

COP26

Country overview and stated priorities for largest emitters and selected others*

Version 3.0: 6 October 2021

Sources: Clean Air in London and BBC Monitoring

*Ranked by territorial emissions in 2019

Global Carbon Atlas: <http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions>

Executive Summary

This report pulls together an overview of the world's 20 most polluting countries and their response to climate change and air pollution, with particular reference to the forthcoming COP26 meeting in November this year.

In addition, it covers Bangladesh, a group of countries in the Middle East including Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, and UAE as well as the Small Island Developing States to capture their attitude and approach to the challenges of climate change.

Each entry provides a summary overview of the impact and importance of climate change and the challenges facing a country as well as its attitudes to solving these issues. In addition, there is a summary of three to five 'stated priorities' for each country or entity together with online links to further information or supporting evidence.

The report ends with a section on key players, initiatives and events within the EU and the UN.

Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Australia.....	6
Overview (15 th largest emitter in 2019).....	6
Stated Priorities.....	7
Bangladesh.....	9
Overview (42 nd largest emitter)	9
Stated Priorities.....	9
Brazil	11
Overview (13 th largest emitter).....	11
Stated Priorities.....	12
Canada	14
Overview (11 th largest emitter).....	14
Stated Priorities.....	15
China.....	17
Overview (Largest emitter)	17
Stated Priorities.....	18
France	20
Overview (19 th largest emitter).....	20
Stated Priorities.....	20
Germany	22
Overview (7 th largest emitter).....	22
Stated Priorities.....	23
India.....	25
Overview (3 rd largest emitter).....	25
Stated Priorities.....	25
Indonesia.....	28
Overview (8 th largest emitter).....	28
Stated Priorities.....	29
Iran.....	32
Overview (6 th largest emitter).....	32
Stated Priorities.....	32
Italy.....	34

Overview (18 th largest emitter).....	34
Stated priorities.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Japan	37
Overview (5 th largest emitter).....	37
Stated Priorities.....	38
Kazakhstan.....	41
Overview (21 st largest emitter)	41
Stated Priorities.....	41
Kuwait	43
Overview (40 th largest emitter).....	43
Stated Priorities.....	43
Lebanon	45
Overview (79 th largest emitter).....	45
Stated Priorities.....	46
Mexico	48
Overview (14 th largest emitter).....	48
Stated Priorities.....	49
Poland	50
Overview (20 th largest emitter).....	50
Stated Priorities.....	51
Qatar	52
Overview (39 th largest emitter).....	52
Stated Priorities.....	53
Russia.....	55
Overview (4 th largest emitter).....	55
Stated Priorities.....	56
Saudi Arabia	58
Overview (10 th largest emitter).....	58
Stated Priorities.....	58
SIDS	63
Overview	63
Stated Priorities.....	63
South Africa.....	66
Overview (12 th largest emitter).....	66

Stated Priorities.....	67
South Korea	69
Overview (9 th largest emitter).....	69
Stated Priorities.....	69
Turkey.....	71
Overview (16 th largest emitter).....	71
Stated Priorities.....	72
UAE.....	76
Overview (31 st largest emitter).....	76
Stated Priorities.....	77
UK	79
Summary (17 th largest emitter).....	79
Stated priorities for the UK chairmanship.....	80
Stated priorities for the UK itself	81
USA	83
Overview (2 nd largest emitter)	83
Stated domestic and international priorities for COP26.....	84
European Union.....	86
Events, initiatives and key people	86
COP26 and the United Nations	88

Australia

Overview (15th largest emitter in 2019)

Australia is one of the world's biggest per capita greenhouse gas emitters. The worsening heat waves, drought, and the devastating 2019-2020 bushfires clearly revealed Australia's vulnerabilities to climate change.

The government has been criticised for not committing to meet its zero emissions target by 2050.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said: "I won't be signing a blank cheque on behalf of Australians to targets without plans... Blank cheque commitments you always end up paying for, and you always end up paying in higher taxes."

He says that Australia will invest in emissions reducing technologies, such as carbon capture and storage and hydrogen. "That is how you actually get to net zero. You don't get there by just having some commitment."

Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack has said that coal is here to stay for many more years to come, noting that 55,000 people worked in the coal industry, which produced \$66 billion in exports.

Labour leader Anthony Albanese blasted Australia's inaction on climate change as "embarrassing".

In December 2020, Australia formally submitted its updated climate pledge document to the UN. It states that it committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 26% to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030.

A government spokesperson defended the submission by saying that "on a per capita or emissions intensity basis, Australia's 2030 target is more ambitious than those adopted by France, Norway, Canada, Japan or South Korea. Since 2005, Australia's emissions have fallen faster than the G20 average, the OECD average and faster than Japan, New Zealand, and the United States".

However, according to Climate Action Tracker, Australia failed to increase its 2030 target, which it rates as "insufficient."

Environment Minister Sussan Ley said: "Climate adaptation is about taking practical actions to help our environment, our communities and our economy deal with the impacts of climate change that are already taking place." In June 2021 she rejected plans for a \$36 billion wind, solar and hydrogen project in Western Australia saying it will have unacceptable impacts on internationally recognised wetlands and migratory bird species.

Greens leader Adam Bandt said: "The Coalition is driving us off the climate cliff, but want to let us know they've packed a box of band-aids for the trip".

Due to the 2019-2020 bushfires and heat waves, the environment has emerged as a top concerning issue for Australians.

One survey found that 36% of Australians are more afraid of climate change than catching COVID-19. Around 66% of people are worried about the ill effects of climate change and they want the government to do something about it.

A survey carried for the World Economic Forum found that young Australians overwhelmingly favour immediate action on climate change but have little faith in their leaders to do anything significant.

There has been a rise in climate activism due to the worsening climatic conditions and due to the government's failure to reduce emissions. Australia's climate issue is not just restricted to election campaigns and people are now taking it to the streets.

In September 2019, an estimated 300,000 Australians participated in climate change rallies across the country in one of the largest protest events in its history.

Inspired by young Swedish climate activists Greta Thunberg, several schoolchildren, including Harriet O'Shea Carre and Milou Albrecht, started the School Strike For Climate (SS4C) movement in Australia.

A group of eight Australian teenage environmentalists lost their court appeal on 24 June to ban a coal mine expansion in New South Wales. However, in what is considered a landmark, the court ruled that the environment minister has an obligation to children to consider the harm caused by climate change as part of her decision-making in approving the mine's expansion.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Net zero asap and preferably by 2050

Summary: Prime Minister Scott Morrison has remained evasive and non-committal on the issue of net zero by 2050, saying: "Our goal is to reach net zero emissions as soon as possible and preferably by 2050". However, this goal divides the coalition government.

Resources Minister Keith Pitt said: "We have not committed to net zero by 2050. That would require the agreement of the Nationals (Party) and that agreement has not been reached or sought."

Links: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/morrison-eyeing-more-ambitious-climate-target-of-net-zero-by-2050-20210201-p56vj3.html>

<https://www.news.com.au/technology/environment/climate-change/its-embarrassing-anthony-albanese-says-government-is-holding-australia-back-on-climate-change/news-story/8304673c9bcbbf76dad7fa2713e006a6>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/feb/16/michael-mccormack-dismisses-claims-he-will-stand-down-as-nationals-leader>

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/why-morrison-cannot-rush-to-net-zero-emissions-20210617-p581y1.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jun/17/nationals-will-oppose-net-zero-emissions-target-resources-minister-signals>

Priority: Criticise carbon tariffs

Summary: The Morrison government maintains that carbon tariffs are not aimed at combating climate change, but rather at economic objectives including protecting local industries such as British and European meat, cheese and wine.

Trade Minister Dan Tehan said Australia was worried that carbon border adjustment mechanisms can be used as protectionist measures.

Links: <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/new-protectionism-australia-to-fight-boris-johnson-s-green-tariff-bid-20210210-p5714j.html>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/scott-morrison-says-he-looks-forward-to-talks-on-climate-at-g7-as-labor-says-australia-s-stance-leaves-it-isolated>

Priority: Green technology

Summary: The Morrison government is going to identify “clean” hydrogen, energy storage, “low-carbon” steel and aluminium, carbon capture and storage and soil carbon as priority technologies slated for investment as part of its technology roadmap. The government is allocating A\$1.9 billion over ten years to develop clean technology in industry, agriculture and transport.

Links: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/22/morrisons-tech-roadmap-flags-more-investment-in-carbon-capture-and-storage>

<https://reneweconomy.com.au/morrison-recycles-old-tactics-in-bid-to-avoid-zero-emissions-targets-71373/>

<https://www.corr.com.au/insights/australia-to-invest-1-9-billion-in-future-energy-technology>

Priority: Renewable energy

Summary: The government is spending \$50m on carbon capture and storage to fund pilot projects to cut emissions from industrial facilities and allotted \$70.4m over five years for a regional hydrogen export hub.

Link: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/oct/06/australia-federal-budget-2020-disappointing-environment-budget-lacks-new-funding-for-australian-renewables>

Bangladesh

Overview (42nd largest emitter)

Bangladesh, which has a population of over 166 million people, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Sea level rise, storms, cyclones, drought, erosion, landslides, flooding and salinisation displace many people every year. Heat stress in agriculture is threatening its food security.

It has been estimated that by 2050, one in every seven people in Bangladesh will be displaced because of climate change. Up to 18 million people may have to move because of rising sea levels alone.

The government is taking steps to prepare for the adverse impact of climate change.

These include encouraging farmers to plant more heat-tolerant rice varieties, increasing forest areas, building cyclone shelters and flood protection embankments, and improving the disaster warning system.

Bangladesh has achieved success in exploiting solar energy, especially in rural areas where it powers irrigation pumps and lights up homes, replacing polluting kerosene and firewood. One agency has rated it second in a list of countries providing off-grid solar solutions to households.

It declared climate change to be a “planetary emergency” in November 2019 and has called on the world to put itself “on a war footing” to combat it and reduce its impacts.

It has established funds for adaptation to climate change and support for environmentally friendly technology such as solar energy, bio-gas plants and effluent treatment plants.

The government has also decided to cancel nine coal-fired power plant projects due to environmental concerns.

Bangladesh was ranked as the world’s most polluted country in 2020 by one company which monitors pollution, and some campaigners complain that the authorities don’t do enough to enforce environmental protection rules.

One domestic study found that pollution includes coal dust blown in from outside the country.

Bangladesh heads up the Climate Vulnerability Forum, which encourages cooperation between countries highly susceptible to the effects of a warming planet.

Stated Priorities

Bangladesh has not yet officially announced its stated priorities for the upcoming COP26 summit. However, the statements made by government leaders, particularly by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, suggest that the following are likely to be the priorities:

Priority: Urging developed countries to do more

Summary: Bangladesh has repeatedly said that developed countries should do more to combat environmental issues, while developing countries should be given more leeway.

Link: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/world/2021/04/22/pm-hasina-places-4-suggestions-to-deal-with-climate-challenge>

Priority: Urging developed countries to fund mitigation and adaptation

Summary: Hasina also told the summit that developed countries should fund the mitigation and adaptation efforts of vulnerable countries.

Link: <https://www.newagebd.net/article/136059/pm-places-4-proposals-at-climate-summit>

Priority: Focus on the green economy and carbon neutral technologies

Summary: Hasina told the summit that there needs to be a focus on the green economy and carbon neutral technologies and that there needs to be a transfer of technologies between nations.

Link: <https://www.newagebd.net/article/136059/pm-places-4-proposals-at-climate-summit>

Also:

Priority: Cutting greenhouse gas emissions

Summary: Executive Secretary of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Patricia Espinosa congratulated Bangladesh, in a letter dated 30 August, on its timely submission of an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) with its commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement on Climate Change. The UNFCCC chief said the timely submission of NDCs during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is “undoubtedly commendable”.

Link: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2021/08/31/unfccc-congratulates-bangladesh-for-its-effort-to-cut-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

Brazil

Overview (13th largest emitter)

Before Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro took office in January 2019, the Latin American country was a leader in climate change initiatives.

It made good use of renewable energy sources and had some success in reigning in rampant deforestation of the Amazon.

However, Bolsonaro undermined environmental protection efforts by prioritising the economy and frequently downplayed the more recent surge in deforestation and forest fires. He also often denied the grave impact of climate change.

His government slashed the budgets for fighting climate change and for environmental enforcement agencies, saying that they were "suffocating" the economy.

And while environmentalists pushed for a phase-out of fossil fuels, he promised to cut the price of diesel.

In the past year, the Bolsonaro government has also taken various legislative actions that could have a negative impact on climate change. For example, Bill 3729/2004, which would loosen licensing requirements for infrastructure, mining and farming projects, has been approved by Congress and will now be considered by the Senate. The president has also pushed for the passing of a draft bill that would permit mineral exploration on indigenous lands.

His poor environmental track record led to warnings of sanctions by the EU and the US.

Brazil has changed its tone on environmental matters since US President Joe Biden took office in early 2021.

Some policy action has been taken that would have a positive impact on climate change, including the passing of a new law that compensates those who provide native forest conservation services.

The government has made more commitments to combat climate change, such as pushing forward its target to achieve climate neutrality by 10 years - to 2050. It has also vowed to eradicate illegal deforestation by 2030.

In the run-up to COP26, it has attempted show the world a "new, greener face" dedicated to environmental conservation, after three years of surging deforestation levels.

But local activists are sceptical about these promises. "It's extortion," says Marcio Astrini, executive secretary of the Brazilian Climate Observatory, an alliance of 63 civil society organizations. "Bolsonaro and his team are saying, 'If you don't give us the money, we don't know what will happen to the Amazon'."

Foreign Minister Carlos Alberto Franco Franca reportedly said that COP26 would be an opportunity for Brazil to demonstrate its partnership with the US on matters of climate change.

The government also intends to brush up the negative image of Brazilian agribusiness overseas at COP26.

However, some prominent agribusiness leaders have voiced their dissatisfaction with the government's approach and worry that the country was "driving away customers by failing to conserve the environment".

Air quality continues to be poor across Brazil, especially in cities such as Sao Paulo and Rio. Air pollution has worsened due to the surge in wildfires which has also brought about various respiratory illnesses amid the country's COVID-19 crisis. According to a study published in September 2021, more than 47,000 Brazilians are hospitalised due to air pollution caused by wildfires every year.

There is public concern about the state of the environment – 61% of respondents in one poll – while there appears to be a general belief that "human actions" had caused global warming (77% of respondents).

Surging deforestation levels, wildfires, droughts and the rapid loss of biodiversity are Brazil's most prominent climate issues, with most environmental NGOs focused on these areas, particularly in light of the fact that the Bolsonaro administration has voiced its intention to "commercialise" environmentally protected regions such as the Amazon.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Funding for the Amazon

Summary: The government's Floresta+ [Forest+] programme is an incentive for the national and international markets to pay for the upkeep and protection of Brazil's national forests. The "Adopt a Park" programme also invites national and foreign companies to pay for the monitoring, surveillance and other conservation expenses required for national parks located in the Amazon.

Link: <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/assuntos/relacoes-internacionais-1>

Priority: Reducing greenhouse gases via the carbon credit trading market

Summary: Brazil recently discussed the use of carbon credits to protect the Amazon with the US government.

Link: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/politica/noticia/2021-02/brazil-us-discuss-environment>

Priority: Achieving carbon neutrality

Summary: The government says it needs \$10bn to meet its goals.

Link: <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c2028j6>

Priority: Combating deforestation

Summary: Bolsonaro said in November 2020 that he would clamp down on countries who imported "illegal wood" from the Amazon.

Link: <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c2026bki>

Priority: Sustainable development of the Amazon

Summary: The government promotes the idea of sustainable economic inclusion and development in the Amazon region for the more than 20 million Brazilians who live there, particularly indigenous groups.

Link: <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/noticias/na-cop-25-ministro-do-meio-ambiente-defende-inclusao-economica-da-populacao-da-amazonia>

Priority: Seeking payment for protecting Amazon

Summary: Brazil wants richer countries to help pay to preserve the Amazon.

Link: <https://www.camara.leg.br/noticias/618646-ministro-vai-defender-compensacoes-ambientais-para-o-brasil-na-cop-25/>

Priority: Expansion of agribusiness in line with climate adaptation

Summary: The government intends to show the positive role of Brazilian agribusiness in mitigating emissions and adapting to climate change at COP26.

Link: <https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/economia/noticia/2021-08/brazil-use-cop26-boost-image-countrys-farming>

Priority: Combating environmental crimes in Brazilian biomes

Summary: Brazilian authorities have cracked down on illegal mining, logging and other illicit activities in Brazil's most vulnerable biomes such as the Amazon rainforest.

Link: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/15/brazil-bolsonaro-illegal-mining-amazon>

Canada

Overview (11th largest emitter)

The three key issues surrounding climate change in Canada are the oil business, the arctic regions and the indigenous peoples.

Canada was the 11th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in 2019 and has a big oil industry – the tar sands in Alberta are thought to be the world’s third largest known oil reserve.

Canadian glacier melt is the third biggest source of water raising sea levels after the Arctic and Greenland. Canada is warming at double the global rate.

Environmental targets and the oil business appear to be two separate shows, in two conflicting realities, with Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s administration trying to maintain them both.

On the one hand, the government declared a “climate emergency” in 2019, and recently Trudeau presented new, ambitious plans to achieve “net zero” by 2050.

In a statement issued at the conclusion of the June 2021 G7 meeting, Trudeau emphasized the importance of continued G7 leadership on climate and energy in order to reach net-zero by 2050 and announced further financial means to battle climate change.

His government also declared that it will restrict the development of thermal coal because of its “unacceptable environmental effects”.

However, on the other hand, the opposition accuses Trudeau of “exempting” the biggest polluters from key legislation.

Trudeau also pushed for the controversial Keystone XL pipeline project that would connect Canada and the US, saying he was disappointed when US President Joe Biden cancelled it earlier this year.

In June 2021, a new report stated that plans to increase the export of oil and gas over the next 30 years means Canada will be unable to meet its emission reduction targets.

Critics also say that Canada has “missed every environmental target it has ever set”.

The dualism has also been evident in the campaigning for the 20 September general election, with the media saying that the country’s “infernal summer”, which caused several deaths and fire-generated air pollution problems, has put climate change “at the forefront of [the] election” but that in spite of the summer of 2021 “changing the way Canadians think about climate change”, both main parties were “struggling to define their message” and to “uphold Canada’s international commitments”.

While Trudeau focused heavily on climate change in his election speeches, he was also criticised: Both by political opponents calling his climate efforts an “abysmal failure” and by political commentators calling his Liberal party’s climate change goals “slippery” and saying the Liberals had “pulled imaginary emissions levels out of the air and then made exaggerated claims about a new policy when in fact nothing changed”.

Indigenous people in Canada are often outspoken in climate issues, with many of the country's "key" climate change influencers being indigenous activists and indigenous groups. Canada has several "climate justice" and legal organisations.

Indigenous people are also said to be over-represented in the lower socioeconomic bands and therefore more adversely affected by pollution.

There is a suspicion that a disproportionate number of polluting industries are sited in areas inhabited by racial minority groups.

Lawmakers have been debating a bill which aims to tackle "environmental racism", where Indigenous, Black and other racial minority communities are exposed to higher levels of dirty air, contaminated water or other toxins and pollutants.

In August 2021, the government announced that it would invest 340 million Canadian Dollars to support Indigenous guardians and Indigenous Protected Areas as part of its commitment to conserving 30% of the country's lands and waters by 2030.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Net zero by 2050

Summary: The government plans to legislate for net-zero emissions by 2050.

In his speech at the virtual Climate Ambition Summit in December 2020, Trudeau said that Canada would raise its emission reduction ambitions, striving "for the upper end of a range of 32% to 40% below 2005 levels by 2030".

In July 2021, Canada released its new Nationally Determined Contribution, reiterating a previously announced target of a 40% to 45% reduction in emissions below 2005 levels by 2030 and sectoral policies from a recently updated climate plan.

One of the steps towards net zero includes a raised levy on carbon pollution "by \$15 a tonne starting in 2023 and rising to \$170 Canadian dollars per ton by 2030", as Trudeau said in his Climate Ambition Summit speech.

Links:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-11/trudeau-hikes-carbon-tax-positions-canada-to-hit-climate-goal>

<https://twitter.com/jonathanwnv/status/1329517376476471296>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eU7xXyuxY4>

<https://climateactionnetwork.ca/2021/07/12/canadas-new-nationally-determined-contribution-does-not-reflect-the-countrys-highest-possible-ambition/>

Priority: Building back better

Summary: Trudeau said that Canada plans a Build Back Better scheme to rebuild after COVID-19, and that this scheme “must contain ambitious plans to take strong action against climate change”. A few months earlier, in July 2020, at a Ministerial on Climate Action (MoCA) meeting, Minister Wilkinson said that Canada is committed to “building a stronger, more resilient, and more sustainable economy as the world begins to emerge from COVID-19.”

Links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eU7xXyuxY4>

<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/ministerial-on-climate-action-links-pandemic-recovery-to-climate-and-biodiversity-agendas/>

[Building back: A fairer, cleaner, and more prosperous future for all](#)

Priority: Investing in climate finance

Summary: Trudeau said that Canada is “committed to making significant investments in international climate finance, because to effectively fight climate change at home, we must fight it everywhere”. He said: “This pandemic has taught us the importance of global cooperation, and we must translate that lesson to how we deal with the climate crisis”.

At the G7 summit in June 2021, Trudeau announced a doubling of Canada’s climate finance, from \$2.65 billion in 2015 to \$5.3 billion over five years, including increased support for adaptation, as well as nature and nature-based solutions that are in line with the G7 Nature Compact.

Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eU7xXyuxY4>

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2021/06/13/prime-minister-concludes-productive-g7-leaders-summit-united-kingdom>

Priority: Powering past coal/other coal commitments

Summary: The Powering Past Coal Alliance was co-founded by Canada and the UK.

The government has also declared that it will restrict the development of thermal coal because of its “unacceptable environmental effects”.

Links:

https://twitter.com/AlokSharma_RDG/status/1369376344057016323

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/canada-and-the-uk-host-round-table-discussion-on-climate-risks-and-opportunities-with-finance-leaders-and-mark-carney-un-special-envoy-for-climate-action-and-finance-815212215.html>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/unacceptable-environmental-effects-new-federal-policy-restricts-thermal-coal-1.6062173>

China

Overview (Largest emitter)

Since Xi Jinping became China's president in 2012, climate change has taken centre stage in domestic and foreign policy.

China has adopted "Xi Jinping Thought" which details a shift to a more sustainable growth model.

And in 2020 Xi committed China to the target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). In December, he said he wanted to reduce carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 65% from the 2005 levels.

In one of the most significant developments, Xi told the UN General Assembly in September 2021 that China would no longer fund new coal-fired power projects overseas. He also pledged to "step up support" for green and low carbon energy projects in developing countries.

The announcement came just months after G7 leaders committed to phase out coal at home and stop financing coal overseas after their meeting in the UK in June.

However, at this stage, there's little clarity on whether commercial deals made by private Chinese companies would also be impacted by the pledge.

China is the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases and is also dependent on coal for its domestic energy requirements. In February 2021, international researchers had found that China had put 38.4 gigawatts of new coal-fired power capacity into operation in the country in 2020.

In 2020, China said its energy consumption per unit of GDP had dropped 13.2% between 2015 and 2019, while adding that the pollution control goals set out in the 13th Five-Year Plan were accomplished. However, in many cities, including Shanghai and Beijing, people continue to live with poor air quality.

Other key targets include increasing the share of non-fossil fuel resources to about 25%, expanding forest cover by six billion cubic metres, and generating 1.2 billion kilowatts of solar and wind energy by 2030. China has also said that it will lead a "green recovery" from the COVID-19 pandemic through multilateralism.

Renewable energy has seen a major expansion in China, which is a major exporter of solar panels and wind turbines. In July 2021, China released new guidelines for "green development", encouraging businesses to carry out environmental impact assessments in "accordance with internationally accepted standards" when funding overseas projects.

China also did not finance any coal projects under its Belt and Road Initiative in the first half of 2021, according to a report released in July by the International Institute of Green Finance (IIGF) at Beijing-based Central University of Finance and Economics.

China's greenhouse gas emissions are expected to level off, rather than drop, over the next few years, but Climate Action Tracker deems China's climate commitments to be "highly insufficient".

Stated Priorities

Nationally determined contributions

China is yet to submit its nationally determined contributions ahead of COP26. However, China's climate envoy Xie Zhenhua said in August that China will submit its nationally determined contributions and its long-term strategy before the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. President Xi Jinping announced in September last year that China's emissions would peak by 2030. Based on priorities discussed during COP25 and the Paris agreement talks, China has set targets on a few key issues such as achieving carbon neutrality, pledging to increase forest cover and dependence on non-fossil fuels.

At the May-June Climate Change Conference, India in a statement on behalf of the BASIC countries- a grouping of Brazil, South Africa, India and China - touched on the importance of technology development and transfer, and capacity building for developing countries.

China is faced with growing international pressure to set a more ambitious climate target before the COP26 summit.

Link: <https://newenergy.in-en.com/html/newenergy-2408060.shtml>

Link to Xie Zhenhua's speech:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gb3_ZaqKGBw&t=411s&ab_channel=OurHongKongFoundation%E5%9C%98%E7%B5%90%E9%A6%99%E6%B8%AF%E5%9F%BA%E9%87%91

Priority: Carbon neutrality before 2060

Summary: In September 2020, President Xi Jinping announced that China would aim to become "carbon neutral" before 2060. With this, China joined the EU, UK and a few other nations by setting climate targets as mandated by the Paris agreement. At the virtual Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December, Xi said that he wants to reduce carbon emissions per unit of GDP by 65% from the 2005 level.

Priority: Phase out coal

Summary: Xi, while speaking at the UN General Assembly in September 2021, pledged that China will stop funding coal projects overseas. However, there are still concerns about China's domestic projects.

At the virtual leaders' summit on climate in April, Xi had said that China will "strictly control coal-fired power generation projects, and strictly limit the increase in coal consumption over the 14th five-year plan period and phase it down in the 15th five-year plan period".

Link: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-58647481>

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3130839/president-xi-jinping-singles-out-coal-and-clears-air-chinas>

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Increasing forest cover

Summary: In 2018, China's forestry authority published its plan to boost the domestic forestry industry and increase its forest resources to the world's average by 2050.

Link: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/05/c_136875051.htm

Priority: China launches national online carbon market

Summary: After several months of delays, China's national carbon market began online trading on 16 July. Set to be the world's largest trading market in terms of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions covered, it will cover more than 2,000 power companies in the first batch, with the trading volume estimated to exceed more than four billion tonnes per year, state media reports said.

The Ministry of Ecology and Environment described the launch as "a significant step" towards Beijing's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060.

Link: <http://www.ecns.cn/news/2021-07-16/detail-ihapauxv0566887.shtml>

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/06/c_139646191.htm

Priority: Green recovery, increase dependence on non-fossil fuels

Summary: At the Climate Summit in December 2020, Xi also said that China will increase the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 25%, increase the forest stock volume by six billion cubic meters from the 2005 level, and bring its total installed capacity of wind and solar power to over 1.2 billion kilowatts.

Link: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-12-13/China-will-lead-the-world-s-post-COVID-19-green-recovery-Wbbjl2M9bO/index.html>

France

Overview (19th largest emitter)

France has set the goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050, with the interim objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030.

Transport is the country's main contributor to climate change, responsible for 31% of greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. The government said France would end sales of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040.

France ranked as the 19th biggest contributor of carbon dioxide emissions in 2019, based on data from the Global Carbon Atlas. This is less than 1% of global emissions.

France has one of the most decarbonised energy systems in the EU, with 51% of its energy derived from fossil fuels, compared to an average 76% in Europe and 85% in the world.

This is because over 70% of France's electricity is produced by nuclear power stations. The country plans to reduce its nuclear power from 70% to 50% by 2035 and close its last coal plants by 2022. At the same time, renewables are expected to replace nuclear and fossil fuels and increase 50% from 2017 levels by 2023, doubling by 2028. Many nuclear reactors are nearing their expiry date and those that can continue long-term operations need to be modernised.

France contributes to a variety of multilateral funds dedicated to fighting climate change. In 2019 President Emmanuel Macron described the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as an "immediate priority". The country has increased its contribution to the GCF in recent years, going from being the fifth biggest contributor in 2015-19 to the second biggest in 2020-23.

France has faced legal action at home and abroad over its climate policies. In 2021, four NGOs successfully sued the French state for failing to tackle climate change. In 2020, the EU Commission said it was taking France to court for flouting limits on air pollution for more than a decade.

French efforts to meet the country's obligations under the Paris Agreement faced a setback when the Senate watered down the government's flagship climate bill, passed into law on 22 August. It was drafted with proposals by the Citizens Climate Convention, a group of 150 randomly selected citizens that was set up by Macron in the wake of the yellow jacket protests in 2019.

Among other things, the law limits short flights, requires more vegetarian meals at state-funded canteens and introduces stricter penalties for "ecocide", or destruction of the environment. It also aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, which is lower than Europe's target of 55% - an aspect many activists have criticised. For its part, the government has lauded the measures as "turning point", while businesses saw them as excessively harsh.

The law is described as a test for Emmanuel Macron, whose term ends next year, with climate change likely to be a big issue in the presidential election in 2022.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Reach a deal that reflects the "urgency" of the climate situation

Summary: French President Emmanuel Macron called for an agreement to be made at the COP26 in response to the IPCC's report in August. He tweeted: "The IPCC report is not subject to appeal. Again. The time for anger has passed. Paris Agreement, carbon neutrality at the European level, climate law... France will be on the side of those who act. In Glasgow in November, let us make an agreement of the highest urgency!"

Link: <https://twitter.com/EmmanuelMacron/status/1424762392639049729>

Priority: Achieve carbon neutrality by 2050

Summary: As part of this objective, France and the other 26 EU member states have decided to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030. Related goals include limiting support for the development of new oil and gas fields; stopping the construction of new coal-powered thermal plants; and increasing businesses' financial transparency in matters of climate.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Phase out coal

Summary: G7 leaders pledged to phase out coal-fired power generation at home and to end funding for new coal-burning power plants in the developing world. The leaders committed to offering developing nations \$2.8 billion to help them switch to cleaner fuels.

Link: <https://www.g7uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Carbis-Bay-G7-Summit-Communique-PDF-430KB-25-pages-3.pdf>

Priority: Transform the financial system to make it climate-friendly

Summary: French President Emmanuel Macron called for "re-orienting private and public financial flows to align them with the objectives of the Paris Agreement". He said France, together with EU partners, is working on transforming the European Investment Bank into a "European Climate Bank". Macron mentioned several related initiatives, such as collaboration with the international Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), which published voluntary disclosure principles designed to inform investors of climate-related financial risk.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

<https://www.vie-publique.fr/discours/279632-emmanuel-macron-22042022-sommet-sur-le-climat>

Priority: Raise funds to help poorer countries cut carbon emissions

Summary: G7 leaders agreed on 13 June to raise their contributions to meet an overdue spending pledge of \$100 billion a year by rich countries to help poorer countries cut carbon emissions and cope with global warming. Earlier, Macron said fighting climate change is an "obligation we owe the most vulnerable countries who are suffering the consequences of past mistakes".

Link: <https://www.g7uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Carbis-Bay-G7-Summit-Communique-PDF-430KB-25-pages-3.pdf>; <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Germany

Overview (7th largest emitter)

Germany is one of only a few of countries to have set the goal of climate neutrality by or before 2045 in its revised Climate Change Act (May 2021).

The government's medium-term target is now to cut greenhouse emissions by at least 65% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, which is more than the EU's coveted goal of 55%. A new interim reduction target of 88% has been set for 2040.

However, Germany is set to widely miss its new target, according to a draft Environment Ministry report published in August 2021.

Chancellor Angela Merkel on 15 May 2021 rejected calls to bring forward the country's exit date for coal in power generation, currently set at 2038.

In 2020, energy consumption in Germany hit a "historic low", according to research by AG Energiebilanzen (AGEB), meaning the country is set to easily surpass its original 2020 target to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by 40% over 1990 levels.

However, some NGOs argued that this result was only achieved thanks to pandemic restrictions and a fairly mild winter.

And the independent Climate Action Tracker (CAT) describes Germany's Nationally Determined Contributions as "highly insufficient", allegedly falling outside the country's "fair share" range and not consistent with holding global warming to below 2C.

CAT says Germany's 2038 coal phase-out date is almost a decade too slow to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and that a new coal-fired power station went online in May 2020.

Chancellor Angela Merkel is seen as a driving force behind the adoption of important climate decisions in the EU and Germany, including the July 2020 decision to phase out coal-fired power generation amid structural strengthening and expansion of wind and solar energy.

The government has been under constant pressure from environmental advocacy groups to massively increase expansion targets for renewables, significantly boost climate finance, rework a climate protection law and commit to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

Germany is currently the country most concerned about climate change out of the 28 surveyed for the August update of the "What worries the world" study by market research and consulting firm Ipsos. Climate change is one of Germans' top three concerns, with 36% selecting it as their main worry.

Following the catastrophic floods in western regions in July 2021, which killed over 150 people, Chancellor Merkel said Germany must increase its climate protection efforts. The disaster also brought climate change to the centre of the recent election campaign.

The continuing COVID-19 pandemic and the September 2021 federal elections are among the key factors that will influence the country's climate agenda this year.

Internationally, Germany calls for a more streamlined effort to close ranks behind vulnerable and developing countries, including by allocating more money towards their climate pledges, and appointing a UN Special Envoy on Climate and Security, the move which was backed by France.

In a decision called “historic”, Germany’s highest court ruled in mid-spring 2021 that the government’s climate policies are insufficient because they lack emission reduction targets beyond 2030.

Following this landmark ruling, in addition to the adoption of the new Climate Change Act, the German government also announced a new immediate action programme to support implementation of the new climate targets for different sectors.

The government aims to spend some 5.2 billion euros in 2022 in climate protection investments as part of an emergency climate pact. The plan allocates an additional 8.1 billion euros from 2022 to help achieve climate protection goals over the next five years. Some 2.5 billion euros are earmarked for the funding of energy-efficient buildings in 2022. More than 650 million euros will go to the decarbonisation of industry as part of a plan that will also include Carbon Contracts for Difference (CCfD).

Stated Priorities

The European Union will be negotiating as a block on behalf of its members, including Germany, at COP26. Germany’s climate policy goals were outlined by Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Renewable power generation

Summary: Phase out not only nuclear energy but also coal-fired power generation and further expand renewables.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Carbon trading

Summary: Commit to carbon pricing, hence the introduction of a national emissions trading scheme for the transport and heating sectors in 2021.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Fund mitigation

Summary: Allocate under 500m euros of additional funding to climate control mitigation.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Climate financing

Summary: Work for the launch at international level of a post-2020 climate financing process; keep pledge to double its budget climate financing to 4bn euros annually.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Support developing countries

Summary: Support developing countries with ambitious climate pledges within the framework of the NAMA Facility.

Link: <https://www.climateambitions summit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Also:

In July 2021, the German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU) called on countries to focus their long-term climate protection strategies beyond climate neutrality on “climate stabilisation” and to make such strategies a main topic at the upcoming COP26 climate conference in Glasgow.

The independent, scientific advisory body to the government, said long-term strategies should contain three separate focal points: first, the complete and rapid phase-out of fossil fuels; second, the protection, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems; and third, strategic preparations for the use of CO₂ removal from the atmosphere.

The strategies should be mandatory and go beyond the goal of achieving “climate neutrality” and aim for “climate stabilisation” instead.

Link: <https://www.wbgu.de/en/publications/publication/pp12-2021>

India

Overview (3rd largest emitter)

India is the world's third biggest emitter of greenhouse gases and is having to deal with major environmental problems.

Its big cities are choked by toxic air and it has faced an increasing number of extreme weather events attributed to climate change over the past few years.

It is expected to suffer major problems in the form of rising sea levels and changing weather. In 2019, monsoon rains continued for a month longer than usual.

Glaciers in the Himalayas, an important source of water, are melting.

India has pledged a big reduction in its emissions and the government says it is leading on climate action.

It says it is on track to fulfilling its commitments under the Paris Agreement to pursue sustainability, cut emissions in agriculture, move towards renewal energy generation and encourage a switch to electric vehicles.

However, it reportedly has dozens of coal-power plants in the pipeline which will generate 60GW to add to its existing 248GW.

It has faced some criticism at home for what is seen as a lack of action to adapt to climate change and mitigate for its effects.

And there is growing pressure from the public and activists for it to act.

Among the big issues that have been evident in recent years is air pollution, with major contributors being stubble burning by farmers, the use of coal in thermal power stations, emissions from waste-to-energy plants and the exhaust gases from vehicles.

Delhi, one of the world's most polluted cities, experiences a smog season between October and March when visibility drops substantially. Authorities have instituted a registration number plate scheme to compel private cars to be on the road only on alternate days.

Country wide, pollution is estimated to have accounted for nearly 1.7 million deaths in 2019 – or 18% of all deaths.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Stick to climate commitments

Summary: Environment minister Prakash Javadekar says countries must commit to their pre-2020 climate change ambitions, not shift goal posts to 2050.

Link: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/idea-of-climate-action-shouldnt-be-to-move-climate-goal-post-to-2050-says-india-at- unsc/articleshow/81187395.cms>

Priority: Develop framework for financial, technical and capacity-building support

Summary: Javadekar says that climate action needs to go hand-in-hand with the framework for financial, technical and capacity-building support to countries that need it, but that commitments made by developed countries to support climate action since 2009 have failed to materialise.

Priority: Strengthen multilateralism, seek equitable solutions

Summary: Javadekar says climate change is an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism and seek equitable and inclusive solutions to “leave a greener, cleaner and sustainable world for our future generations”.

Priority: Integrate low-carbon efforts into COVID-19 response and recovery.

Summary: Javadekar says there is an opportunity for countries to integrate low-carbon development in their COVID-19 rescue and recovery measures and long-term mitigation strategies.

* These points were made by environment minister Prakash Javadekar at a February 2021 UN Security Council debate on climate and security. He referred to COP26 but did not specify what India would present at the conference.

Priority: Transition to clean energy

Summary: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 August announced the launch of the National Hydrogen Mission project, aimed at making India a green hydrogen hub and meeting the Paris Agreement goals. India has set a target of achieving the production of 450 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy by 2030, out of which it has so far produced 150 GW.

Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/from-ioc-to-reliance-indias-hydrogen-push-gains-traction-7454869/>

Priority: Phase-out the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)

Summary: India on 18 August decided to ratify a key amendment to the 1989 ozone-saving Montreal Protocol, negotiated in 2016. The government says it will formulate a national plan to reduce its usage by 2023. India aims to complete the phase-down with a cumulative reduction of 10% in 2032, 20% in 2037, 30% in 2042 and 80% in 2047.

Link: <https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/india-clears-kigali-amendment-centre-to-adopt-strategy-to-phase-out-ozone-depleting-substances-1842817-2021-08-19>

Priority: Investment in green energy

Summary: India and the UK on 2 September signed a 1.2bn-dollar agreement for public and private investment in green projects and renewable energy in India. They also launched a Climate Finance Leadership Initiative (CFLI) India partnership, aimed at mobilising private capital into sustainable infrastructure in India.

Link: https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/uk-to-invest-1-2-bn-in-govt-and-private-green-energy-projects-in-india-121090201063_1.html

Indonesia

Overview (8th largest emitter)

Indonesia, the world's biggest exporter of coal, shows few signs of cutting down on production - and on the contrary has been described as the fossil fuel's final frontier.

“Indonesia remains one of the biggest challenges for people who would like to shift the world's dependence on coal,” said Isabella Suarez, Southeast Asia analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air. “The incentives to keep dirty coal cheap are in place, and that's likely not going to change soon, unfortunately.”

The country has grown from a minor player in the coal industry 20 years ago to a key consumer and producer of coal. Politicians point to the value coal adds to the economy and its role in promoting energy independence.

Indonesia appears to recognise the threat posed by climate change and has committed to improving sustainability but it rarely goes beyond basic international recommendations.

Environmental issues, which did not get much mainstream coverage prior to 2021, have begun to feature prominently in the media during the past several months.

Indonesia has one of the highest rates of climate change denial.

Among those who are concerned about climate change, a majority say they have faith that the government will be able to resolve these issues, although activists have become increasingly critical of the government's lack of commitment.

In the lead up to COP26, government figures have begun to talk about environmental issues more seriously than in the past.

President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo, who took office in 2014, has been criticised for only doing the bare minimum when it comes to addressing climate change.

Last year Indonesia passed a highly controversial law on job creation, which rolled back some environmental regulations in its efforts to reduce bureaucracy and improve investment. There is concern these deregulations could increase deforestation as now only “high risk” projects are required to carry out environmental impact analysis.

In July 2021, Indonesia submitted its updated climate commitment. It includes new measures on adaptation and resilience but maintains its 2016 emissions targets.

Coal, which currently accounts for most of Indonesia's energy is still expected to represent 38% of its energy until 2050.

Indonesia says it won't approve any new coal power plants but more than 40 new plants are still expected to be built between 2021 and 2030 and no plants are going to be decommissioned early, according to the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

There are moves to promote renewable energy so that it accounts for 23% of the energy mix by 2025 and 50% by 2050.

Indonesia is the largest palm oil producer in the world. The industry has contributed to the destruction of rainforests in a major way. Illegal forest fires to clear land for palm oil plantations lead to hazardous air pollution known as the Southeast Asian Haze, which causes adverse health effects in Indonesia and surrounding countries.

Alongside neighbouring Malaysia, Indonesia has firmly challenged the European Union's ban on palm oil in biodiesel.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Summary: On 21 July 2021, Indonesia published its updated NDCs, maintaining the same objectives as in 2016. It is committed to unconditionally reduce emission levels in 2030 by 29% or by up to 41% with international assistance as outlined in the Paris Agreement. Current estimates say Indonesia is well placed to achieve these targets. However, Jokowi has been reluctant to publicly commit to more ambitious emission goals due to its economic growth targets.

In September, Indonesia announced that it had terminated the US\$1 bn decade-long REDD+ project with Norway intended to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, citing non-payment from Norway as a reason. The government said the project's collapse would not affect its "commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions" but there are fears that the termination of the REDD+ funding may remove the incentives to protect the forests.

Links: <https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/indonesia-emissions-reduction-climate-carbon-economy-growth>

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/05/indonesian-president-joko-jokowi-widodo-slammed-for-wait-and-see-approach-on-climate-action/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/indonesia-palmoil-climate-idUSL4N2OZ0EG>

<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Indonesia%20First/Updated%20NDC%20Indonesia%202021%20-%20corrected%20version.pdf>

Priority: Net zero

Summary: Indonesia announced that it will reach net zero by 2060 or earlier in its Long-term Strategy on Low Carbon and Climate Resilience report published in July 2021. It is 10 years earlier than had been announced in March 2021. Emissions are expected to peak in 2030, and will then be followed by an average annual decline. Indonesia aims to achieve a net sink of emissions in the forest and land use sector by 2030.

Links: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Indonesia_LTS-LCCR_2021.pdf

<https://www.wri.org/news/statement-indonesia-submits-new-2030-climate-targets-and-first-long-term-climate-strategy>

Priority: Combating deforestation

Summary: Indonesia has seen progress in reducing its rate of deforestation since 2016, with record low numbers in 2020. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry touted this reduction as the result of the government policies, including a ban on new permits to clear primary forests and peatlands; a moratorium on new palm oil plantation licences; forest fire mitigation; a social forestry programme; land rehabilitation; and increased enforcement against environmental violations. However, observers warn that deforestation could spike again next year.

During his address at the Leaders' Summit, Jokowi praised the success of these policies, saying that more than 66 million hectares of natural forest and peatlands have been preserved. According to Indonesia's updated NDCs, most of emissions reduction will come from the forestry and land use sector by 2030. However, observers warn that deforestation could spike again next year. Concerns are growing as the three-year moratorium on granting licences to new palm oil plantations expired on 19 September 2021, and to date has not been renewed despite many calls from civil society and within government. Moreover, the collapse of Indonesia's collaboration with Norway on the REDD+ project to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation is another cause of concern, which activists have warned could jeopardise Indonesia's future success at combatting deforestation.

Links: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/03/2021-deforestation-in-indonesia-hits-record-low-but-experts-fear-a-rebound/>

<https://en.tempo.co/read/1455462/jokowi-joins-virtual-leaders-summit-on-climate>

<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/09/20/indonesia-ends-forest-protection-deal-norway-raising-deforestation-fears/>

<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2021/07/26/indonesia-aims-to-transform-forests-into-carbon-sink.html>

Priority: Restoring peatlands and mangroves

Summary: In December 2020, Jokowi renamed the Peatland Restoration Agency to the Peatland and Mangrove Restoration Agency and extended its mandate until 2024. The agency has been tasked with restoring around 2 million hectares of peatland and mangroves.

Link: <https://www.aseantoday.com/2021/01/indonesia-pushes-to-restore-peatlands-and-mangroves-at-the-center-of-the-climate-crisis/>

Priority: Urging developed countries to do more

Summary: Indonesia has repeatedly said that developed countries should be doing more to combat environmental issues, while developing countries should be given more leeway. During his Leaders' Summit address, Jokowi said: "Developing countries will adopt similar ambitions if developed countries support and are credible with their commitments". Indonesia has called for developed countries to help environmental projects in developing countries.

In the Long Term Strategy report (LTS-LCCR 2050) Indonesia said it seeks international partnerships to support the sustainable transition towards a low carbon economy and green recovery post COVID-19 pandemic as well as global justice.

Link: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Indonesia_LTS-LCCR_2021.pdf

Iran

Overview (6th largest emitter)

Iran is one of the world's top 10 emitters of carbon dioxide and one of the biggest producers of fossil fuels.

Its major cities are among the most polluted on the planet and its water crisis is getting worse by the day.

While the country is known as one of the most biodiverse in the region it is losing its species to drought, overgrazing and a lack of environmental protection.

The contributors to the current environmental crisis range from war and climate change to international economic sanctions, which are considered to have hampered the generation of renewable energy.

A lack of water in some regions is forcing people to migrate, shifting pressure onto new areas.

Air pollution, caused by the inefficient and eco-unfriendly local car industry and a fossil fuel dependent energy sector, has made living conditions in Iran's cities increasingly challenging.

Wind erosion is aggravating the desertification of agricultural land, putting greater pressure onto remaining arable areas and worsening the water crisis.

Water shortages in the summer of 2021 led to deadly protests in the south-western province of Khuzestan before spreading across the country. Some observers suggested that worsening environmental conditions would prompt more instability.

Biodiversity is under threat but is not a major concern for politicians dealing with "more important issues" such as fighting economic sanctions, increasing local production, and extracting more oil to sell in order to fix the economy broken by sanctions, corruption, mismanagement and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic.

Environmental activism is discouraged by the state.

Iran has not featured prominently in international efforts to deal with climate change. It acknowledges climate change as a major threat but has not yet ratified the Paris Agreement.

It is thought unlikely that President Ebrahim Raisi will attend COP26.

He said in 2019 that Iran "does not need" the Paris climate agreement, arguing that "our brains and religion" will help tackle the country's myriad environmental issues.

Stated Priorities

Iran published its Nationally Determined Contribution in 2015 but said these efforts are partly conditional on the lifting of economic sanctions.

It says that in spite of major obstacles such as the sanctions, the 1980-88 war with Iraq and the burden of refugees from neighbouring countries, it has done much to minimise its impact on the environment.

Link: https://www.ctc-n.org/sites/www.ctc-n.org/files/UNFCCC_docs/indc_iran_final_text.pdf

It has not made public what it hopes COP26 will achieve.

Italy

Overview (18th largest emitter)

Italy, co-organiser with Britain of the COP26 conference, gained a new government at the beginning of 2021 which created a Ministry of Ecological Transition, a move seen as a sign that it aims to create a more environmentally sustainable economy.

The new minister, Roberto Cingolani, reflected this change of mission in his first public address in a #Youth4ClimateLiveSeries webinar by focusing on the role that cities can play in tackling climate change by acting as “laboratories for sustainable growth, energy transition and climate action”.

The new government has been vocal in its support for concerted action against climate change. In May, PM Mario Draghi spoke at the Global Solution Summit stating that Italy’s objectives as co-host of COP26 are reducing emissions and mitigating the damage done by climate change. “Italy is working hard to reach zero emissions by 2050, which will be a tough challenge but made possible by the recent decision by the US to return to the Paris Accords.”

With over 80% of Italians living in urban areas, the improvement of air quality in cities is a particularly urgent issue. The region stretching from Turin to Venice in the North is heavily polluted due to population density and the presence of heavy industry.

The Air Quality Life Index says living in the Po Valley reduces life expectancy by more than half a year. Grassroots and citizen groups in individual cities campaign for change, but decisive government action at a local level has been slow.

Climate change and environmental degradation is already a pressing issue for Italy which has been experiencing an increase in wildfires and flooding.

Desertification is already happening and is expected to increase especially in the South as temperatures rise. A study published in June 2021 showed that 20% of Italy is at risk of desertification – yet only 2 Italians out of 10 express concern over the issue.

Economic inequality between the North and poorer South has long been a feature of Italy but rising temperatures are expected to amplify these inequalities.

And while many Italian cities are working to adapt to climate change by planting trees, preserving permeable land and conserving water, these tend to be in the North.

In the summer of 2021 Italy experienced a record number of extreme weather events – from record high temperatures to violent downpours, hailstorms and tornadoes.

The national farmers’ association, Coldiretti, said that temperatures had been 1.55C higher than normal over the summer season, and that constantly alternating periods of drought and floods had caused more than 2bn euros’ worth of damage to agriculture.

Biodiversity also suffered greatly from this summer’s extreme temperatures: 20 million animals are thought to have died following widespread wildfires in Sicily, Sardinia, Calabria and other southern regions.

As one of the world's 10 biggest economies and one of its 20 biggest emitters of carbon dioxide, Italy is this year leading efforts to deal with climate change.

At the end of September 2021 Italy was scheduled to host the first “Youth for Climate: Driving Ambition” summit, in which almost 400 young people aged between 18 and 29 were to develop concrete proposals on topics that affect the negotiation process of Pre-COP26 in Milan and COP26 in Glasgow.

Mariangela Zappia, Italy's permanent representative at the UN, has promised that “Italy will give all its full backing to new generations”. “The Italian approach aims at actively involving all players, starting from young people, and to... increase the synergy between the COP26 and G20 initiatives.”

Prime Minister Mario Draghi told the UN General Assembly “Climate Moment” events on 20 September 2021 that climate change was an emergency of “equal magnitude” to the pandemic and required an “immediate” response. He also promised that “Italy will do its part” and said that the government is “ready to announce a new financial commitment on climate in the coming weeks”.

Stated priorities

Priority: Working towards climate neutrality by 2050

Summary: The European Commission in 2021 published the first draft of the “Climate Law”, aimed at the concrete implementation of the “European Green Deal”, which foresees the achievement of EU climate neutrality by 2050.

Italy says it is fully aligned with the “European Green Deal” and will work within the EU to promote increasingly ambitious domestic targets for 2030.

Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

Priority: Preparing the ground for COP26

Summary: Italy, along with the UK, is an organiser of the COP26 conference in Glasgow and will be hosting a number of preliminary gatherings whose results will feed into the main conference. These events include a series of #Youth4Climate conferences as well as Pre-COP - the final official ministerial meeting ahead of the COP26.

Links: <https://ukcop26.org/pre-cop/pre-cop-milan/>

<https://www.minambiente.it/pagina/towards-cop26-pre-cop-and-youth-event-youth4climate-driving-ambition>

Priority: Energy and ecological transition

Summary: Prime Minister Mario Draghi replaced the Ministry of the Environment with a new Ministry for Ecological Transition in February 2021 headed by new minister Roberto Cingolani, a physicist and former scientific director of the Italian Institute of Technology. He will manage the influx of green projects stemming from EU Recovery Funds alongside the newly appointed infrastructure and technology innovation ministers.

Draghi has explicitly mentioned the strong environmentalist aims of his government and that all policies will factor in the impact of measures on the reduction of emissions, and long-term ecological sustainability. In March 2021 said Cingolani said: “We are about to launch an impressive 70-80 billion project linked to the Recovery fund. Our ecological transition will involve massive operations relating to the water cycle, the soil, the energy self-sufficiency of agriculture.”

Link: <http://www.governo.it/it/articolo/le-comunicazioni-del-presidente-draghi-al-senato/16225>
<https://www.minambiente.it/comunicati/clima-ministro-cingolani-webinar-cop-26-con-recovery-operazione-da-70-80-miliardi>

Priority: Health (National Prevention Plan 2020-2025)

Summary: New national health strategy being implemented under the banner of a ‘One Health’ approach with ‘environment, climate and health’ one of six key objectives. The environment and health strategy aims are linked to the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Aims include reducing air pollution, improving water quality, water management, to promote the use of cleaner energy sources and more sustainable urban transport systems and strengthening the response to health risks associated with climate change.

Links:

http://www.salute.gov.it/portale/news/p3_2_1_1_1.jsp?lingua=italiano&menu=notizie&p=dalministro&id=5029

http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_notizie_5029_0_file.pdf

Japan

Overview (5th largest emitter)

Japan has long been criticised for not doing enough to tackle climate change, but under outgoing Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga the government has pushed for more ambitious targets since October 2020.

As a major developed nation, Japan is in the “Umbrella group” for international climate talks overseen by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and played a key role in brokering the Kyoto Protocol when it hosted a UNFCCC meeting in 1997.

Despite this leading role, Japan’s government has typically focused on achievable environmental targets rather than more challenging objectives.

Under former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan in March 2020 reaffirmed its 2015 target of cutting emissions by 26% with respect to 2013 levels by 2030 rather than raising its goals. Laurence Tubiana, a key player in the 2015 Paris Agreement as France’s climate ambassador, described the lack of ambition as “disappointing”.

This situation changed after Suga, a close aide to Abe, succeeded him as prime minister in September and made climate change mitigation one of his core priorities.

In his first policy address as leader in October 2020, Suga pledged to cut Japan’s greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and increase the focus on renewable energy. This goal was effectively enshrined in law on 26 May 2021, when Japan's parliament passed a revision to the nation’s existing law promoting measures against global warming.

In April 2021, Suga also raised the more short-term target for emissions reduction by 2030 from 26% to 46-50%. The new target - announced in time before US President Joe Biden’s global climate summit - is considered ambitious, but experts also suggest it may be unrealistic given current emissions and energy infrastructure.

Having led the move towards more ambitious climate targets, Suga’s decision to effectively step down as prime minister after September 2021 may have a bearing on Tokyo’s strategy for COP26 and beyond.

However, the goal of carbon neutrality may well remain a priority under his successor Fumio Kishida, who plans to promote clean energy - including the resumption of Japan’s idle nuclear reactors - to achieve Japan’s vision of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The move to clean energy sources represents a major shift for one of the world’s biggest greenhouse gas emitters, with oil, natural gas and coal making up 87% of energy consumption as of 2019. The reliance on fossil fuels has been particularly prominent since Japan suspended nuclear power plants in 2011 due to the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster, causing a shift back to more traditional energy sources.

The increased focus on climate change mitigation also extends to natural disaster management, a key focus for a country that has historically been vulnerable to frequent earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons and floods.

Japan has long emphasised the “Build Back Better” concept in its crisis recovery efforts, following each natural or man-made disaster with new technologies, processes and solutions to ensure similar disasters in the future can be mitigated.

But an increase in the frequency, severity and duration of recent disasters - as well as the impact of global warming - has led to Japan emphasising long-term climate change mitigation alongside short-term post-disaster efforts in its crisis management planning.

Stated Priorities

Japan has not officially highlighted priorities or a specific vision with COP26 in mind but announced an initial roadmap for a “Green Growth Strategy Through Achieving Carbon Neutrality” in December 2020 (published in January 2021).

Priority: Net zero by 2050

Summary: Prime Minister Yoshihida Suga, addressing Japan’s Diet in his first policy speech in October 2020, pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and “realise a carbon neutral, decarbonised society”. Suga’s proposal to ensure a “green society” while placing the environment as “a pillar of our growth strategy” was further developed in a “Green Growth Strategy” roadmap announced in December. The roadmap highlighted that climate change mitigation could be a major opportunity, enabling economic growth alongside protecting the environment. Suga's goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 was later enshrined in law in May 2021, when Japan's parliament voted to revise the Act on Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasures, the country’s primary law addressing measures to combat global warming.

Links:

https://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/energy_environment/global_warming/ggs2050/pdf/ggs_overview_all.pdf

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/99_suga/statement/202010/_00006.html

<https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=141e6999-7396-457a-a8e5-d8796ad84736>

<https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210526/p2g/00m/0na/048000c>

Priority: Net emissions reduction of 46-50% by 2030

Summary: In line with its long-term target of achieving net zero emissions by 2050, Prime Minister Suga in April 2021 unveiled an ambitious target of an emissions reduction of at least 46% below 2013 levels by 2030, a drastic increase from the previous target of 26%. The new target, which also advocates strong efforts to achieve an even greater reduction of 50% if possible, was unveiled to coincide with US President Joe Biden's global climate summit. This increased target has been praised by some for showing ambition but has also been questioned by critics who consider it unrealistic given Japan’s current emissions and energy infrastructure.

Links: https://www.mofa.go.jp/ic/ch/page6e_000236.html

Priority: Funding green innovation

Summary: The roadmap for ensuring green growth and decarbonisation relies heavily on the involvement of the private sector, for which the government has pledged to provide support. To this end, it has proposed the creation of a Green Innovation Fund worth 2 trillion Japanese yen over the course of 10 years and aims to stimulate 15 trillion yen worth of private research and development and investment. The government also plans to provide tax incentives to stimulate 1.7 trillion yen worth of private investment over a decade. Through these initiatives, the government hopes to implement Suga's stated vision of "revolutionary innovations", such as developing next-generation solar cells and carbon recycling, and become a global green industry leader. Japan also aims to boost this green innovation through "digital transformation" in environment-related fields, in line with Suga's other aims of digital renewal and regulatory reform.

Links: https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2020/1225_001.html [December 2020 version, with details in English and Japanese]

https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2021/0618_002.html [Updated June 2021 version, with detailed documents only available in Japanese]

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/99_suga/statement/202010/_00006.html

Priority: International collaboration on decarbonisation

Summary: The government, in its Green Growth Strategy roadmap, has pledged to cooperate with both developed and emerging nations on green innovation policy, standardisation and rule-making, carbonisation solutions and joint projects. It also aims to organise a "Tokyo Beyond-Zero Week" to globally promote its net zero vision, although details for such an event are yet to be announced.

Links: https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2020/1225_001.html [December 2020 version, with details in English and Japanese]

https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2021/0618_002.html [Updated June 2021 version, with detailed documents only available in Japanese]

Priority: Increasing focus on renewable energy

Summary: In line with his decarbonisation aims, Prime Minister Suga emphasised increasing the use of renewable energy sources, including returning to the use of long-dormant nuclear energy capabilities and moving away from coal power. Environment Minister Shinjiro Koizumi will play a key role in such initiatives, and in December 2020 he proposed increasing renewable power sources to more than 40% of Japan's energy consumption by 2030. This almost doubles the government's previous goal of renewables comprising 22-24% of energy usage by 2030, but an increasing number of politicians and businesses are advocating a switch to renewable sources. Media reports suggest this may prove tricky, however, given Japan's heavy reliance on fossil fuels and the expectation of high costs to enable such a drastic change in under a decade.

Another barrier may be Japan's terrain - mostly mountains and coastlines - which does not have much flat land or shallow waters suited to solar and wind farms.

Links: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Environment/Climate-Change/Japan-s-Koizumi-ups-climate-ante-with-goal-of-40-renewable-power>

Kazakhstan

Overview (21st largest emitter)

With an economy dependent on the extraction of raw materials and large-scale wheat production, and a history of being used as one of the main sites for Soviet nuclear weapons' tests, Kazakhstan faces many serious environmental issues.

Most of the country's industrial infrastructure is Soviet-built and depends on fossil fuels. The industrial sector disposes of more than 2.5m tonnes of waste into the air annually, with the amount growing by 100,000 tonnes every year, according to the Environment Ministry. In most Kazakh cities air pollution exceeds guideline levels by 8-10 times.

The excessive use of the country's water sources in the Soviet period has left much of them unusable. The most devastating consequence of those policies was the dramatic shrinking of the Aral Sea. There are growing concerns about another large inland body of water, the Lake Balkhash in eastern Kazakhstan - its surface area has shrunk by 2,000 sq.km, and the water level dropped by more than 2m in recent years. The Caspian Sea, a site of massive oil production by transnational oil companies, has been losing its capacity for self-purification.

Kazakhstan also faces the problem of rehabilitating areas around the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground in the east that saw nearly 500 nuclear tests between 1949 and 1989. Russia continues to use the Soviet-built military testing grounds and the Baykonur space site on Kazakh soil. The country also faces the issue of ensuring secure storage of Soviet-era radioactive waste as well as the waste from its atomic industry.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Carbon neutrality by 2060

Summary: Speaking at Climate Ambition Summit 2020, President Kasym Zhomart Tokayev said Kazakhstan aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and plant 2bn trees in the next five years.

He said Kazakhstan "hoped that an agreement can be found at COP26 to the outstanding issued of the Paris climate package". "This will help unlock fully the potential for joint action and increased cross-national cooperation on greenhouse gas mitigation".

Link: <https://www.climateambitionsummit2020.org/ondemand.php>

Priority: Switch to renewable energy

Summary: The government has set targets on switching to renewable sources of energy. Energy Minister Nurlan Nogayev told a government meeting in February that in 2020 the country achieved its first, 3% target. By 2025 the share of energy coming from renewable sources in overall consumption is planned to reach 6%, 10% by 2030, and at least 50% by 2050.

In a speech on 25 February, President Tokayev said that unless Kazakhstan creates "favourable conditions for developing an alternative energy industry, it risks finding itself hopelessly

behind”. He said the state policy in the area remains “vague” and ordered the government to draft a bill on developing the sector of renewable and other alternative sources of energy.

Links: https://forbes.kz/news/2021/02/09/newsid_243530

https://www.akorda.kz/ru/speeches/internal_political_affairs/in_speeches_and_addresses/vystuplenie-glavy-gosudarstva-kasym-zhomarta-tokaeva-na-v-zasedanii-nacionalnogo-soveta-obshchestvennogo-doveriya

Priority: Raise standards of environmental protection

Summary: On 2 January President Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev signed into law a new Environmental Code aimed at raising national environmental protection standards and improving mechanisms to ensure their observation.

The new Code is based on “all progressive international requirements” on environmental protection, according to official reports.

The Code makes climate change adaptation measures a legal norm for regional and sectoral policy planning. It also increases the role of civil society in identifying and solving environmental issues; and introduces measures to increase government subsidies for green projects.

Under the new Code, the government is switching from the system of fining industrial enterprises for causing environmental damage to making them invest in technological modernisation. The 50 most polluting enterprises (in the oil and gas, ore mining, metals, chemical and power generation sectors) will be required to introduce such changes within the next 10 years. The Code also introduces research standards and government funding for biodiversity and ecosystem protection measures.

Link: <https://www.kazpravda.kz/articles/view/balans-ekologicheskikh-interesov>

Priority: Monitor protected areas

In 2017 Kazakhstan also passed a law On Strictly Protected Natural Areas, which along with the new Environmental Code reflect recommendations from the UNDP’s office in the country.

The government is currently working on a project to create a Single State System for Monitoring the Environment and Natural Resources. It will be a “comprehensive and accurate” database on the environmental situation in the country (the state of the air, soil, waters, and wildlife, climatic changes and so on) to be used as a basis for taking “management and economic decisions”.

It is also creating a Single Environmental Protection Information System to simplify gathering of information on industrial and consumer waste. It will include creation of a map of dangerous waste.

Link: <https://www.kz.undp.org/content/kazakhstan/en/home/presscenter/news/2021/january/ecocode.html>

Kuwait

Overview (40th largest emitter)

Kuwait is highly dependent on income from oil production and has avoided committing to targets to reducing greenhouse gases.

At the same time, it is highly vulnerable to climate change, which has been blamed for rising temperatures - which have exceeded 50C in the shade - declining rainfall and an increasing frequency of dust storms.

Nevertheless, Kuwait set up the Environment Public Authority (EPA) in 1995 with tasks including designing strategies and plans for environment protection and preserving natural resources, squaring up to environmental disasters and drafting relevant laws and regulations.

In its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2019-2030, Kuwait committed itself to preserving the local and regional environment, with the moto being “Enhanced Climate Resilience to Improve Community, Livelihood and Achieve Sustainability”.

Kuwait introduced the Environmental Protection Law in 2014 and completed its bylaws in 2018 to cover the monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions.

It also ratified the Paris Agreement in 2018.

The EPA also launched an ambitious system called Environmental Monitoring Information System of Kuwait (eMISK), which aims to establish, build and maintain a comprehensive geo-environmental database for Kuwait.

However, critics say Kuwait’s response to the climate change crisis has been extremely weak as there has not been any real government commitment to achieve the global objectives to reduce carbon emissions and there is a lack of big projects introducing sustainable technologies to curb climate change impacts.

Stated Priorities

Kuwait’s most recent Nationally Determined Contributions were set in 2015.

Priority: Resilience to climate change

Summary: The National Adaptation Plan aims to build capacity and resilience that reduces Kuwait’s vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

The most sensitive sectors to climate change are coastal zones, marine life and fisheries. Kuwait experiences high temperatures up to 48c in summer, with climate projections showing even higher future temperatures and a decrease in the already low annual rainfall. Kuwait recorded the highest temperature in the world for this year 2021, registering 53.2c. Unprecedented heat over the past five years have made it difficult to live there, especially during summer. The heat leads to mental and physical exhaustion for the population and causes respiratory and heart diseases.

The heat also puts pressure on Kuwait's water resources, especially in light of the rapid population growth.

Link: <https://epa.org.kw/Portals/0/PDF/NAPCompleted.pdf>

<https://www.gulf-insider.com/kuwait-records-highest-temperature-on-earth-in-2021/>

Priority: Tackle air/water pollution

Summary: The country suffered massive air pollution when hundreds of oil wells were set on fire were during the 1st Gulf war in 1990-91.

Kuwait's environment body EPA has launched a project for monitoring pollutants to improve air quality in a phased manner from 2020 to 2035.

Link: <https://epa.org.kw/en-US/Air>

Priority: Waste management

Summary: Kuwait pays increasing attention to waste management nationwide, and the authorities crack down on any violations through inspection campaigns.

Link: <https://epa.org.kw/InspectionCampaigns>

The EPA and the interior ministry took part in the Interpol's 30 Day at Sea to uncover pollution crimes at sea and ship waste.

Link: <https://epa.org.kw/NewsArchive/Id/1050>

Priority: Diversify energy sources

Summary: The secretary-general of the Kuwait-based Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) has described COP26 and the implementation of the Paris agreement as an "important transformation" in limiting climate change and said that the demand for energy will keep increasing for decades. While the demand for oil would remain high for some time to come, he said the world's energy mix would need to include a variety of sources.

Link: <https://www.aljarida.com/articles/1604247129769958000/>

Priority: Protecting biodiversity and endangered species

Summary: The authorities are keen to prevent the smuggling of various species, like hawks. The EPA highlights efforts to preserve the country's species.

Link: https://twitter.com/EPA_KW/status/1409772289814638594

The authorities urge holidaymakers on beach resorts to keep lights off to allow turtles to hatch their eggs.

https://twitter.com/EPA_KW/status/1402351504116400131

Lebanon

Overview (79th largest emitter)

With one of the oldest environment ministries in the Middle East, its famous snow-capped mountains and a plethora of civil society-led environmental organisations, Lebanon should be at the cutting edge of environmental protection in the Middle East.

However, pollution and shortages have become synonymous with the corruption and poor governance that have characterised the country since its civil war ended in the early 1990s. In 2015, protests over the country's towering rubbish piles led to anti-establishment protests with a simple message for the ruling class: "You Stink".

Government has been unable to provide basic services such as running water, 24-hour electricity and waste management long before the country entered a phase of unprecedented economic collapse in 2019.

A parallel market exists for all these functions, selling electricity produced by diesel-fuelled generators, underground water delivered by the truckload and dumping waste in unmanaged landfills along the country's coastline or directly into the sea.

To resolve its energy crisis, Lebanon has been in talks to import natural gas from Egypt and electricity from Jordan via Syria's territory. The Iran-backed Hezbollah has also repeatedly said it would obtain shipments from Iran despite US sanctions.

The country's once booming tourism industry was premised on being able to visit "pristine mountains and golden beaches" on the same day. Both have suffered from the absence of a centralised waste management strategy, with rubbish piling up on the seaside and in rivers.

The influx of Syrian refugees, estimated to be around 1m – roughly a 25% increase of the population – has put further strain on resources.

In 2015, Lebanon committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030 and signed the Paris Agreement, but it was only ratified by parliament in 2019.

However, critics pointed to parliament also approving massive incinerators to deal with the country's endemic waste management crisis as counterproductive.

In June 2021, the UN signed a memorandum of understanding with the Lebanese authorities to "guarantee that the sustainable development plan for 2030 remains a priority" and deemed that the country's woes "are putting Lebanon at risk of failing to fulfil its climate commitments".

The UN estimated that environmental degradation cost Lebanon up to 5.5% of GDP in 2018 alone.

The country's current government, starting with the minister of the environment, resigned following the massive blast in the port of Beirut last August, but it continues to act as caretaker amid a stalemate in negotiations to form a new technocratic government.

In recent months, Lebanese media highlighted several environmental crises, such as the infestation of the Litani River, the country's largest, and Lake Qaraoun with toxic bacteria which killed scores of fish.

Waste water plants in the Zahle and Bekaa regions are threatening to join their idle counterparts in Beirut, further compromising water safety.

Woodlands have continued to suffer, with the spread of oak processionary moth and a disastrous pine nut harvest alarming the public.

In July, massive forest fires erupted in the northern district of Akkar near the border with Syria.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Renewable energy

Summary: Lebanon's environment ministry says that it aims to increase the use of renewable energy sources to cover 30% of the country's needs.

The country could soon be plunged into darkness, as it struggles to pay for fuel imports, officials have warned.

Lebanon's rulers had long seen the possibility of building dams as the silver bullet to resolve the country's water shortages (ample surface water is barely used) and to produce cheap, clean hydro-electricity.

However, dam projects have faced intense opposition from local residents and environmental activists worried about corruption, lack of planning and threats to biodiversity.

In September 2020, the World Bank cancelled \$244m of undisbursed funds for the Bisri Dam – a project that authorities said would remedy water shortages in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

Climate change has been impacting the origin of the fresh surface water, with temperatures rising in the mountains and cedar woodland – the country's national symbol – being devastated by drought and pests.

Links: <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c202v5m4>

<https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2021/03/11/Lebanon-crisis-Lebanon-heads-for-total-darkness-blackout-as-electricity-funds-dry-up>

<https://www.alhurra.com/lebanon/2020/05/18/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%8A%D8%A4%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%AC%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%81-%D8%B3%D8%AF%D9%91-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81-%D8%AD%D8%AC%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AB%D8%A9>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/statement/2020/09/04/cancellation-of-water-supply-augmentation-project-bisri-dam-project>

Priority: Generate green jobs, attract funding

Summary: The ministry of environment sees environmental commitments as an opportunity to create green jobs. Securing foreign funding for environmental projects has always been an objective for Lebanese politicians. Critics and activists have long accused officials of channelling such aid to their allies through dubious contracts. Now, the Lebanese system needs access to “fresh dollars” more than ever.

The environment ministry estimates that climate change will reduce Lebanon’s GDP by 14% by 2040 and by 32% in 2080.

UN Deputy Special Coordinator in Lebanon Najat Rushdi said that the government has submitted its National Determined Contributions for 2021 and called for integrating green initiatives with reconstruction efforts.

Link: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/03/world/middleeast/lebanon-protests-corruption.html>

Mexico

Overview (14th largest emitter)

Mexico is vulnerable to climate change which now appears to be increasing the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and droughts.

But the government appears to be disregarding the threat of global warming by promoting fossil fuels and curtailing the production of renewable energy.

The country has high levels of pollution, not only in major cities like Mexico City, the capital.

It relies heavily on tourism, meaning that preservation of natural areas, in particular beaches like Cancun, is critical for the country's economy. This is especially true in coastal areas that would also be more vulnerable during the hurricane season.

Climate change and socio-economic conditions in Central America (Hurricanes Eta and Iota) have also led to increased migration through and to Mexico.

The Ayoloco glacier at the summit of the Iztaccihuatl volcano in central Mexico was declared "extinct" by scientists in 2021. They attributed its demise to climate change.

A major concern in Mexico is the homicide of environmental activists, specifically from indigenous communities. Indigenous groups are some of the strongest activists for environmental preservation, although representation in the national agenda is infrequent.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador promised to protect the environment, promote reforestation and phase out the herbicide glyphosate. He railed against fracking during his 2018 campaign.

However, he has prioritised state-owned oil and energy companies at the expense of renewable energy and disparaged wind turbines for spoiling the landscape.

His government also postponed a rule requiring cleaner-burning diesel until after he leaves office in late 2024, arguing that the state-owned petroleum company Pemex lacks the infrastructure to generate the necessary supplies. Recently, as a result of nation-wide blackouts caused by harsh winter weather conditions in Texas, Lopez Obrador has promoted a move towards natural gas self-sufficiency.

Mexico has also lowered its ambitions when it comes to meeting commitments outlined under the Paris Climate Accord.

One of the major problems facing efforts against climate change in Mexico is that environmental policy does not figure prominently on the agenda of most Mexicans.

In a country with high levels of poverty and an alarming presence of organised crime groups and cartels, the economy and security are among the government's top priorities.

Most concerns about the environment tend to be related to agriculture, including drought and flooding.

Mexican political decision-making is also heavily connected to the United States, in terms of trade, agriculture, technology and energy, among others.

Under the new Biden administration, Mexico may come under pressure to switch to greener energy sources as well.

Stated Priorities

Mexico's priorities leading up to the COP 26 meeting include: electricity generations and the opportunity to “decarbonize”, protecting agriculture and forests and receiving financing for climate initiatives. (<http://www.iniciativaclimatica.org/cop26/>).

Despite Mexico's stated priorities, Climate Action Tracker has said that the country's actions to mitigate climate change are “highly insufficient”. <https://expansion.mx/empresas/2021/09/21/climate-action-mexico-cambio-climatico>).

Priority: Multilateral approach

Summary: Mexico favours multilateralism in tackling climate change.

Link: <https://cambioclimatico.gob.mx/mexico-participo-en-la-cop-25-de-manera-constructiva-y-con-el-objetivo-de-fortalecer-la-cooperacion-en-materia-climatica/>

Priority: Regional, technical innovation.

Summary: Mexico favours technological innovation in the region to tackle climate change, improve agricultural processes and develop greener energy sources.

Link: <https://cambioclimatico.gob.mx/mexico-participo-en-la-cop-25-de-manera-constructiva-y-con-el-objetivo-de-fortalecer-la-cooperacion-en-materia-climatica>

Priority: Carbon market

Summary: Mexico has expressed an interest in an international carbon market.

Link: <https://cambioclimatico.gob.mx/mexico-participo-en-la-cop-25-de-manera-constructiva-y-con-el-objetivo-de-fortalecer-la-cooperacion-en-materia-climatica/>

Priority: Finance to deal with risk

Summary: Mexico is keen for a focus on financing actions to prevent and minimise risks.

Link: <https://cambioclimatico.gob.mx/mexico-participo-en-la-cop-25-de-manera-constructiva-y-con-el-objetivo-de-fortalecer-la-cooperacion-en-materia-climatica>

Poland

Overview (20th largest emitter)

Poland, host of the COP24 summit in 2018, could put Europe at risk of missing its climate targets because of its reluctance to wean itself off coal.

It is the only EU state that has refused to pledge climate neutrality by 2050 and has been accused of dragging its feet towards renewable energy sources in its latest energy plan.

Pollution in the form of dust from the coal mines as well as smoke from domestic stoves burning coal for heating and cooking is blamed on thousands of premature deaths annually.

Environmentalists near the mines demonstrate the problem by scraping off a grey layer of dust to reveal white snow below.

While critics say the PEP2040 energy strategy unveiled in February 2021 lacks ambition, the government says it provides a compass to help the country navigate away from coal.

The plan is for renewable energy to rise to at least 23% of the mix by 2030, which is little compared with the EU as a whole, where renewables generated 38% of electricity in 2020.

Poland is planning one new coal-fired power plant.

On 21 May, the EU Court of Justice ordered Poland to “immediately cease lignite extraction activities in the Turow mine” on the border with the Czech Republic. The court upheld the complaint filed by the Czech Republic.

The court ruling has given a boost to anti-coal and pro-environment protests in Poland. Activists demand that the mine and a coal-fired power plant nearby be closed down immediately, while the authorities want to phase out the mine in 2044 citing a possible gap in the country’s energy balance and high social costs of the closure. The government also says that the Turow plant has a costly new generating set which should work for at least 40 years to break even.

Poland is now trying to persuade the Czech Republic to withdraw its complaint from the EU Court of Justice. As of mid-September 2021, the talks had made “some progress”. However, one Polish minister says that the matter is “political” and can only be resolved after the Czech general election due in early October.

While some other EU countries - notably Germany - are moving away from nuclear, Poland plans to open a series of nuclear power plants within the next few years. In September 2021, two private Polish investors announced plans to build six small SMR-type nuclear reactors with the first one going online “no later than 2030”. The technology is currently being certified in the USA and Canada.

The development of onshore wind power has been constrained by a 2016 “distance act” requiring wind turbines to be a certain distance from farms and villages, reportedly ruling out the most attractive sites for their deployment. And the government is reportedly keen to phase out onshore wind turbines altogether, while boosting offshore wind power generation. The UN Environment Programme gave

Poland a pat on the back by rating it as a “leader” in efforts to build back better following the onset of COVID-19.

Praiseworthy measures included support for electrifying transport, a clean air programme to replace boilers and improve insulation.

In September the National Environment Protection Fund allocated the equivalent of 20.7m dollars to buy hydrogen-powered buses for the coal-producing Slask region.

The country has not been immune from the effects of climate change, registering an increase in the number of hurricanes and a rise in temperatures - which are expected to extend the growing season.

Stated Priorities

While Poland’s priorities for COP26 have not been publicised, it has acknowledged the need to deal with climate change and in early 2021 published its energy strategy - PEP2040 - setting out several goals.

Priority: Reduce greenhouse gases

Summary: Under PEP2040 Poland will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% in 2030.

Link: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-energy-idUSKBN2A225K>

Priority: Increase renewable energy

Summary: PEP2040 outlines plans for the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption to rise to at least 23% by 2030.

Link: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-energy-idUSKBN2A225K>

Priority: Bring nuclear power on stream

Summary: PEP2040 envisages a series of nuclear power plants. The government also pledged to start a first nuclear plant with capacity of 1.0-1.6 GW.

Link: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-energy-idUSKBN2A225K>

Qatar

Overview (39th largest emitter)

Qatar is busy preparing to host a carbon neutral FIFA World Cup in 2022 while at the same time massively increasing its capacity to export fossil fuels.

It already produces a third of the world's liquified natural gas (LNG) and is now planning to increase output by 64% by 2027 - for which it will need a fleet of more than 100 extra ships.

LNG is seen as a substitute for coal - but it is also a potent source of greenhouse gases. Methane, which is the chief component of natural gas, is 84 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

FIFA and Qatar worked together to develop a "sustainability strategy" meant to ensure that the 2022 football tournament leaves a positive legacy.

And Qatar says the event, which is expected to attract more than a million visitors, will be carbon neutral, something which it says will be achieved in part by a new solar power plant, implementing greater energy efficiencies and the provision of transport by electric buses and metros between stadiums. Qatar said it developed climate-controlled stadiums for the tournament.

How an environmentally friendly tournament can be held in one of the hottest places on earth is in some doubt since entire stadiums will be air conditioned to make temperatures bearable.

Qatar's innovations are all part of the country's diversification drive meant to reduce its vulnerability to price fluctuation of hydrocarbons.

The country gained its wealth from oil and gas but it is also reaping the rewards of investing those oil earnings internationally. It isn't short of cash to fund innovation and big projects.

It says it is striving for sustainable development under its National Vision 2030, which stipulates that "the environment shall be managed in a way that guarantees harmony and balance between economic and social development and environmental protection".

Qatar signed the 2015 Paris Agreement but has not committed to specific carbon reduction targets, saying in its 2015 nationally determined contribution that it wouldn't accept carbon-cutting policies as they would risk its oil-based wealth.

And it claimed that it "has been contributing indirectly to the global efforts to mitigate climate change by exporting Liquefied Natural Gas as a clean energy".

Brazil singled out Qatar and other wealthy "developing" countries for not doing enough to tackle climate change.

In 2021, Qatar appointed veteran diplomat and former head of the Qatar-based Global Dryland Alliance Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani as a special envoy of the foreign minister for climate change affairs and sustainability.

The UK is a key partner in Qatar's environmental efforts. For example, Qatar has started issuing green bonds through the London Stock Exchange and the UK embassy supports the #KeepQatarClean campaign launched by Sheikha Maysa Al Thani.

COP26 president-designate Alok Sharma welcomed Qatar's commitment to tackling climate change and the leadership's ambition for the country to be a leader in green finance and clean energy growth.

Stated Priorities

There has been little publicity about any objectives Qatar might have for COP 26, but it has outlined various general environmental and economic objectives which might indicate its position at the conference. The country's environment ministry was actively involved in promoting the international day for plastic free bags.

Priority: Natural gas production

Summary: As one of the leading natural gas exporters, Qatar has put the "cleaner" fossil fuel at the heart of its environmental strategy. It aims to use compressed natural gas across the transport network, increase recovery in its fields and use it to generate electricity and to desalinate water efficiently.

Link broken: <https://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/21/09/2019/Qatar-makes-great-efforts-in-addressing-climate-change>

Priority: Water and food security

Summary: Like most Gulf countries, Qatar is one of the most arid lands on the planet. With rapid urbanisation and development in recent decades, underground water reserves no longer sustain the population and energy-intensive desalination is used.

Qatar's food security has also been a key priority for the government since a spat with Qatar's neighbours in 2017 caused food shortages.

Qatar is home to the Global Dryland Alliance, which aims to "work with local, regional, and international partners to identify, disseminate, and implement solutions for agricultural, water, and energy challenges of dryland countries".

Link: <http://www.globaldrylandalliance.org/en/about-us/vision-mission/>

Priority: Maintain biodiversity

Summary: Qatar has prioritised the conservation of its flora and fauna in recent years amid rising nationalism across the Gulf. For example, it has moved to protect the Arabian Oryx, the symbol of its national carrier, from extinction and to sequence its genetic code. Since 2010, it has also started studying the large shark population surrounding its offshore oil field of Shahin.

Link: <http://www.globaldrylandalliance.org/en/about-us/vision-mission/>

Priority: Fighting desertification and drought



Summary: There is an initiative in place to plant one million trees in the country to increase green cover. The authorities encourage and sponsor initiatives to plant trees. The authorities promote awareness about fighting desertification and drought through its social media outlets.

Link: <https://twitter.com/albaladiya/status/1405495144795750401>

Russia

Overview (4th largest emitter)

Russia is suffering the effects of climate change in the form of droughts, forest fires and floods but it is massively increasing the production of the fossil fuels behind these negative effects.

This is perhaps unsurprising since officials have been putting out mixed messages about climate change, with some even enumerating the benefits for Russia such as the opening up of new sea routes as Arctic ice disappears as well as the increase in arable land and easier access to minerals as the frozen north warms up.

Work on Russia's long-term strategy for economic development with low greenhouse gases emissions has yet to be completed, as many government institutions and state corporations oppose the new legislative framework.

Some Russian experts describe their country's efforts on climate change as slow, insufficient, vague and mostly revolving around economic issues.

The EU Green Deal and the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) are major topics as well as important drivers for Russian climate change initiatives, since they are likely to significantly affect Russian energy and metal corporations for whom the EU is the main export market.

Since the EU published its CBAM proposal in July 2021, Russian oil producers said they were relieved as they wouldn't be as badly affected as they had feared. However, that said they would change their market orientation towards Asia in future.

The EU plans have been severely criticised by Russian officials, with President Vladimir Putin accusing the EU of using the global climate crisis to achieve economic and political goals. He suggested that the proposed rules "clearly contradicted" WTO standards.

At the same time, in order to adapt to new circumstances and to protect its economy, Russia is working on making its climate change measures well-defined and verifiable for them to be validated and accepted abroad, making it possible to retain taxes inside the country instead of buying certificates from the EU to account for the emissions.

Still, some warn that foreign companies might relocate harmful production to Russia because of its lack of control or monitoring facilities.

The government's recently released Energy Strategy 2035 aims to support and develop fossil fuel industries, while largely ignoring renewable energy. Russia, which holds the world's second biggest coal reserves after the US, is increasing production, banking on the likelihood that demand in Asia will remain strong for some years.

President Vladimir Putin has made several statements over the past two years emphasising the significance of climate change and especially global warming which could have a major effect on Russia since 70% of its territory is situated in the frozen, but fast melting, North.

Putin has expressed doubt about whether climate change is manmade. However, he insists that the changes should be taken seriously and that efforts should be made to mitigate them.

The effects of climate change can already be seen in the thawing of the permafrost, retreat of glaciers and heatwaves accompanying droughts lowering food production.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Emission control

Summary: Putin has said that Russia must adjust its economy, bring down emissions and introduce strict control and monitoring measures.

On 2 July 2021, he signed the Federal Law on Limiting Greenhouse Gas Emissions, which introduces Russia's first system for managing greenhouse gas emissions and defines carbon footprint as an important indicator of the development of the national economy. Under the law, starting from 1 January 2023, the country's largest emitters of greenhouse gases will be required to report on their emissions.

Russia is in the process of finalising its long-term strategy on low greenhouse gas emissions till 2050, ordered by the president. On 25 August, the Economic Development Ministry released four scenarios for Russia's socio-economic development strategy with low greenhouse gas emissions: a 'no-change' scenario, a baseline scenario, an intensive scenario and an aggressive scenario. Only the latter two would allow Russia to reach carbon neutrality (by 2060 and by 2050 respectively), whereas the ministry sees the baseline scenario as the main one. Under it, Russia's net greenhouse gas emissions accumulated by 2050 will be lower than the EU's, and by 2030, emissions will not exceed 70% of 1990 levels.

Link: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65418>

https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/minekonomrazvitiya_rossii_podgotovilo_proekt_strategii_dolg_osrochnogo_razvitiya_rossii_s_nizkim_urovnem_vybrosov_parnikovyh_gazov_do_2050_goda.html

<http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/keywords/89/events/66061>

https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/v_rossii_vpervye_sozdana_zakonodatelnaya_sistema_upravleniya_vybrosami_so2.html

<https://tass.ru/ekonomika/12215547>

<https://rg.ru/2021/08/25/nazvany-usloviia-dlia-uglerodnoj-nejtralnosti-rossii-k-2050-godu.html>

Priority: Forest carbon credits

Summary: Russian special presidential representative for climate issues Ruslan Edelgeriyev said that forestry projects would be Russia's main focus at COP26 so that Russian forestry carbon credits can be traded on the international carbon market. As an experiment, Russia is launching a pilot decarbonisation project in Sakhalin in the country's Far East aimed at demonstrating Russia's willingness to set the price for carbon in a separate territory, which could then be replicated in other parts of Russia if successful. In early September, President Putin said that other regions had expressed their interest in joining the project, which he said he supported.

Link: <https://www.finanz.ru/novosti/aktsii/af-predstavit-na-peregovorakh-v-glazgo-po-klimatu-v-2021-g-proekty-po-lesam-i-sakhalinu-1029822175>

Priority: Development of knowledge

Summary: A presidential decree signed on 8 February 2021 instructs the government to develop a federal scientific and technical programme in the areas of ecological development and climate change for 2021-2030. The document should be ready by September 2021. A special council will be responsible for the implementation of the programme, consisting of leading Russian scientists and state officials.

Link: <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/AKh2dmiiH3CN8MniSrmxkZAWsi9O8wzj.pdf>

Priority: Avoid politicising of climate change issues

Summary: Putin recently reiterated that global decarbonisation efforts should not be used as an instrument to exert pressure on other states. Similar concerns have been voiced by other state officials on numerous occasions. Russian officials fear discrimination, double standards and “unfairness” when it comes to global measures.

Link: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/11568309>

Priority: Adapt to EU carbon border adjustment mechanism

Summary: Russian Trade Minister Denis Manturov has said that Russia was working with its European partners to “harmonise approaches” to climate change issues, in particular, to synchronise the ecological agenda and requirements. The purpose of these efforts is to be able to keep the taxes in the country and direct them towards modernising factories in Russia, Manturov said.

Links: <https://rg.ru/2021/07/19/manturov-rasskazal-o-novyh-samoletah-situacii-v-avtoprome-i-uglerodnom-slede.html>

<https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c202v0n1>

Saudi Arabia

Overview (10th largest emitter)

Saudi Arabia is on track to maintaining its position as leading exporter of oil – the very fossil fuel which contributes to the climate change which might soon make the country uninhabitable.

Rising temperatures and evaporation rates are expected to deplete water resources critical for agricultural, industrial and domestic needs.

And a combination of high temperatures and humidity may ultimately render the kingdom uninhabitable by mid-century under a high-emissions, high-climate-impact scenario, according to researchers from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology.

In terms of short-term sales though, climate change presents both a threat and opportunity for Saudi Aramco, the national oil company which has the dubious honour of being the largest source of greenhouse gas-emitting fossil fuel among all firms worldwide.

As the world becomes more sensitive to the damage caused by burning fossil fuels, buyers might prefer Saudi oil for its relatively low intensity of greenhouse gas emissions per barrel produced - due to lower levels of flaring and methane leakage.

“These attributes suggest that oil from the kingdom should retain a prominent role in oil markets,” says Jim Krane, from the Rice University in Texas.

“Despite the implied climate damage to its homeland, Saudi Aramco is moving to expand, streamline and protect its system of oil monetization, so that the Saudi national oil company can produce and market the kingdom’s prodigious below-ground reserves ‘for generations to come’,” Krane says.

Saudi Arabia has long argued that limiting the use of hydrocarbons would disproportionately impact oil and gas producing countries, but it has nevertheless signed the Paris agreement.

Its intended contributions towards limiting climate change aren’t altogether clear, but based on available information the Climate Action Tracker rates them as “critically insufficient”.

Environmental protection does feature under the de-facto leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and has been included in the objectives of his Vision 2030 to modernise Saudi society and in key projects such as the new northern development of Neom, the regeneration of the capital Riyadh and the Red Sea Coral Bloom.

The crown prince also increased protected areas in the kingdom from 4% to 14% of the territory, created “Special Forces for Environmental Security” and raised penalties for environmental violations.

An environment ministry was created in 2016 with a mandate that includes increasing local food production, preserving wildlife and building dams. It also seeks to preserve and maximise vegetation cover to prevent deforestation, for example enforcing a total ban on local lumber.

Stated Priorities

Saudi Arabia occasionally voices support for global efforts to combat climate change. In recent months, the kingdom's leaders made their objectives more specific.

Some of its priorities appear to be at odds with its stated support for moves to beat climate change.

Priority: Transition to post-oil world

Summary: Vision 2030 primarily aims to prepare the economy and society for a post-oil world by diversifying the economy and providing employment for young Saudis. The kingdom aims to secure revenue streams other than energy exports through taxation, investment and increased employment. This means that the potential for technology transfer, as well as the training and employment of young nationals, make green ventures attractive for the government.

Many of these ambitions rest on the monumental project on Neom led by Bin Salman in northern Saudi Arabia. In January, he announced "The Line", a linear zero-car city with underground transport as part of the futuristic development.

Saudi Arabia has invested some \$5bn to create the world's largest hydrogen plant, also as part of Neom, with the ambition of leading the new "clean fuel" sector.

On 27 March 2021, Bin Salman announced the "Saudi Green Initiative" and the "Green Middle East Initiative" with the aim of generating 50% of the kingdom's energy needs from renewable sources by 2030 and planting billions of trees across the region. The inaugural conferences of the two initiatives will be held in Riyadh on 23-25 October.

Critics, such as Greenpeace, lamented that the plan did not mention the fossil fuel industry and wondered how the water used to plant billions of trees in mostly arid regions will be obtained.

In April, King Salman spoke at the international climate conference called for by US President Joe Biden to promote his country's approach of countering climate change through the concept of "Circular Carbon Economy" (CCE).

Days later, Saudi Arabia said it would join the US, Canada, Norway and Qatar in forming a new platform for oil and gas producers to discuss how they can support the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Critics noted that the joint statement used the problematic concept of CCE, attributing it to pressure from Saudi Arabia.

In May, the kingdom established a sustainability council at its ministry of the industry and mineral resources.

In June, US climate envoy John Kerry met Bin Salman and endorsed his green initiatives, with the two countries vowing to support global efforts to cut emissions during COP26.

In August, the cabinet approved an overhaul of the waste management system aimed at reducing water waste, increasing recycling and generating electricity.

In September, the Public Investment Fund (PIF) and the Tadawul stock exchange unveiled plans to establish a regional marketplace for carbon credits.

Links:

<https://www.alarabiya.net/aswaq/economy/2021/06/16/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B6%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%B7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%B6%D8%B1>

<https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c2021v9z>

<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/04/26/saudi-us-net-zero-oil-producer-initiative-lands-scepticism/>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-join-new-forum-climate-change-state-news-agency-2021-04-24/>

<https://www.alwatan.com.sa/article/1074315>

https://www.greenpeace.org/mena/ar/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%B6%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1/

<https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c202gq3j>

<https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c202apam>

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201112-the-green-hydrogen-revolution-in-renewable-energy>

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/economy/%D8%AE%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%B6%D8%AE%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%AF%D9%91%D9%8E%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%80-700-%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B1>

<https://arabic.cnn.com/middle-east/article/2021/09/02/saudi-arabia-will-host-a-climate-change-summit-next-october>

<https://aawsat.com/home/article/3127596/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B1-%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%85%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%8B-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9->

[%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9](#)

https://www.aleqt.com/2021/09/04/article_2164571.html

Priority: Defend the oil market

Summary: Saudi Arabia seeks to develop its crucial oil and petrochemicals sectors and maintain a level of control over global prices through partnerships with OPEC countries and Russia.

This appears directly opposed to its stated intention of moving away from fossil fuels. However Saudi Arabia argues in favour of a gradual transition and says that by investing in cleaner technology and controlling supply, environmental targets can still be reached.

Saudi Aramco for example excludes emissions from assets it controls overseas or does not fully own from its calculations.

Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, rather than the minister in charge of the environment, is likely to lead the Saudi COP26 delegation, like his predecessor at the Paris summit.

Bin Salman was the one who briefed COP26 President Alok Sharma on Saudi climate change efforts during his visit to the kingdom. The conversation focused on CCE as a framework for international efforts to combat global warming, Saudi media noted.

In June, the energy minister and his Russian counterpart angrily reacted to the International Energy Agency's call to put an end to oil and gas investments.

"It is a sequel of the La La Land movie. Why should I take it seriously?" Prince Abdulaziz was quoted as saying.

Links:

<https://www.reuters.com/business/sustainable-business/opec-russia-seen-gaining-more-power-with-shell-dutch-ruling-2021-06-01/>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/04/climate-russia-saudi-arabia-reject-calls-to-end-oil-and-gas-spending.html>

https://www.aleqt.com/2021/03/05/article_2043781.html

https://www.aleqt.com/2017/11/16/article_1284286.html

<https://www.asharqbusiness.com/article/4691/%D8%A3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%83%D9%88-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AB%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%AB%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B9-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%AD%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7>

<https://www.alarabiya.net/aswaq/economy/2021/07/31/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6-%D8%AC%D9%87%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A9-%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%BA%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AE%D9%8A>

Priority: Dealing with stranded oil tanker

Summary: Saudi Arabia has taken to the UN Security Council to warn of an impending “environmental and humanitarian disaster” if the stranded FSO Safer tanker continues to erode off the coast of Yemen. Saudi Arabia accuses Yemen’s Houthi rebels of not cooperating with the UN in efforts to deal with the stranded vessel and fears an oil leak that would inflict irreparable damage on the Red Sea. It has been leading a military campaign to support the Yemeni government against the Houthis since 2015.

In September, the Saudi environment ministry issued new rules for coastal and marine protection and sustainability.

The kingdom has also enlisted top expert Carlos M Duarte to look into the use of algae in decarbonisation, in line with its CCE-based policies.

Links:

<https://www.mubasher.info/news/3849516/%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A1-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B0%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AD%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B9%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A9/>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/climate-change-scientists-duarte-ar1-idARAKBN2CB0EA>

SIDS

Overview

Small island developing states (SIDS) are clear and vocal about being in the midst of a climate emergency.

Most are represented internationally by the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), which has played a leading role in creating awareness of the effects of climate change.

The primary issue is rising sea-levels which threaten the very existence of low-lying member states. Tuvalu is expected to be uninhabitable by 2050 and five Pacific islands face full submersion by the year 2100. Already, coastal erosion has engendered migration and continues to pose a threat as coastal habitation is common on the islands - in the Caribbean, more than half the population lives within 1.5 km of the sea.

Due to their geographic location, a vast majority of the small island developing states are particularly vulnerable to climate events such as hurricanes, storms, cyclones and floods.

Despite causing less than 1% of the world's emissions, the countries are among the first and most heavily impacted by the damaging effects of global warming. They struggle to bear the economic burden of climate change, consequently, global financial support is a key driver in negotiations at an international level.

The association with the ocean, particularly in the Pacific, is historic and cultural as well as economic.

This means the destruction of the ocean is another key issue for the islands - some of which are designated "large ocean states" because they have exclusive economic zones which are far greater than their land mass.

The biological diversity in SIDS is among the most threatened in the world. Issues include coral bleaching and high rates of wildlife extinction, including endemic species.

Overfishing is affecting marine ecosystems and poses a significant threat to food security and the economy. Higher ocean temperatures have also left marine species searching for cooler waters which is having an impact on fishing, tourism and marine life.

These islands are scattered around the world and in their various groupings, such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group and the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), the islanders have tried to bring their concerns to the attention of global bodies.

Stated Priorities

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) called on the countries of the world to raise their ambitions to tackle climate change and to help others to achieve their climate goals.

AOSIS delivered a statement at a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting on 31 May 2021 outlining its priorities. (<https://www.aosis.org/statement/climate-sbs-2021aosis-opening-statement-at-unfccc-virtual-subsidiary-body-meetings/>)

Priority: Formal discussion about NDCs at COP26

Summary: Small islands states want formal dialogue on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted by parties at COP 26. AOSIS said: “A suitable platform should be provided at COP 26 and AOSIS expects this to be captured by the outcomes of COP 26”.

Priority: Global stocktake and periodic review

Summary: Small island states want a review of progress on the Paris Agreement goals.

Priority: Finance for funding and mitigation

Summary: AOSIS says that financing for mitigation and adaptation, and loss and damage must be “adequate, predictable and accessible” and calls for “a new global finance goal” at COP 26.

Priority: Make progress on emissions trading and related markets

Summary: AOSIS called for clear progress in developing market systems – such as emissions trading - designed to promote international cooperation and promote greater ambition in mitigation and adaptation. It calls for the implementation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement by the end of 2021. AOSIS calls for:

1. The adoption of a substantial cancellation rate for the delivery of an overall mitigation in global emissions (OMGE)
2. Adoption of a substantial rate of emission reduction credits to be set aside as a share of proceeds (SOP) for adaptation
3. The extension of OMGE and SOP to create a level playing field

Priority: Greater funding for adaptation

Summary: The exploration of concrete ways of closing the adaptation funding gap.

Priority: Greater funding for loss and damage

Summary: Discussion of how the Santiago Network* will work and how financing can be mobilised, following the Review of the Warsaw International Mechanism at COP 25**

*<https://unfccc.int/santiago-network/about>

**<https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/loss-and-damage-ld/warsaw-international-mechanism-for-loss-and-damage-associated-with-climate-change-impacts-wim>

Priority: Technology transfer

Summary: Consideration of how technology can deliver targeted support (“SIDS have a high landed cost of technology that can be roughly three times that of major economies, which is a barrier to climate technology transfer”).

Priority: Full participation by island states amid COVID-19

Summary: “Ensuring the full participation of AOSIS at COP26 is paramount; in this regard, the still unequal COVID-19 vaccination distribution is likely to impact the participation of AOSIS countries at an in-person COP. And yet, without a real face-to-face meeting, it will be challenging to deliver a proper conclusion to all the pending issues.”

AOSIS has been active ahead of COP26, launching an eight-episode “Islands on Alert” podcast series, broadcasting one episode per week on its website, YouTube and Spotify until 1 November. The series highlights the climate change realities facing island nations. AOSIS Chair Ambassador Aubrey Webson said: “Islands are depending on COP26 to mobilise rapid global action to reduce carbon emissions at a pace that will limit global warming to 1.5°C. COP26 will also be the platform for advancement on critical issues such as climate justice, climate finance, adaptation and mitigation, and loss and damage, all of which are integral to supporting island states and providing opportunity for a sustainable future.”

The organisation has also stepped up its Twitter activity asking, for example, on 18 September: “Why do wealthy governments continue to fund the fossil fuel industry while failing to meet their \$100-billion-a-year pledge?” and urging: “Make this #COP26 count! Because the lives, livelihoods, and homes of island people depend on it. #IslandsMatter.”

South Africa

Overview (12th largest emitter)

South Africa is one of only a few countries whose constitution guarantees citizens the right to a clean environment.

This guarantee is now being tested in court by community and environmental groups in what has been dubbed the Deadly Air case.

The government is accused of failing to protect the people in the epicentre of the world's largest coal-fired power plant emissions hotspot – the province of Mpumalanga, east of the major cities Johannesburg and Pretoria - where it is alleged that pollution leads to thousands of premature deaths every year.

Despite its constitutional guarantee of a clean environment, South Africa is one of the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

This is in large part due to heavy reliance on coal for energy and export revenue. South Africa has large coal reserves and strong vested interests in exploiting them. Thousands of people depend on the coal mines and power plants for work.

The continent's second biggest economy has been struggling to meet its energy needs and in desperation now plans to moor power generating ships offshore.

New coal-fired plants are still in the pipeline and a switch to renewable energy sources has been slow.

Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Gwede Mantashe has been accused of being a coal fundamentalist, a claim he has denied. More positively, during President Cyril Ramaphosa's tenure, a carbon tax and mandatory greenhouse gas reporting have been implemented.

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) promised to focus on renewable energy and public transport and invest in safe, reliable and integrated public rail transport as part of its election manifesto in 2019, and Ramaphosa vowed to support the use of renewable technologies.

Climate Action Tracker (CAT) rates South Africa's climate targets and policies as "insufficient".

South Africa has experienced droughts which have been blamed on climate change, with Cape Town, one of its biggest cities, almost running out of water in 2019. Climate change – in the form of hotter and drier weather - is expected to hit the economy hard.

The country has some of the worst air quality areas in the world, and often experiences smog. The World Health Organisation estimates that 20,000 people die prematurely due to air pollution every year, making it a leading killer in the country.

Climate change and pollution – along with changes in land use, poaching and other factors - have contributed to a decline in biodiversity.

South Africa has numerous environmental groups which are active and tenacious and which have had some success in halting harmful developments.

A high court is considering an application by one group to scrap the licence granted to South African oil giant Sasol and the Italian behemoth Eni to drill for hydrocarbons in the middle of marine protected areas off the Kwa-Zulu Natal coast.

However, environmentalists face violence. For example, Fikile Ntshangase, a vocal campaigner against the expansion of a coal mine, was murdered in 2020, and Sikhosiphi “Bazooka” Rhadebe, who opposed the proposed mining of titanium in coastal dunes, was killed in 2018.

Stated Priorities

Senior government figures have spoken in favour of driving down greenhouse gas emissions but there hasn't been much publicity about specific priorities for the upcoming COP26.

Priority: Plan for a low-carbon economy

Summary: A Presidential Climate Change Commission was established in 2020 to develop a “clear plan to take us from an aspirational commitment to a low-carbon, climate resilient economy and society awake to the reality of new technology, new investment and, above all, new jobs”.

Environment Minister Barbara Creecy said current trading partners might shun South Africa if it continued with its carbon-intensive production.

One report suggests South Africa could fully decarbonise its power sector.

Links: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2021-02-17-sa-working-towards-low-carbon-climate-resilient-economy-barbara-creecy/>

<https://www.africanews.com/2021/09/17/african-carbon-markets-and-the-journey-to-a-net-zero-future/>

Priority: Address climate change challenges

Summary: President Ramaphosa was the only African leader invited to attend the G7 summit in the UK in June 2021 in recognition of his country's role in leading the fight against COVID-19. During the summit he noted South Africa's recently established Presidential Climate Change Commission to promote the transition to a lower carbon economy. Ramaphosa stressed a desire to contribute South Africa's fair share towards the global effort to address climate change challenges and support the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Link: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/south-africa-commits-to-helping-fight-climate-change/2272737>

Priority: Investment in green economy

Summary: The government is encouraging investment in the green economy, with Environment Minister Creecy saying: “It opens access to new green financing opportunities; it offers the possibility of significant proven job creation; it has potential to localise production and services which will build

small and medium enterprises; and of course it enhances our long-term competitiveness while mitigating our transition risks."

Various recent publications have noted that South Africa is ideally positioned to become a global leader in exporting green ammonia.

Links: <https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-barbara-creecy-debate-state-nation-address-17-feb-2021-0000>

<https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/south-africa-has-potential-to-become-major-player-in-green-ammonia-isondo-adviser-2021-08-16>

Priority: Reduce coal dependence

Summary: South Africa noted its aim to reduce dependence on coal from 89% of its energy structure currently, to 59% by 2030.

Link: <http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2021cornwall/210618-cop.html>

Priority: Addressing climate and biodiversity loss crises

Summary: G7 Climate and Environment Ministers met on 20 and 21 May 2021 as part of the efforts to reach net zero by 2050. The UK G7 Presidency invited others including South Africa to participate. South Africa's domestic efforts were commended. Examples include the Ocean Economy Programme and Marine Spatial Planning act, as well as the introduction of a Nationally Determined Contribution Consultation Process. Ramaphosa's participation in the G7 Summit talks aims to assist the negotiations during COP26 in Glasgow.

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/g7-climate-and-environment-ministers-meeting-may-2021-presidency-statement-on-guest-participation/explanatory-presidency-document-guest-countries-at-the-2021-g7-climate-and-environment-ministerial-track>

<https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/climate-change-to-top-agenda-of-upcoming-g7-summit/>

South Korea

Overview (9th largest emitter)

The growing industrial giant South Korea appears to be making amends for the earlier neglect of its environment and is now also contributing to global efforts to combat climate change.

President Moon Jae-in has pledged to work toward net carbon neutrality by 2050 and unveiled a “Green New Deal” for sustainable economic development.

He has also promised to ban new public financial support for overseas coal-fired power investments, an important step since South Korea has been one of the top three financiers of coal, alongside China and Japan.

For many environmentalists, these mitigation measures at home and abroad finally give hope that decades of promises of “green growth” may finally come to pass.

South Korea’s rapid industrialisation and urban expansion resulted in deforestation and the destruction of wetlands.

And in the process of becoming one of world’s leading exporters it has largely relied on fossil fuels, with oil, coal and natural gas comprising 87% of South Korea's energy consumption in 2019.

It is among the top five importers of liquified natural gas (LNG), coal and petroleum, and was the world’s ninth-largest energy consumer in 2019.

Under new proposals, however, the government plans to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy and build forward with an environmental focus at the heart of a new, post-COVID-19 economy.

In the short term South Koreans’ biggest concern has typically been the continuing problem of fine dust pollution – from their own industry and transport emissions as well as dust and industrial pollutants blown in from China.

Popular entertainers have helped to raise awareness of the need to tackle environmental issues.

K-pop artists such as the girl group Blackpink - an official ambassador for the COP26 conference - and BTS have used their popularity to spread messages about climate change and mobilised their global fanbases to carry out environmental campaigns.

Stated Priorities

South Korea has not officially highlighted priorities or a specific vision with COP26 in mind, but it has laid out an agenda for climate change and sustainable development in its detailed 2050 Carbon Neutral Strategy policy brief, released in December 2020.

Priority: Carbon neutrality by 2050

Summary: South Korea announced in late 2020 that it plans to become completely carbon neutral by 2050, expanding greatly on previous commitments - linked to the Paris Agreement - to reduce emissions

by 2030 to 37% below business-as-usual (BAU) levels. President Moon later announced plans to establish a presidential committee to oversee this process, while details of the roadmap for achieving carbon neutrality were released in December 2020. As for the December 2020 roadmap, the targeted reduction by 2030 stood at 24.4% relative to 2017 emissions levels (a different metric than the BAU levels). At the climate summit organised by US President Biden in April 2021, he announced that South Korea plans to further raise its nationally determined contribution (NDC) to reducing carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement. The new goal was described as being even more ambitious than given in the roadmap unveiled in December, and on 31 August 2021 the National Assembly passed a bill requiring a greenhouse gas emissions reduction of over 35% by 2030 - compared to 2018 levels - as part of efforts to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Links: [2050 Carbon Neutral Strategy of the Republic of Korea](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LTS1_RKorea.pdf)
https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LTS1_RKorea.pdf

[The Carbon Brief Profile: South Korea](https://www.carbonbrief.org/the-carbon-brief-profile-south-korea)
<https://www.carbonbrief.org/the-carbon-brief-profile-south-korea>

[Remarks by H.E. President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea at the Leaders Summit on Climate](https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Speeches/971)
<https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Speeches/971>

[South Korea proposes cutting emissions 40% by 2030](https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/06/16/south-korea-proposes-cutting-emissions-40-2030/)
<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2021/06/16/south-korea-proposes-cutting-emissions-40-2030/>

Priority: Green New Deal

Summary: The carbon neutrality pledge complements another proposal put forward in 2020, a “Green New Deal” aimed at building a green economy. The Green New Deal and Digital New Deal together comprise the “Korean New Deal”, a \$138 billion initiative aimed at building a new, post-pandemic economy centred on the green and digital sectors.

Link: [2050 Carbon Neutral Strategy of the Republic of Korea](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LTS1_RKorea.pdf)
https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LTS1_RKorea.pdf

Priority: Contributing to global climate action

Summary: In its policy brief on the 2050 Carbon Neutral Strategy, South Korea says that “as a party to the Paris Agreement and a responsible member of the international community” it will participate in efforts to limit the global temperature increase to well below 2C above pre-industrial levels. Furthermore, it will pursue efforts to limit this margin to as little as 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. In addition to its own efforts, South Korea says it is keen to engage with other countries for joint efforts against climate change and plans to support developing countries by sharing technological innovations and knowledge. At US President Biden’s climate summit in April 2021, President Moon Jae-in announced that South Korea would stop official financing for foreign coal power projects and work to expand green finance for investments in renewable energy.

Link: [2050 Carbon Neutral Strategy of the Republic of Korea](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LTS1_RKorea.pdf)
https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LTS1_RKorea.pdf

[Remarks by H.E. President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea at the Leaders Summit on Climate](https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Speeches/971)
<https://english1.president.go.kr/BriefingSpeeches/Speeches/971>

Turkey

Overview (16th largest emitter)

Turkey has held off ratifying the Paris Agreement, but President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told the UN General Assembly in September 2021 that it would do so before COP26.

Ankara signed the Paris Agreement in 2016 but did not ratify it, citing concerns over its classification as a “developed country” which isn’t entitled to the same financial assistance as developing countries.

Officials have repeatedly argued that Turkey fulfilled its responsibilities better than some countries that have ratified the agreement.

With COP26 approaching, there have been rising pressure and apparently inducements for Turkey to put the agreement into force, with high-level meetings with COP26 President Alok Sharma and US Special Envoy for Climate John Kerry as well as representatives of the European Union and reportedly the World Bank.

Turkish TV said Ankara reached an agreement with the World Bank, as well as French and German development banks, for a three-billion-dollar loan for climate projects, something which played a role in Turkey’s decision to ratify the agreement. There has been no official announcement of such agreements.

Turkey is susceptible to the effects of climate change, with nearly 1,000 extreme weather incidents recorded in 2020. That year was also reportedly the “third hottest year” on record since 1971.

There has been significant reporting in recent months about the possible impact of climate change in Turkey, with warnings about rising sea levels in the Bosphorus, popular food items disappearing and temperatures increasing to 45-50 degrees.

Thick mucilage - dubbed sea snot - spread in the Sea of Marmara, wildfires raged through the country’s south-western coasts and deadly flash floods hit the northern Black Sea region in the summer of 2021. These alarming developments appear to have raised public awareness and concern about climate change and its effects.

Air pollution is a major problem, with the Turkish Right to Clean Air Platform estimating that more than 30,000 deaths could have been prevented annually if air pollution had been lowered to WHO guideline levels.

Turkey submitted Nationally Determined Contributions in 2015 (21% reduction in GHG emissions from BAU by 2030), which the Climate Action Tracker rated as “critically insufficient” and “not at all consistent” with the Paris Agreement’s goals.

There now appears to be increased planning within the country on climate action, though few concrete steps or results have materialised. Environment Minister Murat Kurum said in April that Turkey was preparing a climate law. Work to prepare and update climate action plans and strategies is also underway, according to reports.

In July, Turkey released a Green Deal Action Plan and set up a working group in an effort to align with the EU's European Green Deal.

While Turkey has a small but vocal environmental activist tradition with some success in preventing projects deemed harmful, climate change and the environment have so far not been decisive election issues. However, it is possible that the public shock caused by recent extreme weather events may translate into wider activism or interest.

Renewable energy now reportedly makes up about half of the country's installed electric capacity and there are plans to increase this.

But Turkey continues to invest in fossil fuels. It found natural gas reserves in the Black Sea and is prospecting for gas in the East Mediterranean, indicating continued reliance on traditional energy sources.

The Russian state-owned company Rosatom is building Turkey's first nuclear power plant in the southern province of Mersin. The Akkuyu plant is due to start operating in 2023.

Stated Priorities

Priority: Ratify Paris Agreement

Summary: President Erdogan told the UN General Assembly in September 2021 that Turkey planned to ratify the Paris Agreement before COP26. Parliament will have the final say in the matter.

Officials earlier in the year signalled a shift in policy on ratification, citing the possible economic impact of not endorsing the agreement.

The EU's work on establishing a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), in the context of the European Green Deal, appears to have played a role in support for ratification.

Top business groups have repeatedly called for ratification, saying that the annual cost of the EU carbon tax for Turkey could be up to 2bn euros.

Climate experts commenting on Erdogan's announcement said that changing geopolitical balances amid China-US ties, extreme weather events in Turkey, access to alternative funding, and the carbon tax may all have had an impact on Turkey's decision to ratify.

Links: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/turkey/ngos-petition-turkey-to-ratify-paris-climate-agreement/31987>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/cevre-ve-sehircilik-bakan-yardimcisi-birpinar-cevre-konusunda-ulkeler-fonlarla-cezalandirilmamali/1980558>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-g20-climatechange-turkey/erdogan-says-u-s-stance-stalls-turkish-ratification-of-paris-climate-deal-idUSKBN19T11R>

<https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-56701147>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/renewable/uk-climate-envoy-says-paris-ratification-will-require-no-new-financial-contribution-from-turkey/32678>

<https://www.dunya.com/surdurulebilir-dunya/paris-iklim-anlasmasi-onaylansin-haberi-624228>

<https://ekoIQ.com/2021/06/08/tusiad-cop26-oncesi-paris-anlasmasi-sureci-tamamlanmali/>

<https://www.iklimhaber.org/cop26-uzerine-bu-yil-eylem-yili-olmali/>

<https://temizenerji.org/2021/06/04/6869tusiad-baskani-yesil-donusum-ab-ve-turkiye-arasinda-siyasi-olumlu-gundem-kapsaminda-onemli-bir-baslik/>

<https://t24.com.tr/haber/tobb-ve-tusiad-turkiye-paris-iklim-anlasmasi-ni-onaylamazsa-ciddi-maliyetle-karsilasacagiz,958111>

<https://yesilgazete.org/cop26da-bizi-neler-bekliyor/>

<https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/chp-paris-anlasmasinin-onaylanma-surecinin-tamamlanmasi-icin-tbmm-baskanina-basvurdu,O6NqLTD-CEeRdi3rtbBXNg>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/bakan-kurum-abd-baskani-bidenin-iklim-ozel-temsilcisi-kerry-ile-bir-araya-geldi/2311816>

<https://yesilgazete.org/turkiyeden-paris-anlasmasi-karari-alti-yilda-ne-degisti/>

<https://www.tccb.gov.tr/assets/dosya/2021/2021-09-21-bm.pdf>

Priority: Access to international climate finance

Summary: Turkey has mostly focused on securing access to international climate funds in UN climate talks up to now. This is expected to remain on the agenda in COP26.

Chief climate negotiator Prof Mehmet Emin Birpınar says Ankara wants access to the Green Climate Fund, but that it is not eligible on the grounds that it is in the category of “Annex I” developed countries.

He says Turkey needs about 80bn euros in climate change mitigation funds “in order to reach EU standards” on environmental issues.

Environment Minister Kurum said this summer that talks for a memorandum on access to finance were underway.

He said the World Bank as well as the leaders of Germany and France had also told President Erdogan that there would be support for climate financing.

He also said Alok Sharma had promised “all support” for a memorandum on financing to be signed before COP26.

Reports that Turkey reached a loan agreement with the World Bank and French and German development banks have not been confirmed.

However, experts have suggested that “seeing a possibility for access to funds” this year would have played a role in Turkey’s decision to ratify the Paris Agreement.

Links: <https://www.iklimhaber.org/chief-climate-negotiator-turkey-does-not-have-a-luxury-to-be-a-laggard-in-terms-of-climate-action/>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/cevre-ve-sehircilik-bakan-yardimcisi-birpinar-cevre-konusunda-ulkeler-fonlarla-cezalandirilmamali/1980558>

<https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-56701147>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/environment/turkey-expects-up-to-21-decline-of-emissions-until-2030/2217416>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/bakan-kurum-abd-baskani-bidenin-iklim-ozel-temsilcisi-kerry-ile-bir-araya-geldi/2311816>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/cevre-ve-sehircilik-bakani-kurum-cop26-baskani-sharma-ile-ortak-basin-toplantisinda-konustu/2277402>

<https://t24.com.tr/haber/turkiye-nin-paris-iklim-anlasmasi-taahhudunun-altindan-3-milyar-dolarlik-kredi-paketi-cikti,980604>

<https://yesilgazete.org/turkiyeden-paris-anlasmasi-karari-alti-yilda-ne-degisti/>

Priority: Redefine Turkey’s status

Summary: Turkey’s concerns over financing mainly stemmed from its classification as an “Annex I” developed country.

Climate negotiator Prof Mehmet Emin Birpinar says “a mistake” was made in 1992, when Turkey was “listed among developed countries that are required to achieve absolute emissions reduction targets”. This prevented Turkey from receiving financial support for the transition, he adds.

“We want to be listed along with developing countries such as South Korea, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Saudi Arabia, and China. These countries can receive financial support,” Birpinar says.

Turkey reportedly submitted an official request to COP26 to be removed from the list of Annex I countries.

It is not clear whether an understanding on this issue led to Turkey’s decision to ratify the Paris Agreement before COP26.

A climate policy expert told privately-owned NTV news channel that President Erdogan’s announcement at COP26 “may mean that the debate over Annex I countries is over”.

Links: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change_unfccc_and-the-kyoto-protocol.en.mfa

<https://yesilekonomi.com/ek-1-talebimiz-cop25te-kapatilmak-istendi/>

<https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/127662/iklim-liderler-zirvesi-nde-yaptiklari-konusma>

<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/cevre-ve-sehircilik-bakani-kurum-cop26-baskani-sharma-ile-ortak-basin-toplantisinda-konustu/2277402>

<https://yesilgazete.org/cop26da-bizi-neler-bekliyor/>

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2021_01_adv.pdf

<https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/07/02/turkeys-role-in-the-climate-change-struggle-the-paris-negotiations>

<https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/iklim-kriziyle-mucadelede-yeni-donem-turkiye-paris-iklim-anlasmasini-onaylayacak,S2-THiyqUufShx2hk0sCw>

UAE

Overview (31st largest emitter)

The United Arab Emirates - which already suffers major environmental problems and expects serious consequences of global warming - regards itself as a regional leader in efforts to protect the environment.

The desert nation's cities endure high levels of pollution because of emissions from industry and desalination plants, the high levels of motorised traffic and dust storms. Unlike many other cities, dry UAE lacks trees and other vegetation to temper these effects.

Rising sea levels due to climate change could be expected to inundate its coastal cities in the distant future but the country is already suffering from dust storms whose intensity and frequency appears to be increasing, partly because the region is becoming drier.

The UAE is diversifying its energy mix by drawing on solar power, and controversially, by starting up the Arab world's first commercial nuclear power station in 2021.

The motivation is suspected to be partly to reduce dependence on oil and gas, which can be sold more profitably abroad.

Dubai claims to have the largest single-site solar energy project in the world. It is being developed over multiple phases and is designed to have a total capacity of 5GW of renewable energy by 2030.

The country, which marks its 50th anniversary this year, has become a space faring nation, with a space craft in orbit around Mars, a mission which it hopes will enhance knowledge of climate change.

Separately, a low-orbiting nano satellite was scheduled to start work in March 2021 monitoring pollution and dust storms in the UAE.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment is actively engaged in environment protection activities, especially through holding climate-related events, such as the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week held in January 2021.

And in February 2021, a senior official outlined his government's commitment to combating climate change: "The UAE's second NDC reflects its target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 23.5% compared to business as usual for the year 2030. By then, the country aims to expand its clean power capacity to 14 GW, rising from just above 100 MW in 2015.

"In boosting nature-based climate solutions, the UAE has committed to planting 30 million mangroves by 2030 to conserve and enhance coastal blue carbon ecosystems," said Fahed Al Hammadi, Acting Assistant Under-Secretary of the Green Development and Climate Change Sector.

The Climate Action Tracker rated the UAE's first nationally determined contributions as "highly insufficient", but its new target as nominally stronger.

The country's media outlets highlight the UAE's active engagement in talks on climate change in a prelude to COP26 conference.

The country's environment minister said the UAE has finalized a law on climate change to be the first in the region representing a general legal framework for climate mechanisms and efforts.

Stated Priorities

The country's officials are actively preparing for COP26 as part of its commitment to scaling up its climate action. At the COP21 United Nations Climate Change Conference in December 2015, the UAE affirmed its plan to generate 24% of its electricity from clean energy sources by 2021. The UAE is committed to continuing to work on progressive climate action and is the first in the region to announce an economy-wide emissions reduction by 2030.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment tweeted on 12 March: "Recognizing that climate change is humanity's no. 1 existential threat, the UAE is an active contributor to global climate efforts and a driver of regional climate action".

Qais Al Suwaidi, head of the climate change department in the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment said in August that the country's plans for a net-zero emissions may not be ready in time for the COP26 climate talks. "Don't expect us to announce anything by the COP26, but we are considering a net-zero target like any other part of the world," he said in an interview.

Meanwhile, the UAE and the UK on 16 September signed an agreement on Climate Change and Environmental Cooperation, which focuses on sharing "best practice for climate neutrality, mainstreaming climate and environment within development cooperation". It also aims to reduce climate risks and accelerate the low carbon transition nationally and globally.

Priority: Reduce greenhouse gases by 23.5% by 2030

Summary: The UAE says in its latest nationally determined contributions that it is aiming for a reduction of 23.5% in GHG emissions for the year 2030, relative to BAU (business as usual). BAU scenario emissions in 2030 stand at about 310 million tonnes, assuming a moderate annual economic growth rate based on historical growth trends."

Link broken:

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/United%20Arab%20Emirates%20NC4%20revised.pdf>

Priority: Waste recycling

Summary: Waste management is one of the key issues that the country is trying to handle. The UAE has managed to turn waste into an economic resource, and set a target to reach a 75% recycling of waste by 2021.

Link: <https://www.moccae.gov.ae/ar/knowledge-and-statistics/wastes-and-chemicals.aspx>

Priority: Protect fisheries

Summary: The environment agency in Abu Dhabi said it took 14 measures to preserve fisheries and prevent over-fishing and draining of fish reserves. One of the problems the agency is handling is the high increase in the number of fishing boats. Studies showed a 90% decline in fish reserves over the past 40 years.

Link: <https://www.emaratalyoud.com/local-section/other/2018-08-11-1.1125351>

Priority: Ensure water security

Summary: The UAE suffers a water shortage due to its arid weather. It has designed a strategy for water security which aims to ensure sustainable access to water during both normal and emergency conditions.

Link broken: <https://u.ae/en/about-the-uae/strategies-initiatives-and-awards/federal-governments-strategies-and-plans/the-uae-water-security-strategy-2036#:~:text=In%20September%202017%2C%20Ministry%20of,vision%20to%20achieve%20prosperity%20and>

UK

Summary (17th largest emitter)

The UK is in a special position leading up to COP26 as it will be hosting the meeting, and almost all domestic climate change issues are being discussed with COP26 in mind.

The debate does not only concern how the issues relate to the COP26 targets, like it may do in other countries, but also how the issues and the handling of them will reflect on the UK chairmanship itself: What does the UK's handling of its own climate goals say about its ability to “deliver” on the Glasgow summit as a whole?

Just like most other developed countries, the UK is behind on emission targets, but this is perceived in the media as worse than ever because of the country's key role in the COP26.

The UK is the birthplace of the industrial revolution and still struggles with legacy industries and their pollution. The government has close ties with, and enjoys economic support from, businesses in the pollution-heavy transport and industry sectors.

It was revealed in July 2021 that ExxonMobil, BP, Shell, Chevron and Equinor suggested to a UK government minister in 2020 that continued use of the fossil fuel was “a necessary compromise”. In general, UK ministers meet fossil fuel business representatives 10 times as often as clean fuel business representatives.

In 2020 the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) reported that the UK had failed to meet 17 of 21 climate adaptation targets.

The government has launched ambitious climate goals in anticipation of COP26, but has not fully managed to turn around years of policy just for this one event, so a lot of old structures, such as tax relief for carbon-intensive businesses, remain in place.

COP president-designate Alok Sharma told Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee that while processes are in place, he “certainly do[es] not underestimate the amount of work that we all collectively need to do,” adding that: “We need to do more in terms of closing the gap”.

Critics say the government isn't doing enough to reach its climate targets and warn that the UK's negotiating power will be “weakened” by the granting of new licences for North Sea oil and gas projects (promoted after a £400,000 oil business donation to politicians) and if a planned Cumbrian coalmine project isn't halted.

Leaked emails indicate that the UK dropped climate demands in a trade deal with Australia, prompting an opposition politician to say: “If we cannot even convince a prosperous ally and friend to engage seriously with the climate crisis, why should anyone – particularly from the global south – listen to the UK at the upcoming COP26 summit?”

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/g7-cop26-climate-change-political-spectacle-b1866933.html>

Campaigners have criticised the government for plans to cut foreign aid even though it promised financial investment in climate mitigation abroad during the June 2021 G7 meeting.

In April 2021, former UN climate chief Christiana Figueres said: “There have been recent decisions in the UK that are not aligning with the ambition of the net zero target. It is worrisome. There are raised eyebrows among world leaders watching the UK”.

Greenpeace scored Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s environmental work as “below expectation” and “failing”.

Government action to improve the nation's resilience was failing to keep up with the impact of warming and worsening climate risks already hitting the UK, the CCC said in mid-2021.

The country has an active environmental movement fighting on many fronts against air pollution and unsustainable development. It is challenging plans for a massive road building programme, finance for fossil fuels and more broadly, the system which it says promotes economic growth at the expense of the environment.

There have been some encouraging environmental trends. The UK’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 were half of 1990 levels, according to an analysis by Carbon Brief, which says the country is now halfway to meeting its target of “net-zero” emissions by 2050.

The reduction in the past three decades is attributed to cleaner power generation and cleaner industry. However, slower progress was made on heating, and almost no progress has been made on transport, which is still responsible for a quarter of the UK's emissions, Carbon Brief says.

The government plans to phase out the sale of all polluting road vehicles by 2040 and committing the aviation sector to a 2050 net zero emissions target. The UK has also been credited with cutting its existing emissions “at the fastest rate in the G7 since 1990”.

Stated priorities for the UK chairmanship

The UK chairmanship has identified four goals for COP26.

Priority: Mitigation

Summary: Doing everything possible to keep below 1.5C warming.

Links: <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-goals/mitigation/>

<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition>

Priority: Adaptation

Summary: Coordinating efforts to adapt to and minimise the loss already occurring from climate change – particularly by mobilising finance for poor countries, but also by building infrastructure differently. Alok Sharma told an African leaders’ conference that all countries should put adaptation to climate change at the heart of their response to the pandemic. “I urge you to join the Adaptation Action Coalition which aims to scale up action on adaptation around the world particularly relating to

water, health and infrastructure.” The international community must support these efforts by making finance available, he said.

Link: <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-goals/adaptation/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmCtwIOT-FE>

Priority: Finance

Summary: Mobilise public and private finance. Alok Sharma has made it one of his priorities to get public and private finance flowing, and to get developed countries to honour their commitments to raise 100 billion dollars a year in international climate finance.

Link: <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-goals/finance/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDGWIZ5XWSE>

Priority: Collaboration

Summary: Mainly, to finalise the rules for the Paris Agreement; the “Paris Rulebook”. The rules surround carbon market and emission trading, ensuring transparency, agreeing on common time frames and engaging the public and private sector and holding them accountable. Alok Sharma appears to be making some progress towards putting together a package of elements which can be agreed upon in Glasgow in November, saying in April 2021 that he had spoken to ministers and negotiators from 80 countries and that they had most prioritised several common issues. These included: The need for full implementation of the Paris Agreement; Adaptation; Loss & damage (averting, minimising and addressing); Finance (delivering on the \$100 billion mobilisation goal); Mitigation; and Inclusive action (to accelerate action by all).

Links: <https://ukcop26.org/cop26-goals/collaboration/>

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/CPD%20letter%20to%20all%20Parties.pdf>

Priority: Abandoning coal

Summary: Alok Sharma reportedly has made “abandoning coal” as his “personal priority” for the meeting. In June, the Environmental Audit Committee Chairman, Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP, said, in response to UK commitments on coal during the G7 meeting: “Agreeing to accelerate the move away from coal has given a powerful signal that the fossil fuel monopoly is reaching its day of reckoning”.

Links:

<https://www.afr.com/policy/energy-and-climate/abandon-coal-britain-fires-up-new-campaign-for-cop26-climate-summit-20210514-p57s68>

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/62/environmental-audit-committee/news/155811/chaireacts-to-the-announcements-made-at-the-g7-on-the-environment/>

Stated priorities for the UK itself

Priority: Net-zero by 2050

Summary: The UK's latest Nationally Determined Contribution, submitted in December 2020, commits it to reducing economy-wide domestic greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. It says this “represents a step forward for the UK’s ambition to tackle climate change over the next ten years, as the UK accelerates towards meeting the legally binding commitment to net zero by 2050. It is a significant increase from the UK’s previous contribution to the EU’s Intended NDC of 40% by 2030.”

Links: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uks-nationally-determined-contribution-communication-to-the-unfccc>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-sets-ambitious-new-climate-target-ahead-of-un-summit>

Priority: Cut emissions by 78% by 2035

Summary: The government further raised its targets in April 2021 by accepting the advice of its independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) to cut carbon emissions by 78% by 2035, compared with 1990 levels. Environmentalists welcomed this but warned that ministers had consistently failed to achieve previous CCC-set targets and they said Chancellor Rishi Sunak must show clearly how the transition is to be funded.

Links: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/09/ending-uk-climate-emissions-affordable-net-zero-climate-change-committee>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-56807520>

Priority: Adapt

Summary: The UK has also lodged an adaptation plan detailing “how the UK is improving resiliency and mitigation against the climate crisis both at home and overseas”.

Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uks-adaptation-communication-to-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change-unfccc-2020>

Priority: Start a green industrial revolution

Summary: Prime Minister Johnson set out a ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution in November 2020. He said the blueprint was important in the run-up to COP26 and would allow the UK to make progress in eradicating its contribution to climate change by 2050.

Links: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-outlines-his-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution-for-250000-jobs>

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/blog/boris-johnson-ten-point-net-zero-plan>

USA

Overview (2nd largest emitter)

The United States, the world's second biggest polluter, is now trying to take the lead in the fight against climate change.

After undermining international efforts to save the planet, the US has made a policy U-turn under the leadership of President Joe Biden who, within days of taking office in January 2021, issued an executive order placing the fight against climate change at the centre of domestic and foreign policy.

The USA has an above-average percentage of so-called "climate change deniers", which one commentator attributes to "the oil and gas industry's financial interests colliding with a powerful libertarian strain in US politics".

Climate change denial financed by US oil is thought to have seriously weakened international efforts to curb the use of fossil fuels.

However, the US is also home to some of the world's most famous climate change activists, scientists and influencers. US universities have climate change departments hosting world-renowned scientists such as James Hansen, Michael E Mann and Kate Marvel, and the country is also home to activists like Bill McKibben and actor and environmentalist Leonardo Di Caprio.

And in 2020 a record number of corporations are said to have pledged to go "net zero" and move to cancel out the carbon emissions they produce to halt a catastrophic rise in global temperatures.

The increasingly frequent storms which have battered the east coast as well as the snowstorms which hit Texas in 2021, the August 2021 hurricane Ida and wildfires causing severe air pollution are widely associated with climate change.

This dualism is also seen in the politics of Democrat President Biden. On the one hand, Biden has set out a very ambitious climate change mitigation plan, involving big parts of his administration and pledging money and time towards the cause, aiming to once again make the US a leader in the world's struggle to mitigate climate change.

He has pledged money to disadvantaged communities. The Environmental Protection Agency in September 2021 that historically underserved communities may be more exposed to the effects of climate change, including excessive heat, flooding and air pollution.

On the other hand, oil and energy companies are key to the American economy, evident in the way Biden's ambitious climate change plan was presented as much as a plan for "jobs" as for the climate in a press conference on the day it was signed. The Biden administration has also been hesitant over carbon taxes which would have a negative impact on US markets and jobs.

Further illustrating the duality, The New York Times said on 28 May that "despite President Biden's pledge to aggressively cut the pollution from fossil fuels that is driving climate change, his administration has quietly taken actions this month that will guarantee the drilling and burning of oil and gas for decades to come." The NYT added that the "clash between Mr Biden's pledges and some

of his recent decisions illustrates the political, technical and legal difficulties of disentangling the country from the oil, gas and coal”.

Two new infrastructure bills, key for the Biden administration to deliver on its climate pledges, are currently working their way slowly to the houses of Congress, with observers worrying that they cannot pass without some big compromises.

It seems that Mr Biden’s ambitious climate targets have hit a wall: The political reality.

Stated priorities for COP26

International priorities

Priority: Put climate crisis at centre of foreign policy and national security

Summary: An executive order says that the US will work with others to put the world on a sustainable climate pathway, and that it will rejoin the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Link: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>

Priority: Press for raised climate ambitions

Summary: The US hosted a Leaders’ Climate Summit on Earth Day in April 2021 during which several leaders promised action to curb climate change and to make a positive contribution to COP26.

Link: <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/takeaways-key-takeaways-biden-earth-day-summit-2021-04-22/>

Priority: Help finance developing countries’ emission reduction measures

Summary: The US will develop a climate finance plan to help developing countries develop ambitious reduction measures, promoting the flow of capital toward climate-aligned investments and away from high-carbon investments. On, 21 April, the US, UN, COP26 Presidency and others announced the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, with financial institutions across the world.

Biden pledged in September 2021 to double US aid for developing countries vulnerable to the climate crisis.

Links: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>

<https://unfccc.int/news/new-financial-alliance-for-net-zero-emissions-launches>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/sep/21/joe-biden-un-general-assembly-climate-aid-developing-countries>

Domestic priorities

Priority: Net-zero emissions by 2050

Summary: The US aims to deliver an equitable, clean energy future, and put the United States on a path to achieve net-zero emissions, economy-wide, by no later than 2050. At the Earth Day summit, Biden pledged to cut United States greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030. As the magazine Atmos says: “The change would require Biden to make good on his other proposals to completely overhaul the nation’s power and transportation sectors, from renewable energy to solar and wind power.”

Links: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>

<https://atmos.earth/joe-biden-climate-policy-laws-list/>

Priority: Develop the US nationally determined contributions (NDC)

Summary: The US submitted its NDCs in early 2021. The Climate Action Tracker described it “major progress”, adding that “while the new target shows a rise in climate mitigation ambition, it needs to be reflected in concrete actions and policies to ensure the US meets this target.”

In an online briefing hosted by the Department of State on 9 August 2021, Dr Jane Lubchenco, Deputy Director for Climate and Environment for the White House Office of Science and Technology, said: “The Biden-Harris administration is committed to ensuring that science is at the table to inform our actions, and we are committed to continuing to be a world leader in understanding and responding to the climate crisis... This administration is committed to leading with science and to making investments in the science needed to better understand the Earth system and its changes, as well as to help people prepare for and respond to current and future impacts.

Links:

<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/United%20States%20of%20America%20First/United%20States%20NDC%20April%202021%202021%20Final.pdf>

<https://www.state.gov/briefings-foreign-press-centers/climate-crisis-the-latest-science-and-u-s-objectives-for-cop-26/>

European Union

Events, initiatives and key people

EU Action Plan Toward a Zero Pollution Ambition

This is a EU initiative working towards reducing pollution

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12588-EU-Action-Plan-Towards-a-Zero-Pollution-Ambition-for-air-water-and-soil>

European Green Deal

The green deal is a plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. It was launched in 2019.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

For ‘players’ please see spreadsheet for list for people tweeting about Green Deal and lobbyists under ‘EU Environment Council Meetings’.

EU Environment Council meeting

The council, made up of ministers or government representatives responsible for the environment, meets around four times a year.

Key players

- Delegates
- Environmental lobbyists (for example, the European Environmental Bureau in Brussels connects many of the green organisations: <https://eeb.org/>)
- Business and industry lobbyists (according to most reports, the majority of lobbying, in terms of money spent and hours worked, comes from businesses and industry, with BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell, and Total having 200 lobbyists in Brussels.)

Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is a [European Union](#) scientific research and investment programme succeeding the current [Horizon 2020](#) programme. It has several mission areas, two of which are relevant for CAL:

Adaptation to climate change including societal transformation (hashtag #MissionClimate)
Climate-neutral and smart cities (hashtag #MissionCities)

Key players

- Experts and consultants involved in the preparation of the Adaptation to climate change mission
People who have tweeted about #MissionClimate
- Members of the “Commission expert group: Mission Board for climate-neutral and smart cities”

- Members of the “Mission Assembly for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities” (most of them run city-focussed organisations, or they are urbanity scientists)
- People who have tweeted about #MissionCities

EU Green Week in Lahti, Finland

Lahti is Europe’s green capital 2021 and therefore hosts this year’s annual EU Green Week. The Green Week initiative is run by Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius and his team.

COP26 and the United Nations

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) secretariat is tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. The Convention is the parent treaty of the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#).

The secretariat organises between two and four negotiating sessions each year – the largest of which is the annual Conference of the Parties (COP).

The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow from 31 October – 12 November 2021.

The UNFCCC secretariat in Bonn, Germany, is led by Patricia Espinosa. There is also a UNFCCC “bureau” that deals with process issues. The bureau members only serve for a few years. Most of the current ones come from the COP25, which was held in Madrid, Spain, in December 2019.

The official power of the COP belongs to the delegates, or parties. They often negotiate together in blocks, or form alliances towards specific goals.

There are also groups that can observe but not take part, such as UN bodies (UNEP, WHO, UNHCR, etc), NGOs and others.

Power arguably also rests with the many scientists, committee members and advisers that feed into the many expert committees and subgroups that advise the UNFCCC, for example the IPCC, as well as with the many lobbyists sponsoring and interacting with the administration.

The COP26 is not run by the IPCC (they are an expert group, a “body”) or UNEP (they are there to observe, just like WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, etc).

Key players

Secretariat

Executive Secretary: Patricia Espinosa <https://twitter.com/PEspinosaC>

Deputy Executive Secretary: Ovais Sarmand <https://twitter.com/OvaisSarmad>

Adaptation Division, Intergovernmental Support and Collective Progress division: Youssef Nassef <https://twitter.com/ynassef>

Means of Implementation Division and Administrative Services, Human Resources, and Information and Communication Technology Division: Daniele Violetti

Mitigation Division, Communication and Engagement Division: James Grabert

Transparency Division: Donald Cooper

Legal Affairs Division: Hafida Lahiouel

Conference Affairs Division: Laura Lopez

Bureau

The bureau was elected during COP25. A new bureau will be elected in COP26, with some members perhaps remaining on the board. See here for names/positions of current board: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Bureau%20members_cop_cmp_cma_web.pdf

The Glasgow COP26 team

President: Alok Sharma https://twitter.com/AlokSharma_RDG

See here for full team: <https://ukcop26.org/uk-presidency/our-team/>

UNFCCC and IPCC committees and expert groups

Please see spreadsheet for those with Twitter accounts

Other key people

Names mentioned frequently in traditional and social media outlets, and by experts, as important players leading up to the Glasgow meeting. (Please note again that just like with the EU, there is a small bit of overlap in the Excel sheet, where a handful of names appear in two or more groups.)