



**Resolution 1976 (2014)<sup>1</sup>**

Final version

## Climate change: a framework for a global agreement in 2015

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Climate change is one of the greatest threats our society faces. It threatens human settlements and natural habitats, economic stability, the availability of resources for development and, ultimately, human lives. As the scientific findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) attest, there is clear evidence that the climate is changing, and that this is largely as a result of human activities. This process risks becoming unstoppable and irreversible in the absence of united, coherent and determined action to cut greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Our success, or failure, in tackling climate change will shape the world we leave for future generations. If we succeed, we will not only safeguard our planet's resources, but also unleash immense economic opportunities for sustainable development, quality job creation and action against poverty. If we fail, the disruption to the global climate, the environment, biodiversity and human well-being will be unprecedented.
3. The international community has recognised the scale of the challenge by adopting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, which set emissions-reduction targets for industrialised countries for the period 2008-2012. Even though the Kyoto Protocol was extended to a second commitment period from 2013 to 2020, most major economies do not have any formal or specific commitments between now and 2020.
4. The clock is ticking and the cost of inaction is growing. Under the Durban Platform, which was agreed in 2011, countries decided to begin negotiations on a new international agreement "with legal force" to become effective in 2020 and for those negotiations to be completed by 2015. The Parliamentary Assembly urges all European heads of State and government to show leadership in these negotiations and to work towards ensuring the adoption of an ambitious global agreement to tackle climate change.
5. The Assembly notes the IPCC's warning that exceeding a threshold of a global rise in temperature by 2°C relative to the pre-industrial level would be disastrous in social, economic and environmental terms. It recalls that its climate action proposal "Stop the Clock – Save our Planet" enabled substantial progress in the global negotiations held in Durban.
6. The Assembly is convinced that the international community's talks must be supplemented by action at the national level. Advancing domestic climate change legislation in key countries needs to be a priority to help build the political conditions conducive to a comprehensive and ambitious international agreement.
7. For over twenty years governments have tried both "top down" and "bottom up" approaches to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. Neither approach has achieved the levels of participation or ambition necessary to tackle climate change. What this Assembly proposes instead is a mixed top down and bottom up approach, including – for the first time – formal recognition of national climate change legislation in the legally binding part of the outcome.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 30 January 2014 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13362](#), report of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Mr John Prescott). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 30 January 2014 (8th Sitting).



8. This mixed approach should apply the United Nations principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and feature a core agreement with a global target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the commitment already agreed by governments in the Copenhagen Accord to keep the global average temperature rise below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels, delivered through national legislation.

9. Countries should be required to pass climate legislation by 2020 at the latest with clear targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and 2050. These national targets and legislation would be reported to the United Nations and formally included in the legally binding part of the outcome in a schedule or annex to the agreement.

10. An international body should be established as a part of any climate change agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions. It should be required to produce annual reports to the international authority under the climate change agreement. It must reflect great scrutiny and the transparency necessary for the credibility of a new climate change agreement.

11. A review of national pledges should be instituted to ensure national legislation is aligned with the global target to reduce emissions, and that it is equitable. Countries would also be required to report on progress each year as part of an international process that evaluates the implementation of national legislation and the emission reductions that result.

12. National climate change legislation is not just something that should underpin an agreement after it has been agreed; rather it is an enabler that creates the political space for an agreement. The Assembly urges European governments to invest in much greater bilateral co-operation with key countries, to involve national parliaments and to support the international processes between now and 2015 so as to help advance national climate legislation, disseminate best practice, build capacity amongst legislators and promote common or complementary approaches.

13. Legislators are a central element to any successful strategy to tackle climate change. They are responsible for developing, passing and amending laws, and ensuring that these are implemented, as well as approving national budgets and holding climate negotiators accountable. It is crucial to build capacity amongst legislators in order to maximise their potential to have a positive influence on international climate ambition.

14. The Assembly therefore welcomes the launch of the GLOBE Climate Legislation Initiative and recognises the crucial role it will play in the international negotiations by helping legislators to prepare and implement climate change legislation between now and 2015. The Assembly also welcomes the publication of the latest GLOBE Climate Legislation Study, which provides an overview of current climate-related legislation in 33 countries and helps to identify gaps, highlight good practice and enable peer-to-peer learning. The study will be expanded to cover 66 countries in 2014 and to 100 countries in 2015.

15. The Assembly calls for the adoption of the United Nations principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and appeals to the negotiators, in particular those from European countries, to take into consideration the following key elements of a climate change agreement in 2015:

15.1. a target to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2030 and by at least 50% by 2050, relative to 1990 levels;

15.2. the formal recognition of national climate change legislation in the legally binding part of the outcome and a requirement for countries to pass climate legislation by 2020 at the latest;

15.3. support for international processes to assist the development of national climate legislation, to spread good practice and to promote common methodologies;

15.4. a review of national pledges to ensure that they are aligned with the global target and are equitable;

15.5. transparency of performance of countries against their national targets and actions (with yearly reporting), as well as a process to evaluate the implementation of national legislation and the emission reductions that result;

15.6. flexibility allowing countries to improve their legislation and performance;

15.7. international rules and mechanisms for emissions trading;

15.8. a commitment to research and development, demonstration and sharing of new technologies, and dissemination of best existing technologies;

15.9. financial and technical assistance to developing countries, in particular the poorest ones, for climate change adaptation;

15.10. recognition of the right to equitable access to sustainable development, of the profound impact climate change will have on ecosystems and economies and of the importance of valuing natural capital;

15.11. a call for international fora, notably the G8 and G20, to press for reform to support a shift towards a low-carbon green economy.

16. In this context, the Assembly reiterates its concern that climate change will affect the enjoyment of universally recognised fundamental rights, and therefore exhorts national parliaments of the member States to:

16.1. improve relevant mechanisms for building resilience against climate change, parallel to global governmental negotiations on the new climate treaty;

16.2. work with the governments to prepare lasting resettlement solutions for climate refugees and displaced persons.