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**PCS 203**

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**SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES.**

**PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES**

**200 LEVEL.**

**PARIS AGREEMENT**

The Paris Agreement (Accord de Paris), Paris climate accord or Paris climate agreement is an agreement within the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Framework_Convention_on_Climate_Change) (UNFCCC) dealing with [greenhouse gas emissions mitigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_change_mitigation), [adaptation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climate_change_adaptation) and finance starting in the year 2020. The language of the agreement was negotiated by representatives of 196 parties at the [21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_United_Nations_Climate_Change_Conference) in [Paris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris) and adopted by consensus on 12 December 2015. As of November 2017, 195 UNFCCC members have signed the agreement, and 172 have become party to it. The Agreement aims to respond to the global climate change threat by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

In the Paris Agreement, each country determines, plans and regularly reports its own contribution it should make in order to mitigate [global warming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming). There is no mechanism to forcea country to set a specific target by a specific date, but each target should go beyond previously set targets. The ultimate purpose of the Paris Agreement was to strengthen the global response to climate change by creating an international network of government bodies, all dedicated to lowering emissions. Syria and Nicaragua were the only countries who did not join the Agreement.

Those who did pledged to work towards a long-term goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, ideally aiming to limit the increase to 1.5°C. This level of temperature change may sound insignificant, but would, in fact, put massive strain on food production, clean water sources and energy production.

The Paris Agreement was a hard-fought achievement, developed with a loose-fitting framework so as to allow individual countries to develop their own climate strategies.

It was designed not to spook the world's biggest polluters away from the table and to open a dialogue between nations on an international issue. And, while it was criticised for being too lax, it was a step towards a unified front against climate change.

China and India, countries that were initially assumed to be against such a climate deal, have become some of its more steadfast supporters - now more than ever, in contrast with the United States' decision.

In a [statement](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1467100.shtml) released by a foreign ministry spokesperson, China has maintained its support for the Paris Accord:

"The general trend of green, low-carbon and sustainable development advocated by the Paris Agreement coincides with China's policy of promoting ecological advancement. However the other countries may change, China will continue to pursue innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, bear in mind its domestic requirements for sustainable growth, step up concrete efforts to deal with climate change and faithfully implement the Paris Agreement."

While the Paris Agreement holds no legal obligation, Trump's decision to rescind the pledge of his predecessor, Barack Obama, leaves the United States in a tenuous position on the world stage. It joins a select group of countries that have refused to sign the Accord - Nicaragua, as it believed the deal wasn't strict enough, and Syria, which, at the time of signing, was divided by civil war.

Trump has proposed two options for environmental action in America: to either re-enter the Paris Agreement, or create an 'entirely new' environmental deal. But, these deals are as yet just ideas as [key scientific roles in the Trump administration](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/13/one-big-thing-that-trumps-government-is-missing-scientists/?utm_term=.76cfbe4765fb) have yet to be determined.

Trump has yet to appoint a head of the Office of Science and Technology (OSTP), a post that traditionally acts as a science adviser to the President. Furthermore, the President’s Council of Advisers on Science and Technology has seats that remain unfilled - with no sign of being filled. In an interview with [Fox News](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/02/28/trump-no-plans-to-fill-unnecessary-appointed-positions.html), Trump said that "A lot of those jobs, I don’t want to appoint, because they’re unnecessary to have.”

So far, other international leaders have shown little appetite to appease Trump's desire for a new deal. Most have expressed sadness at the decision, but many are also defiant. The German, French and Italian leadership said: "...we firmly believe that the Paris Agreement cannot be renegotiated, since it is a vital instrument for our planet, societies and economies".

Trump faces significant opposition in his own country, too. The Washington Post [reports](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/06/01/these-titans-of-industry-just-broke-with-trumps-decision-to-exit-the-paris-accords/) thirty states plan to press ahead with their existing climate policies and reduce emissions. Pittsburgh has become a particular focus of opposition, having been stated in Trump's decision: “I was elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris." It was perhaps a reference to the Rust Belt voters who had carried him to the White House, on promises of booms to coal and steel industries that used to dominate the region. However, Donald Trump was not, in fact, elected by the citizens of Pittsburgh. In actuality, the Trump administration lost every district in that state during the election and is now facing renewed opposition from its residents.

As the Mayor of Pittsburgh, I can assure you that we will follow the guidelines of the Paris Agreement for our people, our economy & future.

— bill peduto (@billpeduto)

Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto has emphatically stated his support for the Paris Agreement. Renewable energy in Pittsburgh has created an estimated 13,000 jobs, with investment in green development transforming it from its roots as a polluted, steel-mill-driven city to one of the largest growing tech and healthcare centres in the country. Pittsburgh residents have taken to the streets in a "March for Truth" in support of the Paris Agreement, at which time Peduto committed the city to a goal of reaching 100 per cent renewable energy adoption by 2035.

Peduto is one of 246 Mayors who have said they will independently adopt the Paris Accord – calling themselves the [US Climate Mayors](https://medium.com/@ClimateMayors/climate-mayors-commit-to-adopt-honor-and-uphold-paris-climate-agreement-goals-ba566e260097).

Trump maybe withdrawing the US, but 61 [ClimateMayors](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ClimateMayors?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) are adopting the [#ParisAgreement](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ParisAgreement?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Cities will lead the way

— The Climate Mayors (@ClimateMayors)

Elsewhere, academics have expressed their concern for Trump's decision – in particular, John Reilly, co-director of the MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change. Reilly's study, [How much of a difference will the Paris Agreement make?](http://news.mit.edu/2016/how-much-difference-will-paris-agreement-make-0422), formed a key part of Trump's announcement on June 1. Reilly's study demonstrated that, if countries maintained their commitment to the Paris Agreement over the next five to 10 years, global warming would slow by 0.6 to 1.1 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. However, when Trump cited this study, he stated the Paris Agreement would only lead to a change of 2/10 of a degree by 2100 - a "tiny, tiny amount."

Reilly has since [told CNN](http://edition.cnn.com/2017/06/02/politics/trump-mit-study-paris-agreement/index.html) he believes the White House is "probably immune to fact" and that "the whole statement seemed to suggest a complete misunderstanding of the climate problem.

Reference:

Wikipedia.

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