



## COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

### *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement*

**SUBJECT CATEGORY:**

Climate Change

**TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:**

Multilateral

**FORM:**

Legally-binding treaty

**STATUS:*****United Nations Framework Convention on  
Climate Change***

- Signed by Canada June 12, 1992
- Ratified by Canada December 4, 1992
- In force in Canada March 21, 1994
- In force internationally March 21, 1994

***Paris Agreement***

- Signed by Canada April 22, 2016
- Ratified by Canada October 5, 2016
- In force in Canada November 6, 2016
- In force internationally November 4, 2016

**LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:**

**Lead:** Environment and Climate Change Canada

**Partners:** Global Affairs Canada; Natural Resources Canada; Agriculture & Agrifood Canada

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:****Web Links:**

- [The Paris Agreement](#)
- [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#)
- [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#)
- [Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Canada](#)
- [Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#)
- [Canada's International Climate Finance](#)

**Contacts:**

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

**COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

January 2020

**PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**

Addressing climate change requires efforts by the entire international community. Following years of debate centered on securing political commitments from all countries to reduce their emissions, the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Agreement aims to keep the global average temperature from rising to dangerous levels that would create irreversible damage to the environment. It is the first multilateral climate change agreement to include commitments from all countries to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

As part of the Agreement, countries committed to collectively:

- Limit global warming to *well below* 2°C, while also pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C;
- Increase the international community's ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change;
- Make global financial flows consistent with low-carbon and climate resilient development.

**OBJECTIVE**

The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to "stabilize GHG concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." The UNFCCC Paris Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

**KEY ELEMENTS**

The UNFCCC is one of the three Rio Conventions adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 – the others being the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994 and has been ratified by 197 Parties.

The Paris Agreement is a key element under the UNFCCC and it contains several principles and

initiatives that will help countries reach the Paris Agreement goals, including:

Mitigation of GHGs: All Parties must submit GHG emission reduction targets (referred to as nationally determined contributions or NDCs) and update these targets every five years. Each country determines its own NDC to reflect its most ambitious effort in accordance with its national circumstances. Each successive NDC must also be more ambitious than the previous one.

Adaptation and Loss and Damage: The Paris Agreement calls for all countries to strengthen cooperation to enhance adaptation efforts, build resilience, and reduce vulnerability to climate change. It calls for all Parties to engage in adaptation planning processes and encourages them to submit and periodically update an adaptation communication outlining their priorities, implementation and support needs, plans, and actions.

The Paris Agreement also recognizes the importance of averting, minimizing, and addressing loss and damage associated with climate impacts, and urges Parties to work cooperatively, along with other bodies and expert groups, to enhance understanding, action and support related to loss and damage.

Carbon Markets: The Paris Agreement provides a framework for countries to participate in international carbon markets through the use of Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs), whereby emission reductions or removals that occur in one country are transferred for use towards another country's NDC. Such international cooperation can allow for higher ambition in reducing global emissions, unlock new emission reduction opportunities, and mobilize investments in low-carbon solutions from both government and the private sector.

Support for developing countries: The provision of financial and other support to help developing countries implement climate policies is an issue of central importance in multilateral climate negotiations. In 2009, donor countries from the developed world, including Canada, agreed to a collective climate finance goal of mobilizing US \$100 billion per year by 2020 from public and private sources to support climate action in developing countries. In support of the Paris Agreement, Canada pledged C\$2.65 billion over five years in climate finance to pursue ambitious action on climate change in developing countries. The provision of climate finance will continue to be a key element for promoting continued global action on climate change. Parties will set a new long-term finance goal by 2025 from the floor of US \$100 billion

per year. Parties agreed that scaled-up financing should aim to achieve a balance between mitigation and adaptation.

Global stock take: A global stock take will take place every five years starting in 2023 to assess the collective progress in implementing the provisions of the Agreement. The stock take will consider mitigation and adaptation actions undertaken by all countries, and the adequacy of financial, technical and capacity building support.

Transparency framework: The Paris Agreement requires all Parties to regularly report on and undergo review of their GHG emissions, climate action, and progress towards their targets. This transparency system is essential to building trust amongst countries and fostering accountability, as well as to track collective progress and gather necessary data to strengthen the global response to climate change. Donor countries are also required to provide regular reporting on their provision of climate finance.

The preamble of the Paris Agreement highlights a broad set of issues and priorities to be taken into account when implementing the Agreement, and undertaking climate action. This includes the acknowledgement that Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, as well as the rights of Indigenous peoples. The preamble also takes into account the importance of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

Under the Paris Agreement, countries have agreed to work together to strengthen their efforts and lead the transformation towards a low-carbon, climate resilient global economy including by setting targets (NDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit the temperature increase.

To accomplish this objective, the Agreement is designed with a built-in "ambition cycle" wherein all countries – including major emitters – must take on progressively more ambitious efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions over time. The ambition cycle is informed by individual reporting on progress as well as by a regular assessment of global progress that is based on the best available climate science, including the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In this way, the Paris Agreement will help ensure that the policies and measures implemented by countries to address climate change are informed by the latest scientific

evidence on the causes and impacts of anthropogenic climate change.

## CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Canada plays an active and constructive role in the UNFCCC negotiations and was a strong voice in the negotiations towards the establishment of the Paris Agreement.

Canada's current [NDC](#) adopts a target to reduce its economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. Canada is required to submit its next NDC by 2025.

Canada has also stated that it will set a target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Canada will continue to work with its international partners both under the UNFCCC and in other fora to implement our commitments.

## RESULTS / PROGRESS

### Activities

Environment and Climate Change Canada is the Government of Canada lead on both international and domestic climate change. Canada's approach to global climate action is built on:

- Fact-based decision-making and robust science, reflecting the latest findings from the IPCC.
- Recognition of the necessity of transitioning to a low-carbon, climate resilient economy.
- Strong collaboration with provinces and territories, Indigenous Peoples, and non-state actors to take concrete climate action.
- Support for climate resilient development and adaptation in countries that need it.

### International Action

Canada continues to be committed to providing leadership and working with its international partners to help us move to a more sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient world.

Canada recognizes that global climate change action is most effective when women and girls play an active role. Canada was an early supporter of mainstreaming gender throughout the UNFCCC and is a champion of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan. In support of the Action Plan, Canada has supported three regional workshops between 2017 and 2019 (Caribbean and Francophone Africa) to assist women leaders meaningfully engage in international climate change negotiations.

It is fundamentally important for Canada that when taking action on climate change that the voices and rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected and considered. This is why Canada is committed to further advancing the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform under the UNFCCC in a way that meaningfully enhances the engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples in international climate action.

Canada is working with the UK and 95 other members including governments, businesses, and civil society groups committed to the sustainable phase-out of unabated coal power through the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA). Phasing-out coal-fired electricity is the single most important steps the international community can take in support of the Paris Agreement.

Canada was also proud to have played a key role in the ratification of the Kigali Amendment of the Montreal Protocol, which will pursue efforts to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), a potent GHG.

### Domestic Action

The Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (Pan-Canadian Framework) is Canada's plan – developed with the provinces and territories and in consultation with Indigenous peoples – to meet our emissions reduction targets, grow the economy, and build resilience to a changing climate. It builds on the leadership shown and actions taken individually and collectively by the provinces and territories. The Pan-Canadian Framework is built on four pillars: pricing carbon pollution, complementary actions to reduce emissions, adaptation and climate resilience, and clean technology, innovation, and jobs. The Pan-Canadian Framework includes over fifty concrete actions that cover all sectors of the economy, and puts Canada on a path to meet its *Paris Agreement* GHG emissions reduction target of 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The Government of Canada continues to work with the provinces and territories to implement the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change. The framework will ensure that the provinces and territories have the flexibility to implement climate policies while working together to achieve Canada's national emissions reduction targets.

The Government of Canada is also taking action to support the clean technology industry to capitalize on the economic opportunities associated with the global transition to a low carbon economy. Canada has invested more than \$3 billion between 2016 and 2019

to support clean technology research, development and demonstration, commercialization, scale-up, and adoption. We will continue to support and leverage the strengths of Canada's clean technology sector to help the global transition to a low carbon economy.

Finally, the Government of Canada continues to take action on initiatives to manage risks, build resilience, and to help ensure that Canadian communities thrive in a changing climate.

### **Reports**

Under the UNFCCC, Canada prepares and submits to the Secretariat a [National Inventory Report](#) on GHG emissions on an annual basis, a [Biennial Report](#) on Canada's progress in achieving emission reductions and provisions of financial, technology, and capacity building support to developing countries and a quadrennial [National Communications](#).

Domestically, Canada produces an annual [Synthesis Report on the Status of Implementation of the Pan-Canadian Framework](#).