

# US to join climate talks despite Paris accord exit

August 5 2017, by Francesco Fontemaggi

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People walk around Times Square during a sunny day as hot temperatures continue in New York on July 21, 2017

The United States announced Friday it would still take part in international climate change negotiations in order to protect its interests, despite its planned withdrawal from the Paris accord on global warming.

Two months after President Donald Trump announced the United States

would abandon the 2015 global pact, his administration confirmed it had informed the United Nations of its "intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement"—a process that will take at least until 2020.

But in a statement, the State Department said Washington was still committed to reducing its [greenhouse gas emissions](#) and engaging with the international community on combating climate change.

"We will continue to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions through innovation and technology breakthroughs, and work with other countries to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently and deploy renewable and other clean energy sources," said the statement.

It added: "The United States will continue to participate in international [climate change negotiations](#) and meetings... to protect US interests and ensure all future policy options remain open to the administration.

"Such participation will include ongoing negotiations related to guidance for implementing the Paris Agreement."

Trump sparked widespread international criticism when he announced on June 1 that he had decided to pull the world's largest economy out of the painstakingly-negotiated accord, in line with his pledge to voters in last year's election.

## **Open to re-engaging?**

While Trump said he was open to a renegotiation of the pact, the suggestion was swiftly shot down by fellow world leaders who said it was non-negotiable.

Speaking on a visit to Paris last month, Trump again raised the prospect of a change in policy by saying "something could happen" regarding US

participation in the accord but gave no details.

Friday's statement reiterated that Trump was "open to re-engaging" in the pact if the US could "identify terms that are more favorable to it, its businesses, its workers, its people, and its taxpayers."

Andrew Steer, president of the US non-profit World Resources Institute, said the letter implied a level of ambiguity that could indicate a desire to remain engaged.

"The United States could engage constructively in those negotiations on an issue such as transparency," he said.

"But a climate loner that is intent on withdrawing from the Paris Agreement will not be listened to if it aims to weaken or undermine the accord in any way."

The United States is the world's second biggest producer of greenhouse gases after China and its withdrawal was seen as a body blow to the Paris agreement.

The accord commits signatories to efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause [global warming](#), which is blamed for melting ice caps and glaciers, rising sea levels and more violent weather events.

They vowed steps to keep the worldwide rise in temperatures "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) from pre-industrial times and to "pursue efforts" to hold the increase under 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Despite notifying the UN of its intention to withdraw, the United States will not be able to formally pull out of the accord until 2020 at the earliest.

However, Trump has previously said his country would cease implementation immediately.

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