

UN AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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Background

Climate change is a complex problem, which, although environmental in nature, has consequences for all spheres of existence on our planet. It either impacts on– or is impacted by– global issues, including poverty, economic development, population growth, sustainable development and resource management.

At the very heart of the response to climate change, however, lies the need to reduce emissions. In 2010, governments agreed that emissions need to be reduced so that global temperature increases are limited to below 2 degrees Celsius.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

In 1992, countries joined an international treaty, the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC), to consider what they could do to limit global temperature increases and the resulting climate change, and to cope with its impacts.

By 1995, countries realized that emission reductions provisions in the Convention were inadequate. As a result, they launched negotiations to strengthen the global response to climate change, and, in 1997, adopted the Kyoto Protocol.

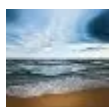
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The Kyoto Protocol legally binds developed countries to emission reduction targets. The Protocol's first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012. The second commitment period began on 1 January 2013 and will end in 2020.

There are now 195 Parties to the Convention and 192 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The Protocol entered into force on 16 February 2005. Since then, the Parties to the Protocol have continued the negotiations and have amended the Protocol to achieve more ambitious results by 2030.

The following timeline provides a brief summary of negotiations towards a climate agreement.

Negotiations timeline

1979 – The first World Climate Conference takes place.

1988 – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is set up. [Learn more about the science of climate change.](#)

1990 – The IPCC and the second World Climate Conference call for a global treaty on climate change. The United Nations General Assembly negotiations on a framework convention begin.

1991 – First meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee takes place.

1992 – At the Earth Summit in Rio, the UNFCCC is opened for signature along with its sister Rio Conventions, the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and the [UN Convention to Combat Desertification](#).

1994 – The UNFCCC enters into force.

1995 – The first Conference of the Parties (COP 1) takes place in Berlin.

1996 – The [UNFCCC Secretariat](#) is set up to support action under the Convention.

1997 – [The Kyoto Protocol](#) is formally adopted in December at COP3.

2001 – [The Marrakesh Accords](#) are adopted at COP7, detailing the rules for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, setting up new funding and planning instruments for adaptation, and establishing a technology transfer framework.

2005 – Entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. The first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP 1) takes place in Montreal. In accordance with Kyoto Protocol requirements, Parties launched negotiations on the next phase of the KP under the [Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol \(AWG-KP\)](#). What was to become the [Nairobi Work Programme on Adaptation](#) (it would receive its name in 2006, one year later) is accepted and agreed on.

2007 – The IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report is released. Climate science entered into popular consciousness. At COP13, Parties agreed on the [Bali Road Map](#), which charted the way towards a post-2012 outcome in two work streams: the AWG-KP, and another under the Convention, known as the [Ad-Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action Under the Convention](#).

2009 – Copenhagen Accord drafted at COP15 in Copenhagen. Countries later submitted emissions reductions pledges or mitigation action pledges, all non-binding.

2010 – [Cancun Agreements](#) drafted and largely accepted by the COP, at COP16. Through the Agreements, countries made their emission reduction pledges official, in what was the largest collective effort the world has ever seen to reduce emissions in a mutually accountable way.

2011 – [The Durban Platform](#) for Enhanced Action drafted and accepted by the COP, at COP17. In Durban, governments clearly recognized the need to draw up the blueprint for a fresh universal, legal agreement to deal with climate change beyond 2020, where all will play their part to the best of their ability and all will be able to reap the benefits of success together.

2012 – The [Doha Amendment](#) to the Kyoto Protocol is adopted by the CMP at CMP8. The amendment includes: new commitments for Annex I Parties to the Kyoto Protocol who agreed to take on commitments in a second commitment period from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2020; a revised list of greenhouse gases to be reported on by Parties in the second commitment period; and amendments to several articles of the Kyoto Protocol pertaining to the first commitment period and which needed to be updated for the second commitment period.

2013 – Key decisions adopted at COP19/CMP9 include decisions on further advancing the Durban Platform, the Green Climate Fund and Long-Term Finance, the Warsaw Framework for REDD Plus and the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage. More on the [Warsaw Outcomes](#).

2014 – COP20 will be held in December in Lima, Peru

2015 – COP21 or CMP11 will be held in Paris, France in December.

*Source:UNFCCC

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