

International efforts to deal with climate change

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Introduction:

- International treaty established to address climate change.
- Established: 1992 at Rio Earth Summit
- Ratified by: 154 countries.
- Came into force: 21 March 1994.

Objective:

- **Primary Objective:** Stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Cooperate on research, technology, and policies related to climate change.

Implementation:

International Negotiation Process:

- **Conference of the Parties (COP):**
 - Annual meeting of member countries.
 - Purpose: Evaluate progress and establish new targets and commitments.

Support for Developing Countries:

- **Financial Support:**
 - Developed countries to provide financial assistance.
- **Technological Support:**
 - Developed countries to offer technological support to help developing countries address climate change impacts.

Conclusion:

- The UNFCCC is crucial for global efforts to combat climate change.

- It provides a framework for international cooperation and coordinated global response.
- Aims to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and promote sustainable development.

Key Points Summary:

Aspect	Details
Established	1992
Ratified by	154 countries
Came into Force	21 March 1994
Primary Objective	Stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations
Responsibilities	- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions - Cooperate on research, technology, and policies
Conference of the Parties (COP)	- Annual meetings - Evaluate progress - Establish new targets and commitments
Support for Developing Countries	- Financial support from developed countries - Technological support from developed countries
Conclusion	- Provides framework for international cooperation - Aims to mitigate climate change effects - Promotes sustainable development

Kyoto Protocol

The **Kyoto Protocol** is an international treaty aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It was adopted on **11 December 1997** and entered into force on **16 February 2005**. The protocol commits its parties to internationally binding emission reduction targets.

Key Provisions of the Kyoto Protocol:

1. **Greenhouse gas emissions reduction commitments.**
2. **Establishment of flexible market mechanisms.**
3. **Monitoring and reporting compliance mechanisms.**
4. **Financial and technical assistance to help developing countries meet their commitments.**

Structure and Commitments:

The Kyoto Protocol divides countries into **Annex I** and **Non-Annex I** categories based on their economic development and historical responsibility for climate change.

1. **Annex I:** Includes developed countries and economies in transition. These countries are committed to specific emission reduction targets. This list includes the European Union, Japan, Russia, Canada, and Australia.
2. **Non-Annex I:** Includes developing countries. These countries do not have binding emission reduction targets but are encouraged to implement mitigation and adaptation measures. This group includes countries like India, China, and Brazil.

Targets:

Annex I countries agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by an average of **5.2% below 1990 levels during the first commitment period (2008-2012)**.

Carbon Trading Mechanisms:

The Kyoto Protocol introduced **Carbon Trading** or **Emissions Trading** as a market-based approach to control pollution by providing economic incentives for achieving reductions in the emissions of pollutants.

- **Emissions Trading (ET):** Allows Annex I countries to trade emission permits among themselves, providing flexibility in how they meet their emission reduction targets. Countries with surplus emission reductions can sell credits to countries that are struggling to meet their targets.
- **Clean Development Mechanism (CDM):** Allows Annex I countries to invest in emission reduction projects in Non-Annex I countries and earn

Certified Emission Reductions (CERs), which can be used to meet their own emission targets.

- **Joint Implementation (JI):** Allows Annex I countries to invest in emission reduction projects in other Annex I countries and earn **Emission Reduction Units (ERUs)**, which can be used to meet their own emission targets.

These mechanisms enable developed countries to achieve their emission reduction targets in a more cost-effective manner through Carbon Trading, by either purchasing emission reduction credits or investing in projects that reduce emissions in other countries.

Kyoto Protocol's Limitations:

1. Many countries failed to meet their emission reduction targets, leading to criticism of the protocol's effectiveness.
2. Some major emitters, like the United States, did not ratify the protocol, weakening its impact.
3. The first commitment period did not achieve significant global emission reductions, prompting the need for a more comprehensive approach.

Paris Climate Agreement

Introduction:

- The Paris Climate Agreement is a landmark international accord adopted in 2015 to address climate change.
- It was adopted at COP21 (21st United Nations Climate Change Conference) on 12 December 2015 in Paris, France, and came into force on 4 November 2016.

History:

- **1992:** Establishment of the UNFCCC, which laid the basis for global efforts against climate change.
- **1997:** Kyoto Protocol is adopted, setting binding greenhouse gas emissions targets for developed countries.
- **2015:** The Paris Agreement is adopted at COP21 in Paris, requiring commitments from all countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Main Objective:

- Limiting global temperature rise to below 2°C, with efforts to keep it under 1.5°C.
- Enhancing adaptation capacities and ensuring resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- ★ Redirecting financial flows to support low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development pathways. ★

Number of Members:

- The Paris Agreement includes 197 member states, encompassing almost all UN member states and the European Union.

Main Principles:

- **Equal but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities:** All countries have a stake in climate action, but responsibilities vary according to their capacities and development levels.
- **Based on latest science:** Climate science guides the decision-making process.
- **Transparency and monitoring:** Strong mechanisms for transparency and progress monitoring of climate action.

Main Provisions:

- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** All member states must set national targets (NDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and update these every five years.

- **India:** India aims to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP by 33-35% by 2030 and install 175 GW of renewable energy capacity.
- **European Union:** The EU aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% compared to 1990 levels by 2030.
- **Global Stocktake:** Global progress will be reviewed every five years to ensure sufficient progress towards keeping global temperature rise below 2°C.
- **Financial Assistance:** Developed countries must provide financial assistance to developing countries to address climate change, aiming to raise \$100 billion per year by 2020.
- **Transparency Framework:** Reporting and monitoring mechanisms ensure transparency in the implementation of climate change policies and measures.

Main Decisions in the Latest Conferences of the Paris Agreement:

- **COP26 (2021), Glasgow, United Kingdom**
 - **Glasgow Climate Pact:** Stresses the need for strong and immediate measures to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C.
 - **Methane Emissions:** Announcement of the Global Methane Pledge to reduce global methane emissions by 30% by 2030.
 - **Renewable Energy:** Commitment to promote renewable energy sources and phase out coal.
 - **Financial Assistance:** Increased climate finance commitments from developed countries to developing countries.
 - **Carbon Market:** Finalisation of the rules of the carbon market mechanism under Article 6.
 - **Loss and Damage:** Discussions and measures to provide assistance for loss and damage caused by climate change.
- **COP27 (2022), Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt**
 - Establishment and operation of the Loss and Damage Fund.
 - Emphasis on the need to substantially reduce emissions immediately.
- **COP28 (2023), Dubai, United Arab Emirates**
 - **Global Stocktake:** The first 'Global Stocktake' of global efforts to control climate change revealed slow progress in all areas, from reducing greenhouse gas emissions to increasing resilience and providing financial and technical assistance to vulnerable nations.
 - **Main Decisions:**
 - Acceleration of action in all areas by 2030, with a focus on transitioning to renewable energy like wind and solar power.

- Signalled the "beginning of the end" of the fossil fuel era.
- Historic agreement on the operation of the Loss and Damage Fund, with commitments totalling over US\$700 million.
- Future actions: Parties should commit to a 1.5°C limit by 2025 in their next round of NDCs, covering all greenhouse gases, sectors, and categories, and come up with ambitious, economy-wide emissions reduction targets.

Conclusion:

The Paris Agreement is a crucial element of global efforts to combat climate change, underscoring the need for collective action and strong commitments from all countries to mitigate its impacts.

