurs, and an enlightened global public are important complements to the Paris Agreement. As part of these global efforts, Americans have demonstrated their dedication to climate action through a wide variety of commitments.

- **Compact of Mayors:** 117 United States mayors have signed onto the Compact of Mayors pledge. The Compact establishes a common platform to capture the impact of cities' collective actions through standardized measurement of emissions and climate risk, and consistent, public reporting of their efforts.

- **Under-2 MOU:** States including California, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and New York have signed onto the Under-2 MOU. The MOU commits signatories to cut greenhouse gas emissions 80-95% below 1990 levels, share technology and scientific research, expand zero-emission vehicles, improve air quality by reducing short-lived climate pollutants and assess projected impacts of climate change on communities.
- **American Business Act on Climate Pledge:** 154 companies have signed the White House's [American Business Act on Climate Pledge](#). These companies have operations in all 50 states, employ nearly 11 million people, represent more than \$4.2 trillion in annual revenue and have a combined market capitalization of over \$7 trillion. As part of this initiative, each company expressed support for an ambitious Paris Agreement and announced significant pledges to reduce their emissions, increase low-carbon investments, deploy more clean energy and take other actions to build more sustainable businesses and tackle climate change.
- **American Campuses Act on Climate Pledge:** 311 colleges and universities representing over 4 million students have demonstrated their commitment to climate action by joining the [American Campuses Act on Climate Pledge](#).