

## Paris Agreement on Climate Change Enters into Force

NOVEMBER 8, 2016

On November 4, 2016, the Paris Agreement entered into force with 97 countries ratifying it and agreeing to be bound by its terms.

The Paris Agreement was created by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and was negotiated at the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC in Paris. It was adopted by consensus on December 12, 2015, with nearly 200 countries signing on. The goal of the Paris Agreement is to “strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change” by, among other things:

1. Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2° C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;
2. Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production; and
3. Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

Under Article 21 of the Paris Agreement, it enters into “force on the thirtieth day after the date on which at least 55 parties to the Convention accounting in total for at least an estimated 55 per cent of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval, or accession.” This condition was met on October 5, 2016. Entry into force of an international agreement or treaty makes it legally binding and operational for the parties who have expressed their consent to be bound by it. In other words, the obligations of the Paris Agreement are now in effect for those parties who have ratified it.

As of the writing of this post, and as noted above, 97 parties have ratified the Paris Agreement, including the United States. The Clean Power Plan is a key component of the United States’ plan to comply with the Paris Agreement. The outcome of the [pending litigation](#) regarding the Clean Power Plan, as well as the results of the 2016 presidential election, will affect the implementation of the Paris Agreement domestically.

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