

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE POLICY AND STRATEGY CONTEXT

Low-likelihood outcomes, such as ice sheet collapse, abrupt ocean circulation changes, some compound extreme events and warming substantially larger than the assessed 'very likely' range of future warming cannot be ruled out.

IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report, 9 August 2021

International agreement

1. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) or Rio Summit¹, was adopted in June 1992, establishing the objective to stabilise greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous human induced interference with the global climate system. The convention set non-binding limits of GHG emissions for individual countries and established a framework for the introduction of legally binding protocols to set out how the UNFCCC objectives could be achieved.
20. The UNFCCC Kyoto Protocol² was adopted by 192 parties in December 1997. The signatories include all but 4 United Nations member states. The protocol introduced a commitment to reduce the atmospheric concentration of six GHGs, Carbon dioxide,

¹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 9 May 1992

² United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Kyoto Protocol, 11 December 1997

Methane, Nitrous oxide, Hydrofluorocarbons, Perfluorocarbons and Sulphur hexafluoride. The protocol set binding targets for these reductions over a number of commitment periods, effectively establishing carbon budgets. In 2010 the adoption of the Cancun Adaptation Framework³ called for further action on adaptation to climate change and gave adaptation the same priority as mitigation, drawing attention to the need for significant adaptation measures in developing and developed countries alike.

21. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) took place in Paris in 2015⁴ and resulted in the signing of the Paris Agreement. Signed by 195 member states including the UK, the Paris Agreement identified the following goals:
- A long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels;
 - To aim to limit the increase to 1.5°C, since this would significantly reduce risks and the impacts of climate change;
 - The need for global emissions to peak as soon as possible, recognising that this will take longer for developing countries;
 - To undertake rapid reductions in greenhouse gas thereafter in accordance with the best available science.
22. The meeting in Paris was hailed as a make-or-break opportunity to secure an international agreement on approaches to tackling climate change, a commitment to a longer-term goal of near zero net emissions in the second half of the century and supporting a transition to a clean economy and low carbon society. It should be noted that although the Paris agreement recognised the need for emissions to peak as soon as possible, emissions were expected to rebound by about 4.8% in 2021 following a 5.8%

³ UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16 II, The Cancun Agreements

⁴ Decision1/CP.21 'The Paris Agreement' United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 26 January 2016

drop due to the Covid 19 pandemic in 2020, but 2021 data indicates a rebound of 6.4%⁵ indicating a continued rise in global emissions.

23. COP26 held in Glasgow in November 2021 aimed to ensure that countries' near-term commitments for GHG emissions reduction were ambitious enough to achieve the Paris Agreement commitment to limiting global increases in temperature to between 1.5 and 2.0°C through the submission of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) every five years. 153 countries agreed new 2030 emissions targets and to meet in 2022 to strengthen commitments, including a move away from the unabated use of coal, halting and reversing deforestation, reducing methane emissions and speeding up the switch to electric vehicles. Further progress was made regarding adaptation plans with over 45 countries making submissions and record the amounts of adaptation finance were agreed globally. Progress was also made towards delivering the \$100 billion climate finance goal by 2023 at the latest. 34 public finance institutions also agreed to end international support for unabated fossil fuel energy within 12 months with additional agreement on the provision of financial help for poor countries to tackle climate change. The draft agreement did not set binding targets for the end of fossil fuel use but instead asks states to 'phase out' subsidies for fossil fuels. This is the first time that fossil fuels have been specifically mentioned in a COP agreement.
24. COP27 held in Egypt in November 2022 has promised to be a "radical turning point in international climate efforts." Pledging to meet annually, rather than every 5 years is seen by many as a significant step forward. However, the opening remarks of the UN Secretary-General were a stark warning, stating that "The goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees is slipping away.

⁵ International Monetary Fund Indicators Dashboard. June 2022

We are dangerously close to tipping points at which climate chaos could become irreversible... But global emissions, and temperatures, continue to rise.” It is hoped that COP 27 will address the widening gap between emissions reduction pledges and actions, while accepting that the existing pledges point to a rise in global temperatures of up to 2.8°C by the end of the century. Key themes for COP 27 recognise the great economic opportunities of new, green jobs throughout the economy and the need for climate change to form a part of all decision making, governmental and corporate.