

UN climate talks begin amid uncertainty over US position

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In this April 3, 2014 file photo giant machines dig for brown coal at the open-cast mining Garzweiler in front of a smoking power plant near the city of Grevenbroich in western Germany. Despite uncertainties about whether the United States will remain committed to the Paris climate accord under President Donald Trump, diplomats convened talks in Bonn, Germany, Monday, May 8, 2017 on implementing the details of the global deal to combat global warming. (AP Photo/Martin Meissner, File)

Despite uncertainties about whether the United States will remain committed to the Paris climate accord under President Donald Trump, envoys convened talks Monday in Germany on implementing the details of the deal to combat global warming.

During ten days of talks in the western city of Bonn, officials will try to agree on how to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement to cut carbon emissions, a treaty that former U.S. President Barack Obama's government played a leading role in forging.

The Paris accord calls for limiting the global average temperature increase since the industrial revolution to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) or less—a goal that has been called ambitious.

Patricia Espinosa, head of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change that is hosting the Bonn talks, said it was important to make progress on the nuts and bolts of the agreement before November's annual climate summit. Her agency's budget is also up for discussion.

Espinosa refused to comment on the impact of a possible U.S. withdrawal from the talks or even the entire climate change accord.

"I would rather wait until a decision has been taken," she said.

The White House postponed a meeting that had been planned Tuesday to discuss whether to withdraw from the Paris deal that Trump has said he would "cancel"—or find a way to back away from emissions targets set by the Obama administration.

Fiji, which holds the presidency of the upcoming climate summit, said it was important to press ahead with the talks.

"Irrespective of the position of particular countries, I think it's very

important that we continue to move this process forward," said Fiji envoy Nazhat Shameem Khan. "That's the short answer to the issue about the United States."

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