

UN takes step toward global environment pact opposed by US

May 11 2018



Sea ice floats around a group of islands (TOP R) as seen from NASA's Operation IceBridge research aircraft off the coast of the Antarctica in November 2017; the UN General Assembly has voted in favor of a global environmental pact

The UN General Assembly on Thursday took a first step to create a

global pact for the environment, an initiative championed by French President Emmanuel Macron but opposed by the United States.

A majority of 143 of the 193 UN member-[states](#) voted in favor of a resolution establishing a framework for the French-sponsored [pact](#).

Five countries opposed it - Russia, Syria, Turkey, the Philippines and the United States - seven abstained including Iran, while China was among the countries that backed the measure.

In September, Macron made a push for the [global pact](#), which would be the first legally binding international accord that would gather all environmental rights in a single document.

US Ambassador Nikki Haley criticized the proposed pact as a collection of "vague" commitments and said it was not in the US interest to join in.

"When international bodies attempt to force America into vague environmental commitments, it's a sure sign that American citizens and businesses will get stuck paying a large bill without getting large benefits," Haley said.

"The proposed global compact is not in our interests, and we oppose it."

The resolution creates a working group tasked with identifying gaps in international environmental law and determining whether there is a need to a new regulatory structure.

The working group is due to make recommendations to the General Assembly by mid-2019 ahead of an intergovernmental conference.

"Together, it is our joint responsibility to step up our ambitions to protect the planet and give ourselves the appropriate tools to do so,"

French Ambassador Francois Delattre told the assembly.

President Donald Trump faced condemnation when he announced in June last year that the United States was pulling out of the Paris climate agreement, painting the accord as a "bad deal" for the US economy.

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