

# Leaders of warming Earth meet in Paris to cut emissions (Update)

November 30 2015, by Seth Borenstein And Angela Charlton

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U.S. President Barack Obama, left, and Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff, front row third from right, applaud as they pose with world leaders for a group photo at the COP21, United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Le Bourget, outside Paris, Monday, Nov. 30, 2015. (AP Photo/Jacky Naegelen, Pool)

The largest group of world leaders ever to stand together kicked off two weeks of high-stakes climate talks outside Paris on Monday, saying that

striking an ambitious deal to curb global warming can show terrorists what countries can achieve when they are united.

"What greater rejection of those who would tear down our world than marshaling our best efforts to save it?" President Barack Obama asked his fellow world leaders.

The U.N.-organized gathering of 151 heads of state and government comes at a somber time for France, two weeks after militants linked to the Islamic State group killed 130 people around Paris. Fears of more attacks prompted extra-high security and a crackdown on environmental protests.

The conference is aimed at the most far-reaching deal ever to tackle global warming. The last major agreement, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, required only rich countries to cut carbon dioxide emissions, and the U.S. never signed on. Since then, global temperatures and sea levels have continued to rise, and the Earth has seen an extraordinary run of extreme weather.

"The future of the people of the world, the future of our planet, is in your hands," U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told negotiators in his opening remarks. "We cannot afford indecision, half measures or merely gradual approaches. Our goal must be a transformation."

More than 180 countries have already submitted individual national plans, but a climate deal is by no means guaranteed.

Among several sticking points is money—how much rich countries should invest to help poor countries cope with climate change, how much should be invested in renewable energy, and how much traditional oil, gas and coal producers stand to lose if countries agree to forever reduce emissions.

Reviving the rich-poor differences that caused earlier climate talks to fail, Chinese President Xi Jinping said an eventual global deal must include aid for poor countries and acknowledge differences between developing and established economies.



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, left, and French President Francois Hollande, right, welcome U.S. President Barack Obama as he arrives for the COP21, United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Le Bourget, outside Paris, Monday, Nov. 30, 2015. (Loic Venance/Pool Photo via AP)

"Addressing climate change should not deny the legitimate needs of developing countries to reduce poverty and improve living standards," he said.

Many of the leaders said the world must keep the average temperature

within 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) of current levels—and if possible to half that, to spare island nations threatened by rising seas.

The world has already warmed nearly 1 degree Celsius since the beginning of the industrial age, and factories and cars continue to belch pollution around the world. Beijing on Monday reported one of the worst spells of air pollution in years, saying levels of soot were 25 times what the World Health Organization considers safe. That's a different pollution from carbon dioxide, but both come from burning fossil fuel, especially coal.

Many of the leaders framed the problem as a generational issue, where current leaders owe future generations a livable Earth. Britain's Prince Charles said: "None of us should assume that for our today they should give up tomorrow."

Leaders called their attendance in Paris an act of defiance after the Nov. 13 attacks, some of which occurred near the airfield north of the city where the conference is taking place. Wide highways usually packed with commuters were cordoned off to clear the way for the VIPs. Riot police vans and plainclothes officers were stationed around the capital.

Many of the leaders paid their respects at sites linked to the attacks. Obama, in a late-night visit, placed a single flower outside the concert hall where dozens were killed, and bowed his head in silence.

"We stand with Paris," U.N. climate change agency chief Christina Figueres said. "The City of Light, now more than ever, is a beacon of hope for the world."



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, right, and French President Francois Hollande arrive to welcome world leaders for the COP21, United Nations Climate Change Conference, in Le Bourget, outside Paris, Monday, Nov. 30, 2015. (AP Photo/Christophe Ena, Pool)

Many of the leaders called for a binding agreement and emphasized the role of private funding.

To that end, at least 19 governments and 28 leading world investors were announcing billions of dollars in investments to research and develop



clean energy technology, with the goal of making it cheaper. Backers include Obama, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, billionaires George Soros and Saudi Prince Alaweed bin Talal, and Jack Ma of China's Alibaba.

Under the initiative, 19 countries pledge to double their spending on low- or no-carbon energy over the next five years. They currently spend about \$10 billion a year, about half of that from the U.S.

Gates said he and other investors, including the University of California, are pitching in \$7 billion so far and hope to raise more this week.



Policemen patrol outside the main entrance of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Le Bourget, outside Paris, Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015. The site of Paris-Le Bourget will officially become United Nations territory for the COP 21 conference which is scheduled to start on Nov. 30. President Barack Obama heads to a historic conference in Paris hoping to marshal strong global action against climate change. (AP Photo/Laurent Cipriani, File)

"We need to pursue literally dozens and dozens of paths. We know that several of those will give us the solution that we need," he said in launching the project. "We look at the poorest people in the world: They are the ones who don't have energy. ... Unfortunately these are also the same people who suffer the most."

In another announcement, the United States, Canada and nine European countries pledged nearly \$250 million to help the most vulnerable countries adapt to rising seas, droughts and other consequences of climate change. Germany pledged \$53 million, the U.S. \$51 million and Britain \$45 million.

The money will be made available to a fund for the least developed countries. Other countries that contributed include Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland.



Technicians wire the U.S pavilion at the Climate Conference venue in Le Bourget, north of Paris, Sunday, Nov. 29, 2015. Scores of world leaders gather in Paris and activists hold marches around the world to urge them to reach a tough and binding agreement to slow global warming in two weeks of high-stakes talks. (AP Photo/Bertrand Combaldieu)



U.S. President Barack Obama, right, and French President Francois Hollande pay their respect at the Bataclan concert hall, one of the recent deadly Paris attack sites, after Obama arrived in the French capital to attend the World Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21), Monday, Nov. 30, 2015. (Philippe Wojazer, Pool via AP)





U.S. President Barack Obama, center, puts his arms around French President Francois Hollande and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo after paying their respect at the Bataclan concert hall, one of the recent deadly Paris attack sites, after Obama arrived in the French capital to attend the World Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21), Monday, Nov. 30, 2015. (Philippe Wojazer, Pool via AP)

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