

Climate negotiators complete first draft of global agreement

Text arrives on time, but leaves big decisions for the government ministers next week.

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On 5 December, negotiators at the United Nations climate talks in Paris released a draft of an agreement to reduce global greenhouse-gas emissions.

The 48-page document will be debated by government ministers next week, with the aim of agreeing a new global climate deal by the scheduled end of the talks, on 11 December.

The draft does not resolve [key debates](#), such as when to revisit and strengthen nations' current pledges to cut emissions, but it does contain hints of compromise, says Keya Chatterjee, executive director of the US Climate Action Network in Washington DC.

Most importantly, Chatterjee says, the negotiations thus far have run smoothly and produced a manageable document for the ministers. "This whole week has been very low drama," she says. "The process has moved like molasses, but it has been exactly what you would expect in a situation where you have no major problems."

The draft agreement does not define when countries would be required to come back to the table and review the collective effort to curb greenhouse-gas emissions. One provision discusses a "facilitative dialogue" that would take place as early as 2018 or 2019. It also remains unclear exactly how the process of reviewing — and in theory, toughening pledges — will work.

Review mechanisms

For countries whose climate pledges expire in 2025, such as the United States, the expectation is that they will have to extend their commitments to 2030 sometime in the next five or six years, says Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington DC. But the Paris agreement will have to include a different process for countries such as [India](#), [China](#) and Japan, whose pledges already extend to 2030.

One of the big questions for negotiators is how countries' performance carrying out their pledges will be reported and reviewed. The United States has pushed for better monitoring of emissions by developing countries, but many poor nations worry about the cost and feasibility of doing so.

The goal, Meyer says, is to gradually bring developing countries up to the same level of reporting and verification that is currently required of the major developed economies. There are various proposals included in the current Paris draft, but some would delay decisions on the details of reporting requirements to next year's UN climate meeting in Morocco.

"Everyone knows that you are not going to get everything done here," says Meyers. "But we really need to get the big issues solved."



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