

GOALS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The international response to climate change dates back to 1979 when the first World Climate Conference highlighted concerns arising from the increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In recognition of the global nature of the problem, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was agreed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. 189 countries, including all major developed and developing countries, have ratified the Convention. The UNFCCC sets the overarching objective for multilateral action: to stabilise greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that avoids dangerous anthropogenic climate change. The Kyoto Protocol, agreed in December 1997, set out an approach for binding international action and agreed specific

commitments up to 2012. It entered into force in February 2005 and has been ratified by 162 countries as of October 2006. However, the US and Australia have declined to join the Protocol, and the Canadian administration has signalled that it is likely to be unable to meet its commitments. Kyoto Protocol commitments of some large economies are documented in the Table. Climate change is now a regular part of the agenda for G8 Summits. G8 declarations are non-binding, but they have provided strong direction to a range of other international bodies.

National initiatives and policy measures designed to foster national and international co-operation in support of global environment issues are numerous, and rising in numbers. They can be found in countries at all stages of development. More than half of these policy measures flow from national policy choices.

Goals on climate change and clean energy adopted by 10 largest economies

Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National objective to increase the share of alternative renewable energy sources (biomass, wind and small hydro) to 10% by 2030 Programmes to protect public forests from deforestation by designating some areas that must remain unaltered and others only for sustainable use
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 11th Five Year Plan contains stringent national objectives including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 20% reduction in energy intensity of GDP from 2005 to 2010 – 10% reduction in emission of air pollutants – 15% of energy from renewables within the next ten years
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kyoto Protocol commitment to cap GHG emissions at 1990 levels by the period 2008–12 National objective for 25% reduction from 1990 levels of GHGs by 2020 and four fold reduction (75–80%) by 2050
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce GHG emissions by 21% on 1990 levels by the period 2008–12 Offered to set a target of 40% reduction below 1990 levels by 2020 if EU accepts a 30% reduction target National objective to supply 20% of electricity from renewable sources by 2020
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 11th Five Year Plan contains mandatory and voluntary measures to increase efficiency in power generation and distribution, increase the use of nuclear power and renewable energy, and encourage mass transit programmes. The Integrated Energy Policy estimates that these initiatives could reduce the GHG intensity of the economy by as much as one third
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce GHG emissions by 6.5% on 1990 levels by the period 2008–12 National objective to increase share of electricity from renewable resources to 20% by 2010
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce GHG emissions by 6% on 1990 levels by the period 2008–12 National objective for 30% reduction in energy intensity of GDP from 2003 to 2030
Russian Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kyoto Protocol commitment to cap GHG emissions at 1990 levels by the period 2008–12
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kyoto Protocol commitment to reduce GHG emissions by 12.5% on 1990 levels by the period 2008–12 National objectives to reduce CO₂ emissions by 20% on 1990 levels by 2010 and by 60% on 2000 levels by 2050
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary federal objective to reduce GHG intensity level by 18% on 2002 levels by 2012 California, the largest state, in the US, has an objective to reduce CO₂ emissions by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050 States in the north-east and mid-Atlantic have set up the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to cut emissions to 2005 levels between 2009 and 2015, and by a further 10% between 2015 and 2018

Source: Stern, N. (2006), *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

The majority of the world's largest economies now have goals in place to reduce carbon emissions, or to decrease energy intensity, increase renewable energy and decrease deforestation. Countries have adopted a range of goals; if they can successfully deliver these, emissions will be reduced significantly below their "business as usual" path. The Table summarises some of the relevant goals adopted by countries that account for around two thirds of the global economy and emissions.

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Reference

Stern, N. (2006), *The Economics of Climate Change: The Stern Review*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, chapter 21.