

175 states signing landmark Paris deal on climate change

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Body

UNITED NATIONS • Leaders from at least 175 countries were signing the Paris Agreement on **climate change** Friday as the landmark deal took a key step forward, potentially entering into force years ahead of schedule.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, holding his young granddaughter, joined dozens of world leaders for a signing ceremony that set a record for international diplomacy: Never have so many countries signed an agreement on the first available day. States that don't sign Friday have a year to do so.

"We are in a race against time," U.N. secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the gathering. "The era of consumption without consequences is over."

Many now expect the **climate** agreement to enter into force long before the original deadline of 2020. Some say it could happen this year.

After signing, countries must formally approve the Paris Agreement through their domestic procedures. The United Nations says 15 countries, several of them small island states under threat from rising seas, were doing that Friday by depositing their instruments of ratification.

China, the world's top carbon emitter, announced it will "finalize domestic procedures" to ratify the Paris Agreement before the G-20 summit in China in September. Ban immediately welcomed the pledge.

The United States also has said it intends to join the agreement this year. The world is watching anxiously: Analysts say that if the agreement enters into force before President Barack Obama leaves office in January, it would be more complicated for his successor to withdraw from the deal because it would take four years to do so under the agreement's rules.

The United States put the deal into economic terms: "The power of this agreement is what it is going to do to unleash the private sector," Kerry told the gathering, noting that this year is again shaping up to be the hottest year on record.

The agreement will enter into force once 55 countries representing at least 55 percent of global emissions have formally joined it. Maros Sefcovic, the energy chief for another top emitter, the 28-nation European Union, has said the EU wants to be in the "first wave" of ratifying countries.

French President Francois Hollande, the first to sign the agreement, said Friday that he would ask parliament to ratify it by this summer. France's environment minister is in charge of global **climate** negotiations.

"There is no turning back now," Hollande told the gathering.

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Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also announced that his country would ratify the agreement this year.

The **climate** ceremony brought together a wide range of states that on other issues might sharply disagree. North Korea's foreign minister made a rare U.N. appearance to sign Friday, and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe brought applause when he declared, "Life itself is at stake in this combat. We have the power to win it."

Countries that had not yet indicated they would sign the agreement Friday include some of the world's largest oil producers, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Nigeria and Kazakhstan, the World Resources Institute said.

The Paris Agreement, the world's response to hotter temperatures, rising seas and other impacts of **climate change**, was reached in December as a major breakthrough in U.N. **climate** negotiations, which for years were slowed by disputes between rich and poor countries over who should do what.

Under the agreement, countries set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The targets are not legally binding, but countries must update them every five years.

Friday was chosen for the signing ceremony because it is Earth Day.

Graphic

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry holds his granddaughter Isabel Dobbs-Higginson as he signs the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) Francois Hollande, President of France, signs the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) Ri Su Yong, Foreign Minister of North Korea, signs the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff prepares to sign the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, signs the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry holds his granddaughter Isabel Dobbs-Higginson as he signs the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) French President Francois Hollande arrives to sign the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) U.S. Secretary of State greets the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, second from right, and French President Francois Hollande, second from left, during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Zhang Gaoli, Vice-Premier of China, speaks before signing the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, right, and French President Francois Hollande attend the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Actor Leonardo Di Caprio, a United Nations Messenger of Peace, speaks at the signing ceremony for the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. Behind him French President Francois Hollande, second left, and Secretary General Ban Ki-moon applaud. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff attends the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, speaks before signing the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Khloponin speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil, speaks before signing the Paris Agreement on **climate change**, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan) Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP

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Photo/Mary Altaffer) Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Bolivian President Evo Morales speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) Anand Mahindra, CEO of the Mahindra Group speaks during the Paris Agreement on **climate change** ceremony, Friday, April 22, 2016 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer) FILE - In this Dec. 6, 2015 file photo, environmentalist activists form a human chain representing the peace sign and the spelling out "100% renewable", on the side line of the COP21, United Nations **Climate Change** Conference near the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Four months after negotiating a global **climate** agreement in Paris, government officials are coming to New York on Friday, April 22, 2016, to sign the pact in a ceremony at the United Nations. (AP Photo/Michel Euler, File) FILE - In this Dec. 12, 2015 file photo, French President Francois Hollande, right, French Foreign Minister and president of the COP21 Laurent Fabius, second, right, United Nations **climate** chief Christiana Figueres and United Nations Secretary General Ban ki-Moon applaud after the final conference at the COP21, the United Nations conference on **climate change**, in Le Bourget, north of Paris. Governments have adopted a global agreement that for the first time asks all countries to reduce or rein in their greenhouse gas emissions. Four months after negotiating a global **climate** agreement in Paris, government officials are coming to New York on Friday, April 22, 2016, to sign the pact in a ceremony at the United Nations. (AP Photo/Francois Mori) FILE - In this April 19, 2016 file photo, Indian Environment Minister, Prakash Javadekar, shows how messages are automatically sent to his mobile device when pollution at certain effluent treatment places remain higher than a stipulated measure for over 15 minutes, at a press conference in New Delhi, India. Javadekar enumerated several measures taken by India to meet its goals to combat **climate change** after the Paris agreement. Four months after negotiating a global **climate** agreement in Paris, government officials are coming to New York on Friday, April 22, 2016, to sign the pact in a ceremony at the United Nations. (AP Photo/Saurabh Das, File) FILE - In this April 14, 2016 file photo, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim speaks at the Turning the Paris **Climate** Agreement into Action panel discussion, during the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings at the World Bank in Washington. Four months after negotiating a global **climate** agreement in Paris, government officials are coming to New York on Friday, April 22, 2016, to sign the pact in a ceremony at the United Nations. (AP Photo/Sait Serkan Gurbuz, File)

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