

# After Chile cancels, the world's largest climate gathering is now without a home

October 31 2019, by Laura Millan Lombrana and Jeremy Hodges

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California is on fire. Scientists are warning of catastrophic floods and global food shortages. A 16-year-old activist has inspired millions around the world to protest for more climate change action.

And the world's largest [climate](#) summit—where government leaders were supposed to put a plan in action—was just canceled.

On Wednesday, Chile President Sebastian Pinera decided to kill the country's plans to host the COP25 conference in five weeks as riots continue to break out in the South American nation. The United Nations has now found itself rushing to salvage an event that was expected to draw tens of thousands of climate activists, investors and world leaders as nearly 200 nations look to execute on the international Paris climate agreement.

The setback is hitting at a "crucial moment" for climate change action, said Helen Clarkson, chief executive officer of the non-profit The Climate Group. "We hope that this does not distract governments from the urgent need to increase the ambition of their individual and collective climate actions."

Planning such a large-scale event in so little time will prove a monumental task. The prospect of a delay is already threatening to slow momentum that has built in the weeks leading up to the summit. Last month, the UN held an unprecedented gathering in New York where world leaders lined up to present more aggressive plans to curb emissions. Meanwhile, a group of more than 500 investors with \$35 trillion of assets called for stronger action.

It was there that the teenage activist Greta Thunberg, in a speech to [world leaders](#) including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, shouted "How dare you!" and accused them of robbing her generation of a future.

The chances that the COP25 event will actually happen this year are now slim, said Jennifer Tollman, a climate policy adviser at E3G in Berlin. "It seems highly likely that something will have to be done early next year

or later."

Given their size, past COPs—short for Conference of the Parties—have always posted logistical challenges. The Chilean government was planning to spend \$62 million in preparation. Last year, COP24 drew a crowd of almost 30,000 people to Katowice, Poland. Hotels in the city filled to capacity and attendees were forced to travel by bus for as long as 90 minutes to get to the main venue.

In 2017, Fiji organized the event, but the conference proved so large that it had to hold the event at a conference center in Bonn, Germany.

Bonn has again emerged as the most obvious choice for an alternative site should this year's talks be salvaged. Germany's deputy environment minister, Jochen Flasbart, said on Twitter that the government is already in touch with the UN to discuss the situation. Another UN gathering on climate change was just held in Bonn in June.

The countries that would lose out the most if the summit is canceled are developing nations. The gathering has traditionally served as a chance for them to lay bare the catastrophic impacts that global warming has exacted upon their regions as sea levels rise and droughts and floods become more extreme.

Chile itself is grappling with the driest decade on record. The government has had to take emergency measures to survive an unprecedented drought. And the COP withdrawal could derail the country's plans to combat the climate change that brought it all about, said Matias Asun, director of Greenpeace in Chile.

For his part, Pinera said that Chile "remains absolutely committed" to fighting climate change and said canceling the event was "a very difficult and painful decision."

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Citation: After Chile cancels, the world's largest climate gathering is now without a home (2019, October 31) retrieved 28 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-10-chile-cancels-world-largest-climate.html>

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