

# French president in Iceland to see global warming's damage

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France's President Francois Hollande walks on the Solheimajokull glacier, where the ice has retreated by more than 1 kilometer (0.6 miles), during a State visit in Iceland, Friday, Oct. 16, 2015. Francois Hollande is in Iceland to experience firsthand the damage caused by global warming, ahead of major U.N. talks on climate change in Paris this year. (AP Photo/Thibault Camus, Pool)

The French president took a few steps on an Icelandic glacier Friday to experience firsthand the damage caused by global warming, ahead of

major U.N. talks on climate change in Paris this year.

Francois Hollande went to the shrinking Solheimajokull glacier, where the ice has retreated by more than 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) since annual measurements began in 1931.

The melting of Iceland's glaciers increases flood risks and may threaten its [electricity supply](#), which is primarily generated by water power.

Hollande said he is "confident" about the chances to reach an agreement at Paris' climate talks, aiming at keeping [global warming](#) below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

"What's at stake in Paris is to get an agreement with the highest possible commitments, because I think that no country will take responsibility for rejecting an agreement but some might be tempted to lower the ambitions of the agreement," he told reporters.

Iceland generates 100 percent of its electricity with renewables, including 75 percent from hydropower and 25 percent from geothermal power.

In a speech, Hollande expressed concerns regarding the exploitation of the Arctic's riches.

"Economic progress cannot be based on environmental disaster," he said in a speech to the Arctic Circle, a nonprofit organization gathering scientists, political and business leaders.

As the planet warms and opens up new shipping routes, fishing grounds and oil and gas drilling, intense competition is running between Russia and the United States. Many have warned of a new battleground for resources emerging in the 21st century.

The U.N. conference on climate is to be held from November 30 to December 11 in Paris.



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