



# drishti

## The Big Picture - Climate Change: Act Now

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Negotiations from around the world began on curbing climate change. It has been three years since the sealing of the landmark deal in Paris that set a goal of keeping global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius. Envoys from many nations gathered in Poland's southern city of Katowice to attend COP24. Host Poland pushes for a joint declaration to ensure a "just transition" for fossil fuel industries like coal producers who are facing closures as part of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The meeting received a boost after 19 major economies at the G-20 summit affirmed their commitment to the 2015 Paris climate accord. The only holdout is the United States, which announced its withdrawal from the climate pact under President Trump.

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## PARIS CLIMATE DEAL- COP21

- In 2015 COP21, also known as the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, aimed at keeping global warming below 2°C.
- The key vision of Paris Agreement was to keep global temperatures “well below” 2.0C (3.6F) above pre-industrial times and “seek to limit” even more, to 1.5C.
- It pledged to curb emissions. Before the conference started, more than 180 countries had submitted pledges to cut or curb their carbon emissions (intended nationally defined contributions, or INDCs, in the UN jargon). The INDCs were recognized under the agreement, but are not legally binding
- A long-term global goal for net zero emissions: Countries have promised to try to bring global emissions down from peak levels as soon as possible. More significantly, they pledged “to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century”.
- The deal includes loss and damage, a mechanism for addressing the financial losses vulnerable countries face from climate impacts such as extreme weather.
- Raising money to bring in necessary changes. Finance to help developing countries adapt to climate change and transition to clean energy was an important point in the negotiations. This part of the deal has been made non-legally binding on developed countries.

## What is COP 24?

- COP24 is the informal name for the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- In accordance with a decision of the 22nd Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention (COP22) in Marrakesh in November 2016, Poland was selected to host this event within the framework of the Eastern European Group (EEG).

## Agenda of COP24

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- Determining the accounting standards of the whole process: to devise a process of measurement to calculate countries achievements. This agenda will not face much difficulty because with time there has been a gradual convergence of opinion.
- MRE- Monitoring, Review, Evaluation: This agenda has always been a bone of contention because many countries fear that this provision might become intrusive.
- Institutional structure for technology: a world body which will see the adequate transfer of technologies from the ‘Haves’ to the ‘Have-nots’.
- Institutional structure for finance: to see the flow of finance from the developed to the developing and underdeveloped countries.

## Key Issues

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- Many developing countries are reluctant to give up coal and hence weaken the commitment. The discussion is around the logistics to implement the Paris Agreement. However, the chief concern is that the Paris Agreement which talks of keeping temperature rise below 2 degrees is grossly inadequate.
- The IPCC report of 2018 has cautioned that human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, with a likely range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.
- Keeping this trajectory, a report suggested that by the end of the century the temperature rise can be as high as 3 to 4 degree Celsius.
- Another concern is the decision of US. As the largest emitter of Carbon dioxide, the US withdrawal from the Agreement is a mighty set back. Besides, China's peaking period is 2030, and many experts say that by the time China lowers its emission it will be too late.
- The most important challenge is the transfer of technology and finance to the developing and underdeveloped countries. The industrialized countries are reluctant to share either of the resources without a tradeoff. On the other hand, the rest of the world has limited resources to purchase such sophisticated technologies.
- The effects of climate change have begun to surface. Migration related to climate change has destabilized many countries and have also led to the emergence of new populist movements.

## Way Forward

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- Most importantly, environmental ethics should take precedence over other issues like national and strategic interest or economic interest.
- COP24 would demonstrate how climate neutrality can be reached by using innovation and a technique for CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration by soils and forests. Such innovative techniques have to be adopted and practiced.
- The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) ought to be ambitious and the countries should not only commit to larger goals but achieve the same in time.
- Alternative sources of energy have to be explored. India's Solar Alliance is a positive step in this direction. The transition of the vehicles from fossil fuel to electric or hybrid is the need of the hour.
- Adequate finance and technologies should be transferred from developed countries to developing countries. In the long run, it would yield rich dividends. Long-term, low-interest loans can be one solution. In this regard the World Bank's commitment of \$200 billion over the next five years is noteworthy.