

# Paris climate talks, day 11: What we're reading

New draft agreement released, the United States increases its financial commitment, and permafrost could spoil the progress in Paris.

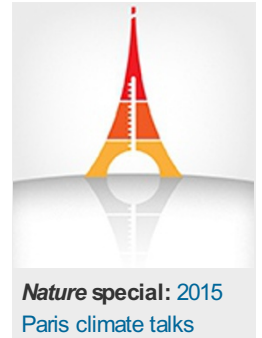
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With two days of negotiations left, the Paris climate talks “are running suspiciously on time”. But big issues — such as agreeing on an actual warming target — still remain.

## 1. New draft whittles down the choices

Negotiators released the latest draft of a climate deal on 9 December, and the document is now at a [much-reduced length of 29 pages](#) (compared to the previous 48 pages). The main sticking points remain finding agreement on a warming target and determining how to keep countries honest and accountable. Today will be a busy day at the summit, [with negotiators expected to produce another draft](#) ahead of the meeting's scheduled close tomorrow. Negotiators will have to [choose between warming targets](#): “below” 2 °C, “well below” 2 °C or an ambitious target of 1.5 °C.



## 2. An \$800-million promise to poor countries

US Secretary of State John Kerry announced on 9 December that the United States would double its financial commitment to poor countries that are most at risk from climate change, increasing its funding to US\$800 million. In the same speech, he also criticized the idea that developing nations might be subject to less stringent rules on emissions verification. “We have to know that everybody is also being held to the same system of transparency about the progress they’re making,” [Kerry said during the announcement](#).

## 3. An unforeseen carbon source

At a news conference during the climate talks, scientists presented results that could drastically alter the carbon-budget calculations used to project Earth’s future warming. They say that the carbon dioxide and methane locked away in permafrost — frozen soil in the polar regions — could contribute more than half of the carbon budget allowed if warming is to be kept below 2 °C. “It’s just like you put celery in your freezer and then you turn your freezer into a refrigerator, and it starts to rot,” a source [told The Washington Post](#).

## 4. Climate change could melt mummies

As well as releasing more greenhouse gases into the air, melting permafrost could cause trouble for archaeologists. Mummies frozen in the ground provide a snapshot of ancient life because their hair, tattoos and clothes are often preserved, [The New York Times reports](#). Thawing permafrost puts these mummies at risk of warming and rotting.

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