

France tries to bridge divide in climate talks

Third draft of climate accord includes French proposals intended to coax an agreement out of rich and poor nations.

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Paris climate talks: The anatomy of an agreement

The focus of the Paris climate talks is to reach an agreement on carbon emissions. This agreement takes the form of a mammoth document - full of articles, definitions and clauses. Nature Video takes a look at the anatomy of this agreement, with help from John O. Niles of UC San Diego.

Negotiators at the United Nations-sponsored climate talks in Paris made a breakthrough late on 10 December, when the French leadership released a new draft agreement to cut greenhouse-gas emissions. It resolves longstanding disputes over how to finance climate action, and how strict a goal the global effort should set.

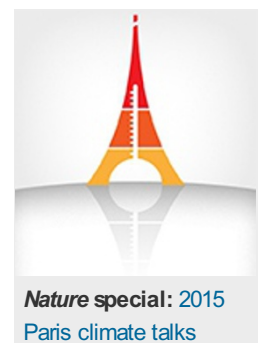
The 27-page draft calls for limiting global warming to “well below 2 °C” above pre-industrial levels, while directing nations to “pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C”. The draft agreement also calls for developed countries to continue to increase climate aid to developing countries after the current commitment of US\$100 billion per year is attained in 2020.

“I think the agreement is in sight,” says Nathaniel Keohane, who heads the global climate programme for the Environmental Defense Fund in New York.

The latest draft also outlines a plan for countries to revisit, in 2019, their collective efforts to cut emissions. All countries should re-examine their individual climate pledges in 2020, and then every five years after.

“That creates a huge opportunity for political pressure on countries to step up their effort,” says Jake Schmidt, director of the international programme at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington DC.

But much work remains to be done at the talks, which are scheduled to end tomorrow — a timetable that seems optimistic at this point.



Negotiators have yet to iron out an agreement on how to handle unavoidable impacts from climate change. But the biggest issue heading into the final hours of the climate talks may be transparency: the new text does not resolve any questions about what kind of process will be set up to assess whether countries are living up to their pledges.

“That’s the heart of the agreement, and now it’s the heart of the negotiations,” Keohane says.

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