



## **COP21 – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is the conference called COP21?**

The Paris Climate Conference is officially known as the 21st Conference of the Parties (or “COP”) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations body which is responsible for climate and based in Bonn, Germany. The Conference will also serve as the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

The COP meets each year to take decisions that further the implementation of the Convention and to combat climate change. COP21 will take place at the same time as CMP11, the 11th meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, which oversees the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and the decisions made to increase its effectiveness.

### **When and where will COP21 take place?**

The Paris Climate Conference, COP21, will be held from 30 November to 11 December 2015 at a site near Paris-Le Bourget.

### **Who is attending the conference?**

In total, 45,000 participants are expected to participate at the COP at the Paris-Le Bourget site at some point during the Conference. This includes delegates representing countries, observers, civil society and journalists. 20,000 people will be officially accredited and will have access to the Conference itself, while people not accredited to the Conference itself will still be able to take part in debates, see exhibitions and attend talks or screenings in the civil society area which will be built very close to the conference centre.

### **Will Paris solve the problem of climate change?**

There are no magical or instant solutions to climate change. The climate challenge is one of the most complex the world has ever faced. But climate change has now risen to the top of the global agenda and countries, cities, the private sector, civil society, faith leaders and individual citizens are taking action.

In preparing for Paris, more than 150 countries have submitted national climate targets covering nearly 90% of global emissions. An agreement in Paris will not be the end point, but it can be a decisive turning point in how all countries, acting together under an agreed, transparent legal framework, will set out a pathway to limit global temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius – the internationally agreed goal.



### **What happens if countries don't agree in Paris?**

Without a global agreement, it will be more difficult, if not impossible, to guide international cooperation on climate change. As climate change is a problem that does not respect borders, our ability to limit climate change to relatively safe levels will be diminished.

### **What will be the outcome of the conference?**

Paris needs to result in a negotiated agreement that will provide a legal framework for moving forward. In addition, a Paris outcome will also include the national climate plans (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions or INDCs) that countries have voluntarily put forward that will form the baseline for reducing emissions and strengthening resilience.

Paris will also need to include a credible finance package. Many developing countries will need international cooperation, including finance and technology, to help them move toward a low-carbon future. As part of this package, developed countries will need to detail how they will fulfill their previous pledge of mobilizing \$100 billion per year by 2020 to support developing countries. And financing for the post 2020 period will also need to be addressed.

Paris will also showcase climate actions that are already underway. Under the "Lima to Paris Action Agenda", many businesses, cities, states and regions, and civil society groups will be highlighting efforts they are taking to respond to climate change. Many new initiatives will also be announced in Paris that demonstrate a growing commitment to climate action.

### **What are the INDCs?**

INDCs stand for 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions', and are climate action plans submitted by each country ahead of the COP21. They outline how, and by how much, countries will reduce their emissions, and the actions they will undertake to strengthen climate resilience.

### **How many countries have submitted their INDCs?**

As of October 31, 155 countries had submitted their contributions. These countries cover nearly 90 per cent of global carbon emissions. Some developing countries have submitted two versions of their contributions: one stating what they would do on their own, and one on what they would be able to do with financial help. A list of the countries that have submitted their INDCs can be found [here](#).





### **Will the INDCs be enough?**

No. The INDCs are a floor for action, not a ceiling. Current estimates indicate that even if countries implement INDCs, the planet would still experience an increase in global temperature between 2.7-3.5 degrees Celsius (depending on assumptions used in the modeling). This is still too high, but it is still better than continuing on a 'business as usual' path which would result in a global temperature increase of more than 4 degrees Celsius. Negotiations are continuing over a mechanism for reviewing and strengthening the level of ambition in order to reach the goal of 2 degrees Celsius or less.

### **What will the agreement consist of?**

The agreement sets 'the rules of the game' on how countries will move forward. It will provide a system for countries to assess the impacts of the INDCs and at what frequency they will come back to look at them and say, 'ok we need to raise the level of ambition' and review their contributions in order to get to the 2 degree path.

### **Will the agreement be legally binding?**

The agreement itself is a legal instrument that will guide the international process on climate change forward. Negotiations are continuing on the exact legal nature of the finance and mitigation commitments under the agreement. The INDCs demonstrate what countries are already prepared to do – it's a voluntary, bottom up process.

### **What is the Lima to Paris Action Agenda?**

Actions to reduce emissions and address the impacts of climate change are rapidly accelerating. The Lima-Paris Action Agenda, a joint undertaking of the Peruvian and French COP presidencies, the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the UNFCCC Secretariat, aims to highlight and mobilize robust action by businesses and other non-state actors towards a low carbon and resilient societies. It will support existing initiatives, such as those launched in New York at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit in September 2014, and will mobilize new partners and provide a platform for the visibility of their actions, commitments and results in the run up to COP21

There will be an "Action Day" on 5 December at the Paris Climate Conference, which will feature announcements of major initiatives. And there will be a sequence of 'Thematic action Days' during the COP, from 2-8 December. The 'Thematic action Days' will enable the stakeholders to present issues at stake and existing solutions' pathways for each main action area of the Agenda. They will be official events with expected high-level attendance that will create a visible sequence during the COP.

More information on the Lima to Paris Action Agenda can be found at:

<http://climateaction.unfccc.int/>



### **What will the financial package look like?**

In Copenhagen, developed countries pledged to give US\$100 billion a year to developing countries for climate finance by the year 2020. Some, but not all of this money, has been mobilized.

Both developed and developing countries must be part of a consultative, politically credible process for defining the \$100 billion trajectory. These funds must be allocated in a balanced manner to address both mitigation and adaptation. In addition, Developed countries must also take the lead in, and strengthen their support for, financing post 2020. Public finance should play a catalytic role in mobilizing the much larger private investment flows that will be needed to transform the global economy in a low-carbon, climate resilient direction.

### **Why do people keep talking about a 2 degrees Celsius limit in global temperature rise?**

The goal of limiting global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of this century was first agreed to in Copenhagen and then by all countries at the Cancun Climate Conference in 2010. It recognizes that climate change is already occurring, but that if we act now, we can avoid the worst impacts of a changing climate.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has provided different scenarios regarding different levels of action. If nothing is done, and the world proceeds on its present course, world is on track for an average global-temperature rise of four degrees Celsius (more than seven degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of this century.

Owing to the carbon emissions that have been pumped into the air so far, average global temperatures have risen by about 0.85 degrees Celsius (1.5 degrees Fahrenheit). This relatively small increase has produced large effects: almost half of the permanent Arctic ice cap has melted away, millions of acres' worth of trees in the American West have died from warming-related pest infestations, and some of West Antarctica's major glaciers, containing tens of thousands of cubic miles of ice, have started to disintegrate. Even if CO<sub>2</sub> levels were to stop rising tomorrow the world would continue to warm, by about .5 degrees Celsius (.9 degrees Fahrenheit).

### **Is there still time to act?**

Yes, according to the IPCC report—the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—we can still limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees. But we must act urgently, with the full participation of all countries and all sectors of society. The longer we delay the more difficult and more costly it will be to limit climate change.





### **What will be the role of civil societies at COP21?**

Civil society engagement has been critical in setting and advancing the climate agenda. In addition to serving as the “conscience” the world, civil society is essential for taking climate action. At the COP, civil society provides the voice that can put pressure on leaders to come to an agreement.

### **What will be the role of the private sector?**

Businesses and companies around the world have been at the forefront of efforts to persuade government leaders to reach a meaningful global climate agreement in Paris. They will also be engaged at the Paris Climate Conference where they will use the opportunity to launch many new initiatives that will reduce emissions or help build climate resilience in connection with the Lima to Paris Action Agenda. As non-governmental organizations, business groups will also be monitoring the negotiations.

