

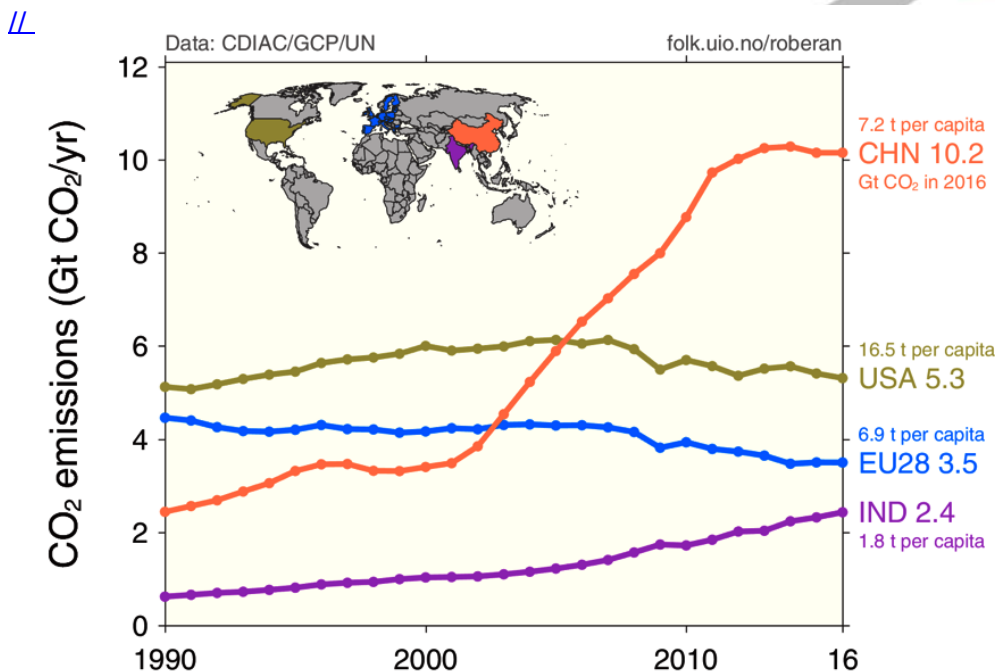


# Five Years of Paris Climate Accord

## Why in News

Recently, India has reiterated her commitment to the [Paris Climate Accord](#), prior to the **Climate Ambition Summit** which will start from 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at Glasgow, Scotland.

- The **Climate Ambition Summit 2020** will mark the **fifth anniversary** of the **Paris Agreement**, and will **provide a platform** for government and non-governmental leaders to **demonstrate their commitment** to the Paris Agreement and the multilateral process.



## Key Points

- **Climate Ambition Summit 2020:**
  - **Objective:** To set out new and ambitious commitments under the three pillars of the **Paris Agreement** that are **mitigation, adaptation and finance commitments**.
  - **Scope:** The Summit will provide a **meaningful platform** for businesses, cities and other non-state actors who are rallying together and collaborating to support governments and **accelerate the systemic change required to reduce emissions and build resilience**.
  - **Hosted By:** The [United Nations](#), United Kingdom and France in partnership with Chile and Italy.
- **History of Emissions:**

- As the most abundant **Greenhouse Gas (GHG)** in our atmosphere, **carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)** has become a direct proxy for measuring climate change. Its levels have varied widely over the course of the Earth's 4.54 billion year history.
- Historically it's the **developed countries that have been major contributors** to carbon emissions.
- **Historical Emissions:**
  - The United States (US) has the highest historical emissions at **25%**, followed by the **European Union (EU)** at **22%** and China at **13%**.
  - India has a low carbon emission contribution of only **3%**.

## Paris Climate Accord

- **Legal status:** It is a **legally binding international treaty on climate change.**
- **Adoption:** It was adopted by **196 countries** at **Conference of the Parties COP 21** in Paris in **December 2015.**
- **Goal:** To limit global warming to **well below 2° Celsius, and preferably limit it to 1.5° Celsius**, compared to pre-industrial levels.
- **Objective:** To achieve the **long-term temperature goal**, countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a climate-neutral world by mid-century.
- **Current Status of Global Emissions:**
  - **Five years after the Paris agreement**, all states have submitted their national contributions to mitigate and adapt to **climate change.**
  - The contributions are **radically insufficient** to reach the well **below 2 degrees Celsius limit and are even further from the 1.5 degrees Celsius** temperature limit identified in the Paris Agreement.
  - Besides **India**, only Bhutan, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Morocco and Gambia were complying with the accord.
  - **China** has the **highest GHG emissions (30%)** while the **US** contributes **13.5%** and the **EU** **8.7%.**
- **India's Current Emissions:**
  - A **United Nations report** released earlier this year stated that India's per capita emissions are actually **60% lower than the global average.**
  - The emissions in the country **grew 1.4% in 2019**, much lower than its **average of 3.3% per year over the last decade.**
  - **Some of the Measures taken by India to Control Emissions:**
    - **Bharat Stage (BS) VI norms:** These are emission control standards put in place by the government to keep a **check on air pollution.**
    - **National Solar Mission:** It is a major initiative of the Government of India and State Governments to **promote ecologically sustainable growth** while addressing India's energy security challenge.
    - **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy 2018:** The main objective of the policy is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected **wind-solar photovoltaic (PV) hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilization of wind and solar resources**, transmission infrastructure and land.
    - All these and many other initiatives helped India in cutting **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 164 million kg.**
- **Issues in Achieving the Pledged Targets:**
  - Most of the Nations have been slow to update their **national contributions for reducing emissions for 2025-2030**, however several have announced **net zero emission targets** in the recent past.

- **Net zero emission** means that all man-made greenhouse gas emissions must be removed from the atmosphere through reduction measures, thus reducing the Earth's net climate balance.
- The net zero targets are **subject to credibility, accountability and fairness checks.**
- **Credibility:** The plans and policies of nations is not credible enough to meet the long term **net zero targets** as :
  - The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) 1.5 degrees Celsius Report](#) indicated that to stay within a reasonable chance of achieving 1.5 degrees Celsius, global **CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have to fall by 45% from the 2010 levels by 2030** but **current national contributions are not on track for such a fall.**
- **Accountability:** There is **limited or no accountability** for the long-term net zero goals and short-term national contributions as:
  - Many **net zero goals have not yet been embedded in national contributions and long-term strategies** under the Paris Agreement.
  - In any case, **accountability under the Paris Agreement is limited.** States are not obliged to achieve their self-selected targets. There is **no mechanism to review the adequacy** of individual contributions. **States are only asked to provide justifications** for the fairness and ambition of their targets.
  - The **transparency framework does not contain a robust review function**, and the compliance committee is facilitative and limited to ensuring compliance with a short list of binding procedural obligations..
- **Fairness:** Issues of fairness and justice, **both between and within generations, are unavoidable:**
  - There is **no mechanism** to check that whether the net zero targets, and pathways to net zero are fair or how much are states doing in comparison to others and relative to how much they should.

## Way Forward

- To achieve this long-term temperature goal, **countries should aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible** to achieve a climate-neutral world by mid-century.
- **Net zero pledges need to be credible, accountable and fair** to get us to a stable climate. Not all states will be in a position to pledge net zero targets, nor should they be expected to. All states, including India, can, however, **pledge actions that are credible, accountable and fair.**
- Credible **short-term commitments, with a clear pathway to medium-term decarbonisation**, that take into account the multiple challenges states face, such as on air pollution, and development, might well be the more defensible choice for some.

[Source:IE](#)

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