



## 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 strengthened climate plan – a Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy](#)
- [Canada's International Climate Finance](#)

##### **Contacts:**

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

#### **COMPENDIUM EDITION:**

February 2022

#### **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 Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC 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 represents a major step forward for international action and cooperation under the UNFCCC. The Agreement outlines several

commitments and cooperative mechanisms aimed at ensuring all countries do their part in addressing climate change, and scaling up global ambition over time, 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.

The provision of climate finance will continue to be a key element for promoting continued global action on climate change. Parties are currently working towards setting a new collective quantified goal on climate

finance by 2024, 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 meeting the goals a of the Agreement. The stock take will consider mitigation and adaptation actions undertaken by all countries, the mobilization of financial, technical and capacity building support, and the extent to which global finance flows are consistent with the goals for the Paris Agreement.

**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.

**Ensuring climate action takes into account broader societal priorities:** 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 40-45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

Canada is also committed to reducing its emissions to net-zero by 2050, as enshrined in the [Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act](#). The Act, which became law on June 29, 2021, establishes a legally binding process to set five-year national emissions-reduction targets as well as develop credible, science-based emissions-reduction plans. The Act will ensure transparency and accountability as the government works to deliver on its emissions targets.

Canada also submitted its [Adaptation Communication](#) to the UNFCCC on July 12, 2021 outlining its adaptation priorities. Canada is also developing a [National Adaptation Strategy](#), to be released by the end of 2022.

In support of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, Canada fully delivered on its 2015 pledge of C\$2.65 billion in climate finance over the past five years to support ambitious action on climate change in developing countries. In June 2021, Canada announced a doubling of its previous international climate finance commitment to \$5.3 billion over five years. To further strengthen Canada's ability to help developing countries transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient, nature-positive, and inclusive sustainable development, this commitment:

- increases the proportion of grant funding to 40%, up from 30% previously
- allocates a minimum of 20% of funding to projects that leverage nature-based climate solutions and contribute biodiversity co-benefits.
- continues to support women's leadership and decision-making in climate action and ensures that at least 80% of projects integrate gender equality, in line with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy.

In 2021, Canada and Germany co-led the development of a Climate Finance Delivery Plan in 2021, on behalf of developed countries, to demonstrate how and when the US \$100 billion goal will be met.

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.
- A commitment to multilateral cooperation to drive the transition to a low-carbon, climate resilient global economy.
- Ensuring that all Parties, particularly major emitters, implement the Paris Agreement to the greatest level of ambition possible, and based on credible and transparent climate action.
- Promoting, protecting and advancing the perspectives and rights of Indigenous peoples, consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in the UNFCCC process.
- Championing human rights, gender equality and youth perspectives across the UNFCCC process, as appropriate.
- Strong collaboration with provinces and territories, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, business and other 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 five

regional workshops between 2017 and 2021 (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 People's Platform under the UNFCCC in a way that meaningfully enhances the engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples in international climate action.

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.

### **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 Communication](#).