

## Trump announces US withdrawal from Paris Climate Agreement

President Trump announced the withdrawal of the United States from the landmark Paris climate agreement, an extraordinary move that dismayed America's allies and set back the global effort to address the warming planet.

Trump's decision set off alarms worldwide, drawing swift and sharp condemnation from foreign leaders as well as top environmentalists and corporate titans, who decried the U.S. exit from the Paris accord as an irresponsible abdication of American leadership in the face of irrefutable scientific evidence.

Trump, who has labeled climate change a "hoax," made good on a campaign promise to "cancel" the Paris agreement and Obama-era regulations that he said were decimating industries and killing jobs. The president cast his decision as a "reassertion of America's sovereignty," arguing that the climate pact as negotiated under President Barack Obama was grossly unfair to the U.S. workers he had vowed to protect with his populist "America First" platform.

With the world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases walking away from the pact, scientists said it would be nearly impossible for the world to realize its agreed goal of limiting global warming to below a 2-degree Celsius (3.6-degree Fahrenheit) rise above preindustrial temperatures.

Still, many U.S. states and private companies announced that despite Trump's decision, they would continue their own existing policies, such as restricting greenhouse gas emissions, as well as pursue new ones to demonstrate urgency in addressing the climate threat.

Citing a litany of statistics disputed by environmentalists, Trump argued that the pact would hurt domestic manufacturing and other industries and would put the United States at a "permanent disadvantage" with China, India and other rising powers. Staying in the accord, he said, would cost the United States as many as 2.7 million jobs by 2025 and as much as \$3 trillion in lost gross domestic product.

In a gesture to those who had encouraged him to remain in the accord, Trump said he was open to negotiating a new climate deal that, in his assessment, would be more fair to U.S. interests.

The leaders of France, Germany and Italy issued a joint statement voicing "regret" about Trump's move, promising to redouble their efforts to implement the Paris agreement and asserting that it cannot be renegotiated.

Erik Solheim, executive director of the United Nations Environment Program, said in an interview that "the biggest losers will be the American people."

Central to Trump's rationale was his feeling that the United States had been taken advantage of. Trump argued the Paris accord was so unfavourable to U.S. interests that other countries were laughing at America.

Obama strongly defended the Paris agreement as a measure to "protect the world we leave to our children." He said the pact was the product of "steady, principled American leadership on the world stage," pointing out that it had broad support from the private sector.

More than 190 nations agreed to the accord in December 2015 in Paris, and 147 have since formally ratified or otherwise joined it, including the United States — representing more than 80 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

It's also heavily backed by U.S. and global corporations, including oil giants Royal Dutch Shell, ExxonMobil and BP. Large corporations, especially those operating in international markets, have had years to get used to the idea of reductions on carbon emissions, and they have been adapting their businesses accordingly for some time.



Condemnations of Trump's decision were immediate and strongly worded. Former vice president Al Gore, who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his work raising awareness about global warming and personally tried to persuade Trump, said the president's decision was "reckless and indefensible."

Jeff Immelt, the chief executive of General Electric, tweeted: "Disappointed with the decision on the Paris Agreement. Climate change is real. Industry must now lead and not depend on government."

Meanwhile, Goldman Sachs chief executive Lloyd Blankfeintweeted "The decision is a setback for the environment and for the U.S.'s leadership position in the world!"

The United States joins only two countries — Nicaragua and Syria — in opposing a climate agreement reached by all other nations in 2015. A signature diplomatic achievement for Obama, the Paris accord was celebrated at the time as a universal response to the global warming crisis.

However, the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris agreement cannot actually be finalized until near the end of Trump's term because of the accord's legal structure and language. Withdrawing the United States from the agreement could take years but such a move would weaken its goals almost immediately. The United States is the world's second-largest greenhouse gas emitter and would otherwise have accounted for 21 percent of the total emissions reductions achieved by the accord through 2030.

## UN raises world population forecast to 9.8 billion people by 2050

The world's population will grow to 8.6 billion in 2030, 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100, driven by faster growth in African countries, according to forecasts by the United Nations.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs published its "World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision", raising its previous predictions for population growth from 8.5 billion by 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050.

The main reason for the adjustment is increased population growth in India and Africa. India is currently the second most populous country in the world with 1.3 billion inhabitants, compared to China's 1.4 billion, but India's population is expected to surpass China's by 2024.

Meanwhile, Africa is experiencing continued high rates of population growth. The UN report predicts, between 2017 and 2050, the populations of 26 African countries will expand to at least double their current size. The population of Africa is notable for its rapid pace of growth. It is anticipated that over half of global population growth between now and 2050 will take place in that region. At the other extreme, it is expected that the population of Europe will decline somewhat in the coming decades.

Despite lower fertility rates in nearly all regions of the world (total fertility rates in Africa slowed from 5.1 births per woman between 2000 and 2005 to 4.7 in 2010 to 2015), life expectancy is higher worldwide; global life expectancy has risen from 65 years for men and 69 years for women in 2000 to 2005, to 69 years for men and 73 years for women in 2010 to 2015.

This will lead to older populations, with more people surviving into old age. This will create challenges and opportunities. For instance, countries with growing populations will experience a concentration of people of working-age, leading to a rapid growth of income per capita. On the other hand, in countries with rapidly growing older populations, the upward shift in the age distribution challenges the sustainability of social protection systems, especially old-age pension and health care systems, due to a decreasing ratio of workers to retirees.

The UN report predicts that by 2050, half of the world's population growth will be concentrated in just nine countries: India, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania, the U.S., Uganda and Indonesia.