

Marking the One Year Anniversary of the Paris Climate Change Agreement Celebration and Reality Check



Bonn, Germany, 12 December 2016 – One year after the world adopted the Paris Climate Change Agreement, climate action across governments, business and societies continues to scale new heights. The challenge now is to take this to an even higher scale with a speed and an urgency that reflects the scientific reality.

“2016 was an extraordinary year in many ways. In less than 12 months the Paris climate agreement entered into force and almost weekly, more countries ratify. Meanwhile nations,

cities, regions, businesses and investors continue to signal their unwavering support through practical action, shifts in investments and ever more ambitious pledges, “said Patricia Espinosa, the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

“This urgency and this action needs not only to continue but to go to scale and gather ever more speed over 2017 and the years and decades to come—because current ambition still falls short of what is needed. In 2016 the UN’s World Meteorological Organization announced world-wide average temperatures had risen 1-degree Celsius in 2015 and that concentrations of the key greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, reached past the significant milestone of 400 parts per million in the atmosphere over the entire year, “she added.

Ms Espinosa said achieving the aims and ambitions of the Paris Agreement will also rest on the speed and urgency of realizing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015.

“From eradicating poverty in all its forms and improving health and well-being to conserving and restoring the Earth’s forests, wetlands, drylands and mountains, the SDGs and the climate agenda are inextricably interwoven and provide the guiding star to a better, more prosperous and stable future for us all, “she said.

The Paris Agreement’s primary goal - to limit global warming to well below 2°C and as close to 1.5°C as possible to prevent dangerous tipping points in the climate system - means that global emissions must peak soon and be driven down thereafter to achieve climate neutrality in the second half of the century. A balance must be achieved in the second half of this century between global emissions and removals through natural absorption into healthy ecosystems or through other human-managed means.

Priority Paths to Achieve Paris Goals

There are three broad and interlinked avenues of effort which will ensure the Paris goals are secured: national climate action by all countries across public and private sectors, international climate cooperation and a comprehensive shift in public and private investment to support both.

Last month's UN climate change conference in Marrakech demonstrated that progress across all three avenues remains promising. A few examples follow to illustrate this progress across the three avenues but the very large spread of all positive actions at Marrakech can be seen here in the UNFCCC secretariat's final [COP 22 press release](#).

National Climate Plans

First, the Agreement is itself founded upon a global set of national climate action plans (NDCs) which countries have agreed will only rise in ambition over time. In Marrakech, the broad commitment at national level to increase ambition was apparent.

For example, a club of subnational governments, the [Under2 Coalition](#), who have committed to reduce their emissions by at least 80 percent by 2050, announced their membership has grown to 165, representing a third of the global economy and a population of around one billion people across North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum of over 40 nations issued a [Marrakech Vision](#) committing themselves to ambitious aims, including 100% renewable energy between 2030 and 2050.

International Climate Rulebook

Several countries – Canada, Germany, Mexico and the United States – also announced [ambitious climate strategies out to 2050](#), reflecting the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement to achieve climate neutrality in the second half of the century.

It is also important that the poorest countries can develop their own national plans, which was the reason for the launch of the [NDC Partnership](#) – a coalition of developing and developed countries and international institutions working to ensure countries receive the technical and financial support they need to speedily meet their climate and sustainable development goals.

Second, the intergovernmental UN climate change process retains a most important task to complete the international “rulebook”, the operational manual of the Agreement which will deliver a transparent global accounting of emissions reductions, provision of climate finance, technology development and transfer, and adaptation needs.

The details of the task are complex but the principle is simple: transparency builds trust that countries are delivering on their pledges which, in turn, generates the confidence for all countries to increase their own ambition to the best of their abilities.

Countries have already built the foundation for this by peer assessing each other’s actions to cut emissions through a transparent process that began in 2014.

Governments pressed forward on the rulebook in Marrakech and indicated a fast track date of 2018 for completion.

Investment Shift

Third, a faster shift in investment in both developed and developing countries is under way, although even greater speed is necessary. Governments, multilateral and private sector institutions need to be able and willing to raise and allocate tens of billions of dollars at a time towards climate and sustainable investments. Meanwhile, smaller scale funding must be available to allow the individual investor, smaller companies and poorer countries without easy access to big money to take a full and willing part in this economic transformation.

Data from the UN and independent studies show that an annual flow of one trillion dollars per year into climate action should be achievable in the near term. The availability of 100 billion dollars per year by 2020 to assist directly the poorest and most vulnerable also remains a priority.

In Marrakech, countries promised over \$81 million to the Adaptation Fund, surpassing its target for the year, [pledged over \\$23 million to the Climate Technology Centre and Network](#), which supports developing countries with climate technology development and transfer.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) also [announced the approval](#) of the first two proposals for the formulation of National Adaptation Plans in Liberia and Nepal and said it was on track to approve a total of \$2.5 billion worth of projects.

The next annual UN climate conference will be held in Bonn, Germany in November 2017 with the small island developing state of Fiji named as President.

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The Paris Agreement http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

The UN climate conference 2016 <http://newsroom.unfccc.int/unfccc-newsroom/nations-take-forward-global-climate-action-at-2016-un-climate-conference/>

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