



Climate change had been identified as a problem by the global community as far back as 40 years. Today, climate change is acknowledged not only as a clear and present danger to the planet, but also one of the most pressing threats to human health and wellbeing. In 1992, almost all countries signed an international framework to limit the increase in average global temperature. Since then, world leaders and governments have been participating in climate diplomacy, reached important agreements and signed key international treaties to find ways to combat climate change and cope with its impacts.

In this lesson, we will explore:

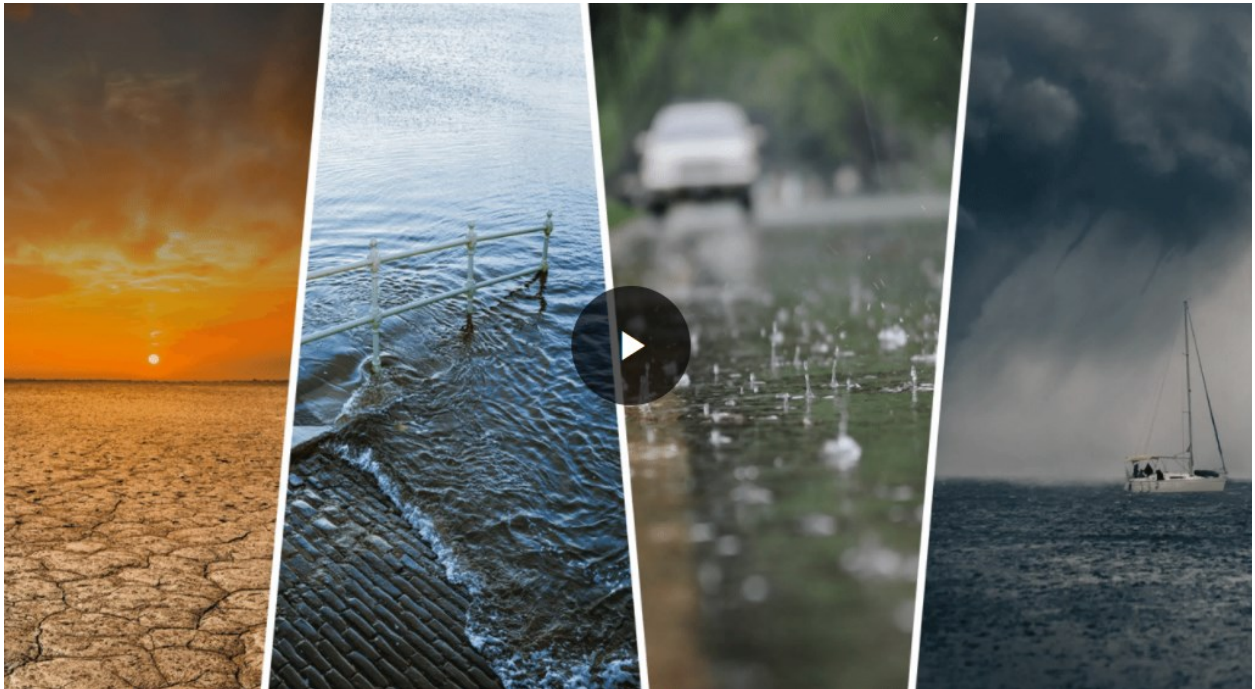
- The key milestones in the history of climate diplomacy;
- The structure and functioning of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- The Kyoto Protocol; and
- The Cancun Agreements.

# Introduction

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Welcome to Lesson 2 of the Climate Change  
Negotiations and Health course.

Let's begin our journey by watching a short introductory video (check online lesson)



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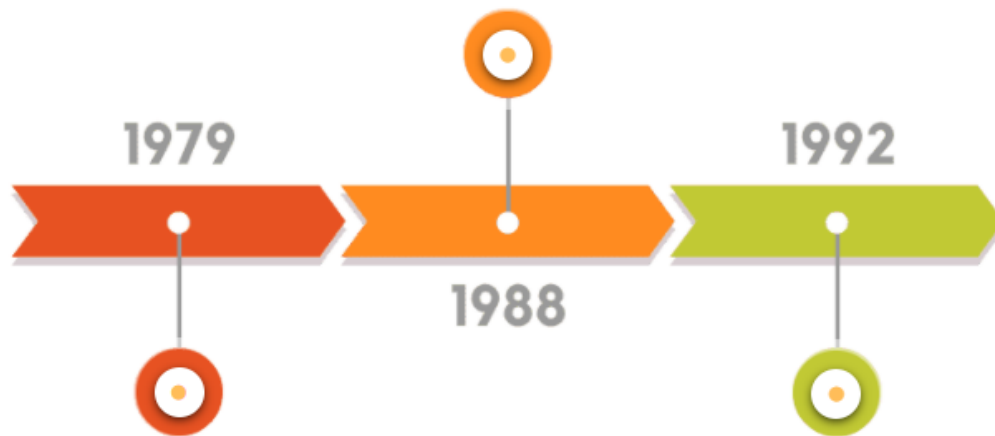
In the next segment, we will review key events in the history of  
the UN Climate Negotiations between 1979 and 1992.

## Timeline of Events (1979-1992)

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At the start of the twentieth century, climate change was largely seen as a scientific phenomenon. However, in the 1970s, environmental issues featured in the international agenda for the first time.



### ➤ 1979



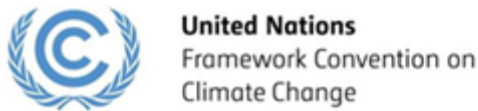
The First World Climate Conference, sponsored by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), is organized in Geneva.

➤ **1988**



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is created. This is the United Nations body which assesses the science related to climate change, providing options for adaptation and mitigation.

➤ **1992**



The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is established and open for signature at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), commonly known as the Rio Earth Summit.

The UNFCCC was the first global agreement that acknowledged the existence of human-induced climate change.  
In the next segment, we will learn more about the UNFCCC.

## What is the Role of the UNFCCC?

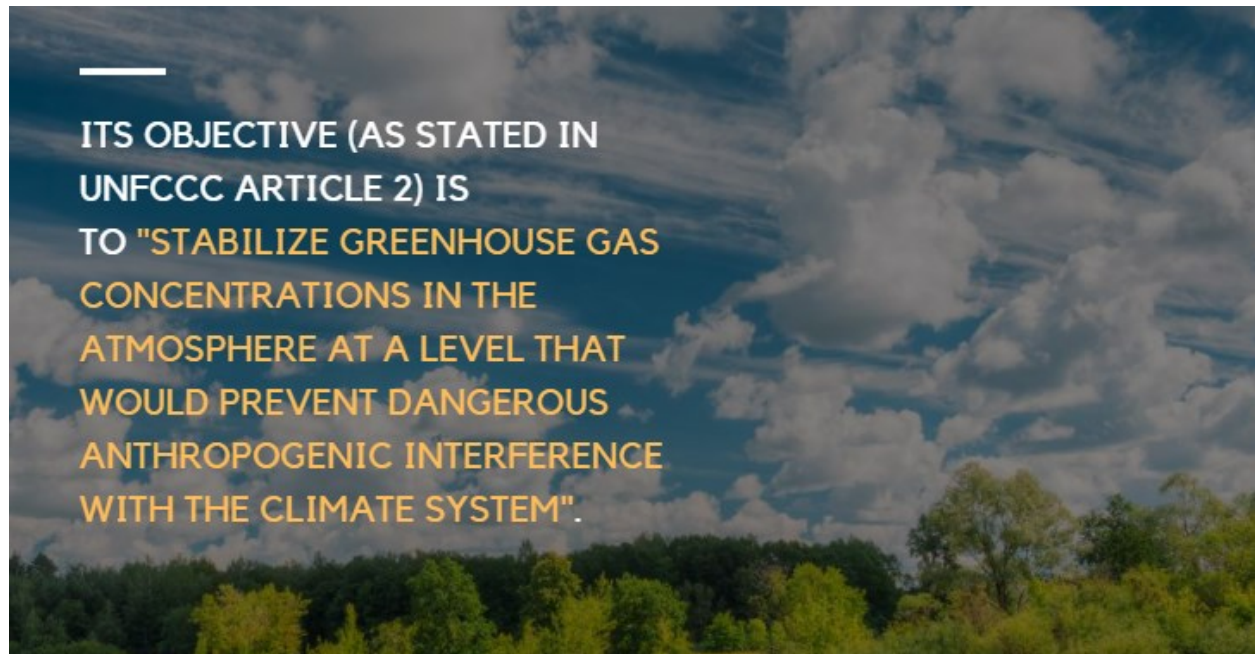
IN 1992, COUNTRIES JOINED AN INTERNATIONAL TREATY (THE UNFCCC) AS A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE.



## What is the UNFCCC?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) is an **international environmental treaty to combat climate change** by limiting average global temperature increases and coping with the impacts of global warming.

The Secretariat to the Convention is based in Bonn, Germany. So far, the Convention has been ratified by **197 countries**, also known as Parties to the Convention.



## Health in the UNFCCC

The [Convention](#) integrates health in 2 places.

- UNFCCC Article 1 - The UNFCCC definition of "adverse effects of climate change" comprises "effects on health and welfare".
- UNFCCC Article 4.1.f - Public Health is highlighted in the Convention as a key area for consideration for governments taking climate actions.

The UNFCCC Provides a Framework for Countries to Combat Climate Change.

So, do you think all countries are equally responsible for the rise in global temperature and other forms of environmental destruction?

- Yes
- No

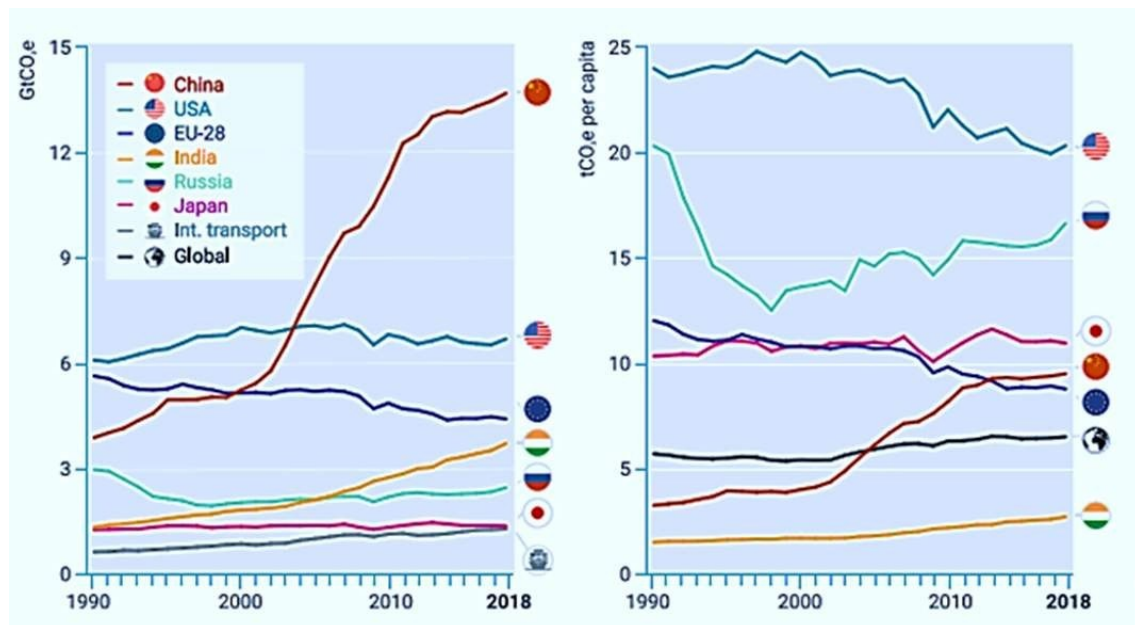
Okay, so do you think all countries should contribute equally toward the efforts to limit temperature increase?

- Yes
- No

## Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)

"Common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR) is one of the main principles of the Convention. It is very relevant in the negotiations and is also known as "differentiation".

The principle implies that, although **all countries are responsible** for creating climate change, some are **more responsible than others**.



Source: Emissions Gap Report, UNEP 2020

The chart above shows difference in the historic GHG emissions (both absolute and per capita emissions) produced by different countries. Notice how some of the (mostly developed) countries are responsible for higher emissions than the global average.

The principle of "**common but differentiated responsibilities**" acknowledges that the reduction of GHG emissions is a common responsibility, but also provides for developed countries - who have a larger share of historical emissions - to take the lead in taking climate action to tackle the problem.

How does the UNFCCC work? Who attends the UNFCCC negotiations? And how do they make decisions?  
You will find the answers in the next segment.



PARTIES	Countries that are a part of the Convention are generally called "Parties". Delegates of Parties are identified by a pink badge.
OBSERVERS	Any other organization or members of civil society, ranging from a private company to a non-governmental organization (NGO), to a city are called "Observers". Observers are organized into different representative groupings called "Constituencies" (for example, youth, farmers, women, industry). Observers are identified by a yellow badge.
UN AGENCIES	UN agencies, such as WHO, and other specialized agencies are also observers to the UNFCCC. They are identified by a blue badge.

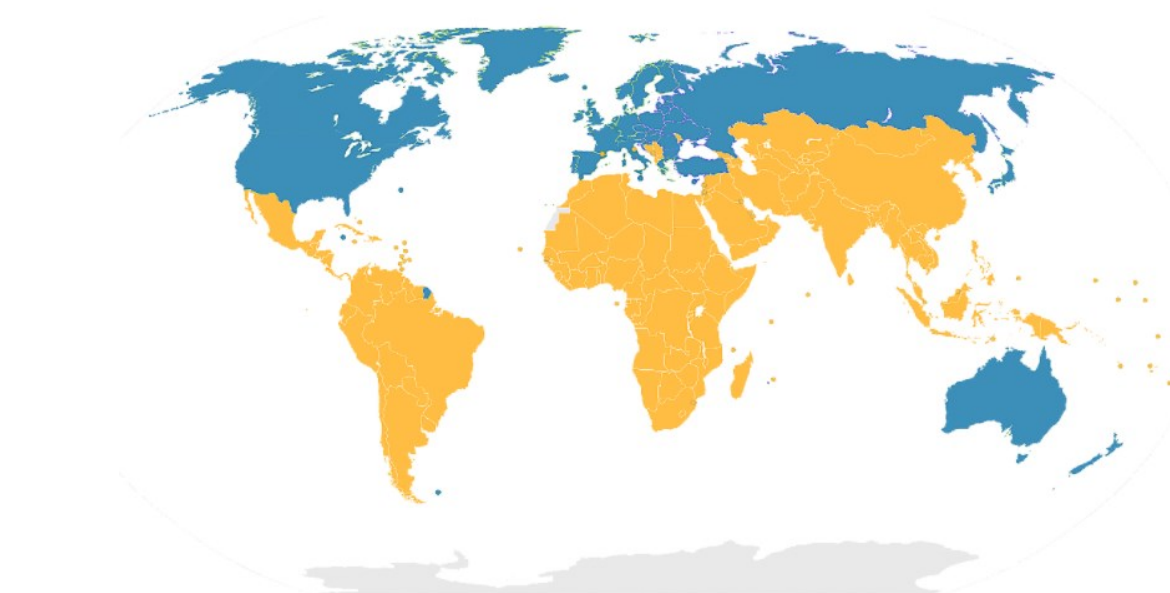
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UN AGENCIES	UN agencies, such as WHO, and other specialized agencies are also observers to the UNFCCC. They are identified by a blue badge.

PRESS	Members of the press and media from around the world cover the climate conferences. Press members are identified by an orange badge.
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## Negotiating Groups at the UNFCCC

The Convention divides countries into two main groups, according to differing commitments.

<b>Annex 1 Parties</b> <i>Include mostly industrialized countries</i>	<b>Non-Annex 1 Parties</b> <i>Include mostly developing countries</i>
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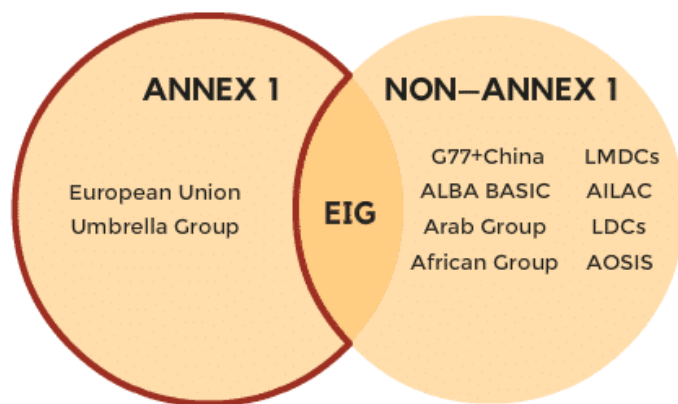
During the sessions of the UNFCCC bodies, Parties are represented by their national delegations. However, they generally work through [groupings](#) in order to define common negotiating positions. Knowing their negotiating positions is a good entry point for promoting health-relevant positions and policies.

### Annex 1 –

**European Union:** A regional organization, the European Union (EU) is a party to the UNFCCC. Its [27 members](#) coordinate and privately agree on a common negotiating position. The country holding the EU presidency, a role which rotates every six months, speaks on behalf of the European Union and its member states. The EU announced its goal to become climate neutral in 2050. For further information on the EU climate diplomacy, please check: [Climate negotiations | Climate Action \(europa.eu\)](#).

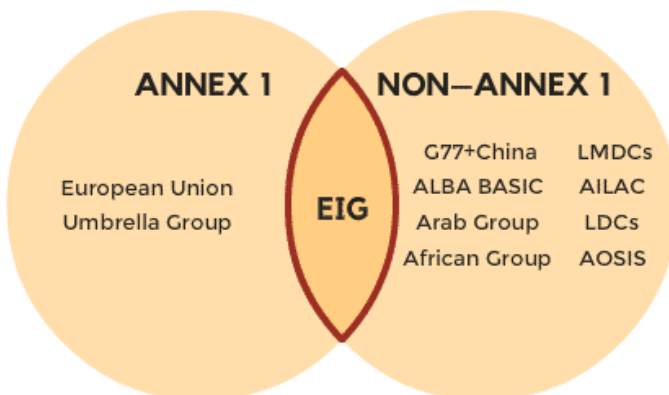


**Umbrella Group:** Formed after the adoption of Kyoto Protocol, it comprises 12 Parties, including Australia, Belarus, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United States. You can read the Statement by Australia on behalf of the Umbrella Group at COP25 [here](#).



### Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)

The **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)** includes Mexico, Liechtenstein, Monaco, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland. These 5 countries are not part of other groupings and negotiate jointly only when they share a common position. Together, they promote the environmental integrity of the climate change framework.



### Non-Annex 1

**G77+ China:** It is the largest group, consisting of [134 countries](#). Developing countries generally coordinate common negotiating positions through this group following a consensus approach.

However, countries can also choose to express their positions individually. Coordination for specific issues can be delegated by the group to specific countries.

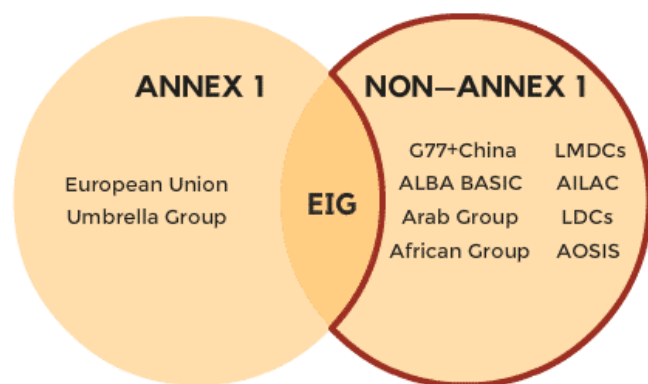
The Chair of the group rotates on an annual basis. The opening statement of the group at COP25 can be accessed [here](#). Further information can be accessed [here](#).

**African Group:** It is an alliance of the [54 African countries](#) that represents and voice the interests of the region in the negotiations. Topics that are particularly relevant for the members of this group include adaptation, financing, capacity building and technology transfer.

Further information can be accessed [here](#).

**LDCs:** [47 Parties](#) are defined as Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The UNFCCC pays specific attention to these countries given their limited capacity to address climate change, encouraging particular consideration when discussing issues related to finance and transfer of technology. LCDs often jointly share their views and support their interests (for instance, with respect to vulnerability, adaptation, loss and damage, climate finance and ambitious mitigation). Further information on the LDCs can be accessed [here](#).

**AOSIS:** The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) brings together [39 countries and 5 observers](#). Despite their low emission levels, these low-lying countries are particularly threatened by climate change. They push for increased ambition to cut GHG emissions and for enhanced adaptation efforts. The AOSIS COP25 closing statement can be accessed [here](#).



### Non-Annex 1 (Other Groups)

Several other groups exist, including:

**Arab Group:** This group includes 22 countries from Africa, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula, including Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

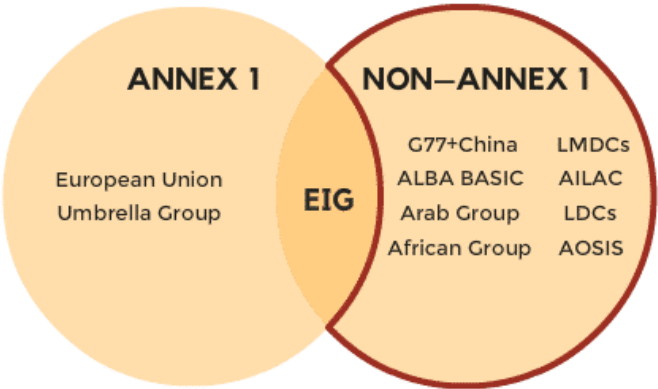
**ALBA:** The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America brings together a group of 10 Latin American countries: Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica,

Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

**BASIC:** It gathers Brazil, South Africa, China and India, all countries with emerging economies.

**LMDCs:** Like Minded-Group of Developing Countries, including 25 Parties: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam (CarbonBrief).

**AILAC:** The Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean, which comprises the following 7 countries: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay and Peru.



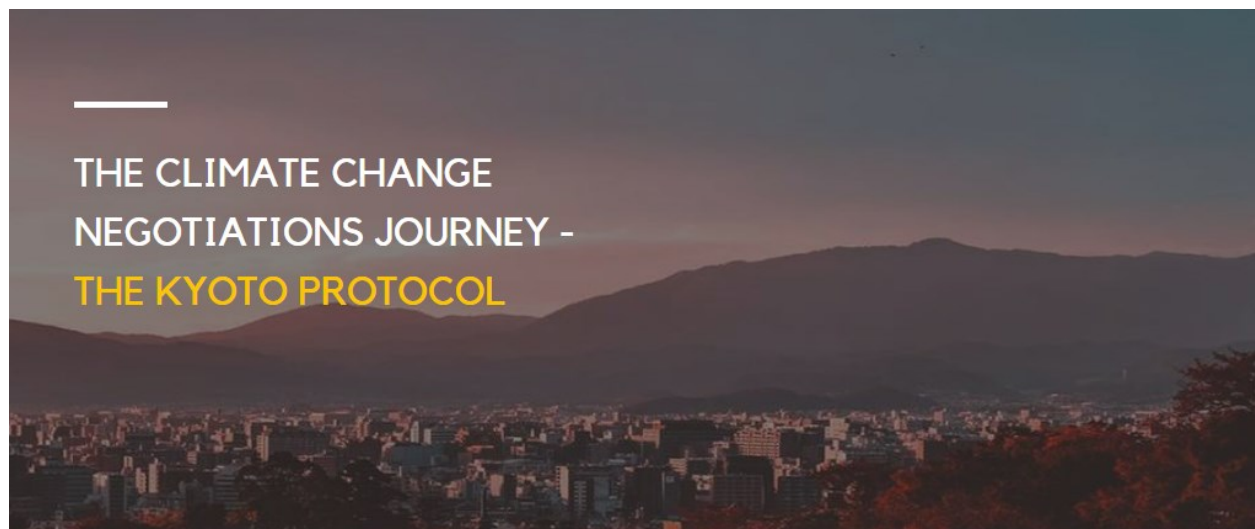
**Meetings and Decision-Making**

The UNFCCC makes decisions through consensus of all parties. There are several types of meetings taking place at UN climate conferences, each allowing different stakeholders to attend, including:

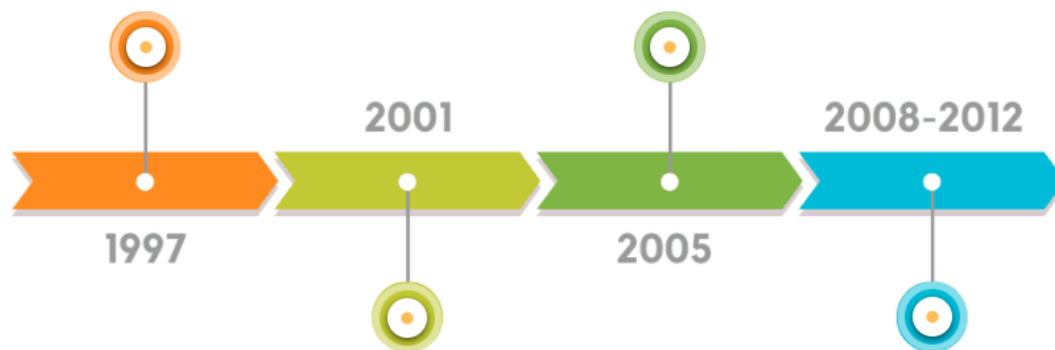
Plenary	Contact	Informals
Parties, observers, media, presidency	Parties, observers, and co-chairs	Parties
Friends of the Chair	Ministerial Consultations	Corridors
Selected parties	Ministers	Unofficial meetings

In the next segment, we will resume our climate change negotiations journey by reviewing some of the key milestones between 1997 and 2012.

## Timeline of Events (1997-2012)



In 1995, COP 1 negotiations began in Berlin with proposals to enhance the UNFCCC's commitments. This eventually led to adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.





➤ **1997**



Negotiations at the third Conference of Parties (COP3) resulted in the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the UNFCCC. It establishes binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the EU to reduce GHG emissions.

➤ **2001**



The COP7 conference held at Marrakech, Morocco ended with agreements on how to enforce the Kyoto Protocol.

The Marrakech Agreements adopted a set of monitoring and compliance procedures to enforce the rules of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. It includes agreements on capacity building, technology transfer and the protocol mechanisms.

➤ **2005**      The Kyoto Protocol enters into force.

➤ **2008-2012**



**United Nations**  
Framework Convention on  
Climate Change

The implementation of the first period of the Kyoto Protocol commences in 2008 and concludes in 2012.

In the next segment, we will discuss the Kyoto Protocol in a bit more detail.

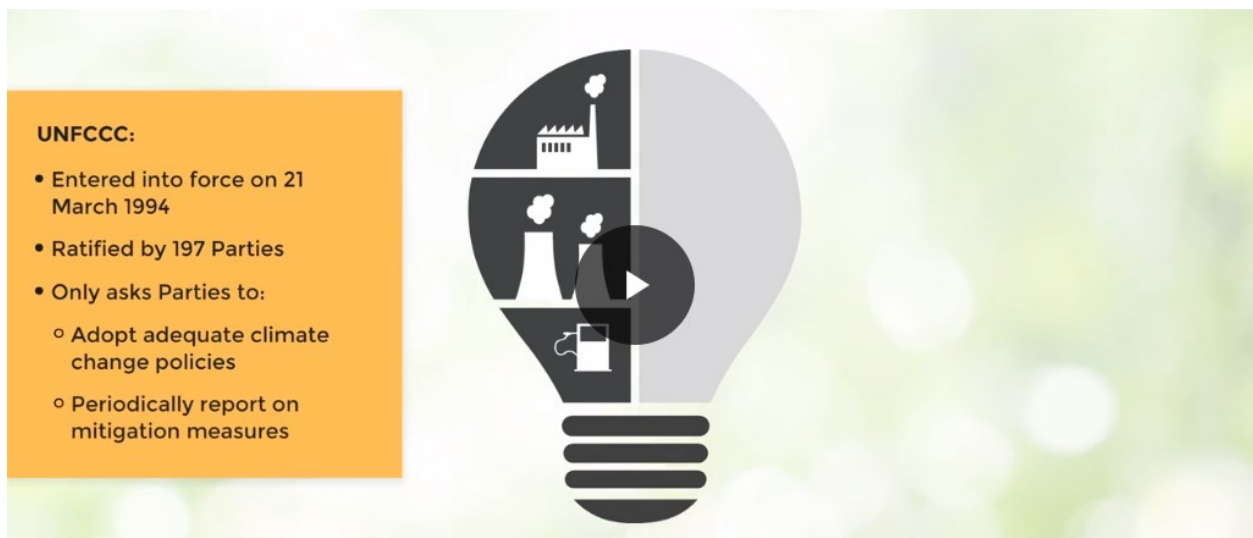
# The Kyoto Protocol

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What is the aim and objectives of the Kyoto Protocol?

Watch a video in the online lesson to find out.



The Kyoto Protocol established binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the EU to reduce GHG emissions. Under the Protocol, these countries must meet their agreed targets to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

As an additional means of meeting these targets, the Kyoto Protocol introduced three market-based mechanisms, thereby creating what is now known as the carbon market.

These mechanisms allow for the trading of GHG emissions among countries and companies in order for them to remain within an agreed limit. Such mechanisms provide flexibility to plan for climate action and provide incentives to reduce emissions.



### International Emissions Trading (ET)

This mechanism allows countries that have emission units to spare – i.e. emissions that are permitted but not “used” – to sell them to countries that are over their targets.



### Joint Implementation Mechanism (JI)

This mechanism allows for a country with an emission reduction commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to earn emission reduction units (ERUs) from a relevant project in another country that is in the list of countries with an emission reduction target.



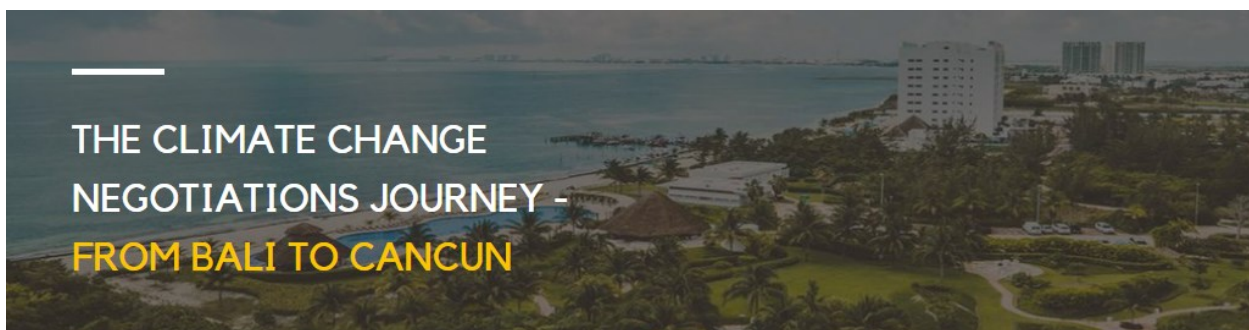
### Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

This mechanism allows a country with an emission-reduction/limitation commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to implement emission-reduction projects in developing countries and count such emission reductions as part of its own efforts.

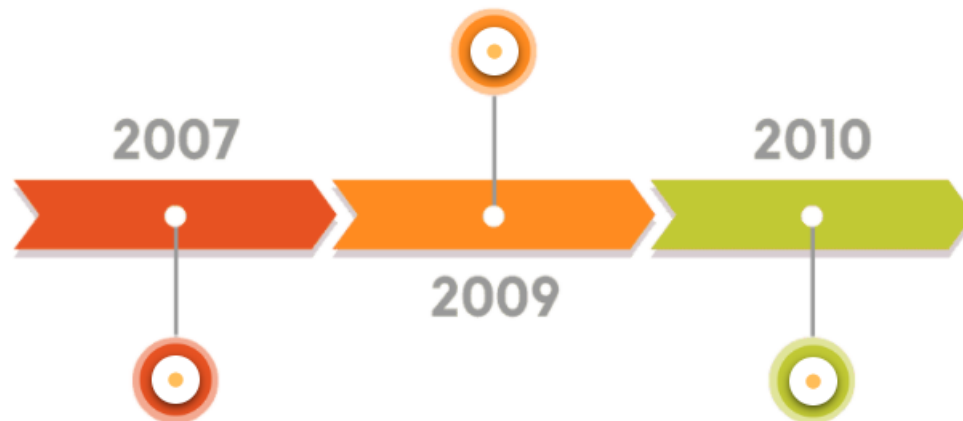
The Kyoto Protocol was successful in setting **GHG reduction targets** for industrialized countries. Although some of those countries did meet their Kyoto targets and reduce their emissions, overall global GHG emissions **continued to soar** between 1990 and 2009.

In the next segment, we will continue our climate change negotiations journey by reviewing some of the key milestones between 2007 and 2010.

## Timeline of Events (2007-2010)



The Kyoto Protocol was agreed in 1997, but entered into force in 2005. The Protocol started being implemented from 2008. Meanwhile, other important developments were taking shape in the global climate change negotiations arena.



➤ **2007**



A set of forward-looking decisions related to the work of various negotiating tracks was adopted at COP13, held in Bali.

This "Bali Roadmap" included the Bali Action Plan, the launch of the Adaptation Fund, decisions in the areas of technology transfer and of reducing emissions from deforestation.

➤ **2009**



At COP15, held in Copenhagen in 2009, participating countries agreed to adopt the "Copenhagen Accord".

However, this Accord was not legally binding and was widely criticized.

➤ **2010**



COP16 took place in Cancún, Mexico.

The conference produced the "Cancún Agreements", a far-reaching international response to climate change which included the establishment of the Green Climate Fund and agreement on the Cancún Adaptation Framework.



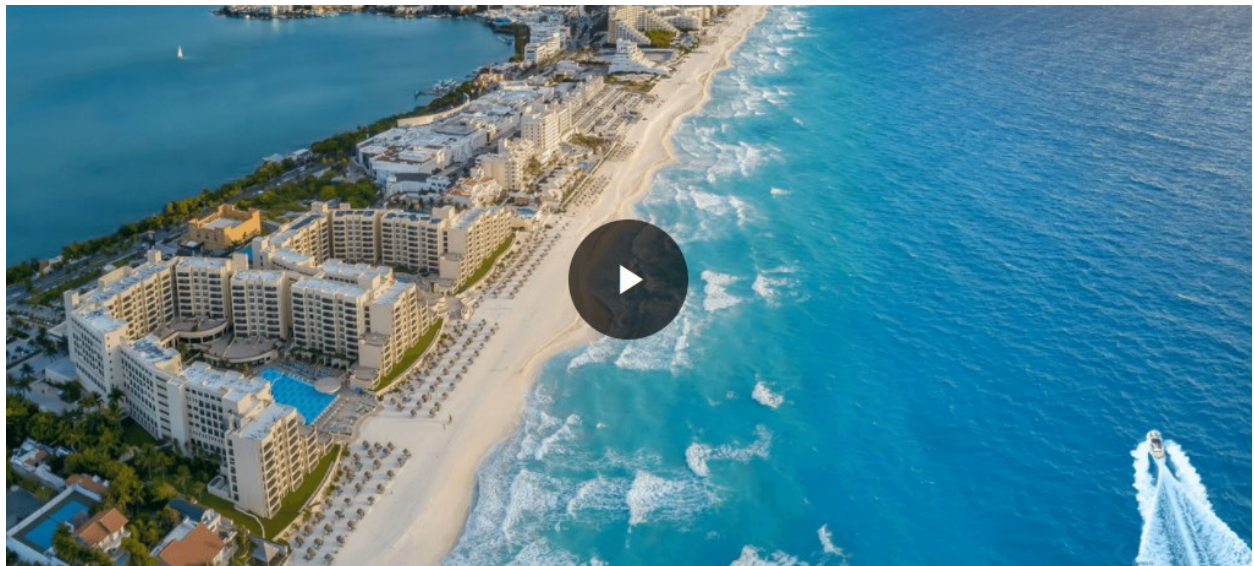
In the next segment, we will take a more detailed look at the  
Cancún Agreements.

## The Cancún Agreements

IN COP16, COUNTRIES REACHED  
THE **CANCÚN AGREEMENTS** - A  
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT FOR  
THE UN CLIMATE PROCESS.

Did the [Cancún Agreements](#) address some of the implementation challenges of the Kyoto Protocol?

Watch a video in the online lesson to find out.



In Cancún, the COP established the national adaptation plan ([NAP](#)) process as an instrument to:

- Identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs; and
- Develop and implement strategies and programs to address those needs.

The NAP is a continuous process which follows a country-driven, gender-sensitive, participatory, and fully transparent approach.

➤ **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**

In order to enhance adaptation, the COP also requested the [Green Climate Fund](#) to provide financial support for the development and implementation of national adaptation plans.

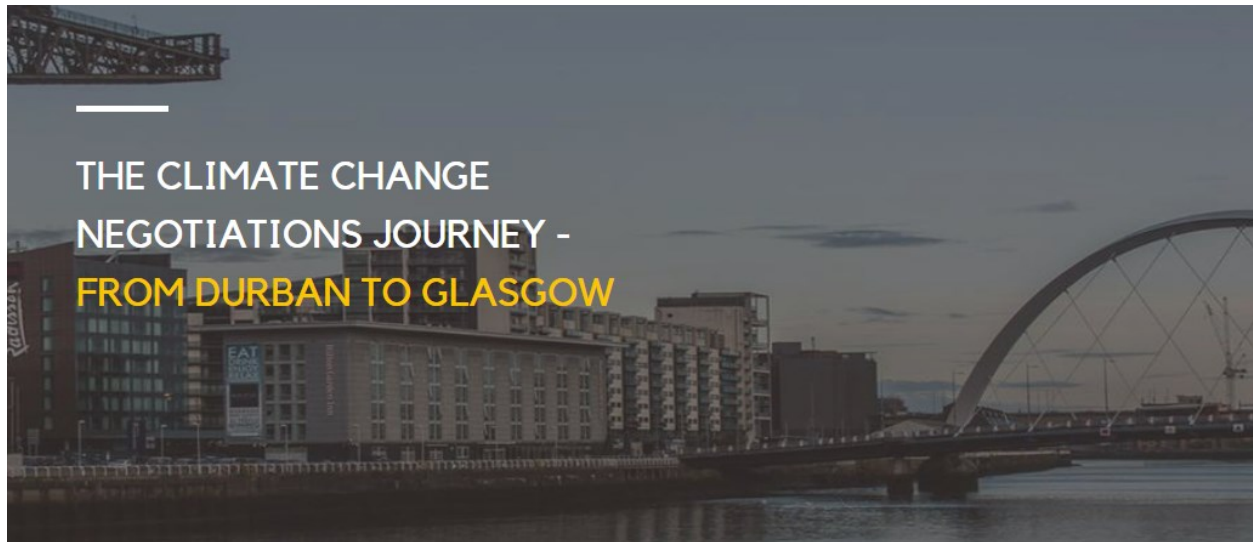


➤ **Adaptation Committee (AC)**

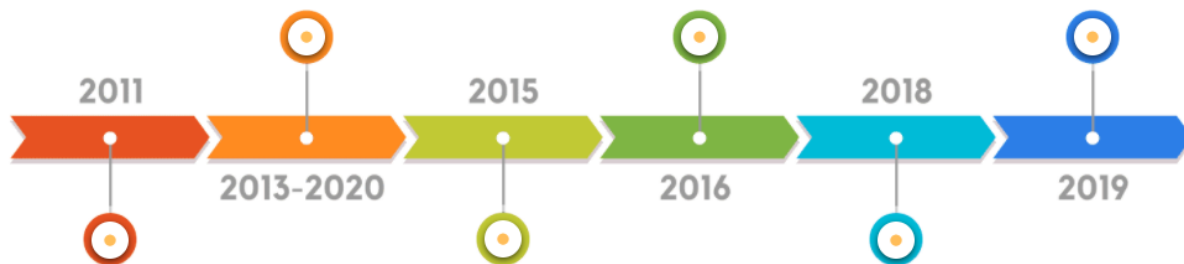
In addition, as part of the Cancun Adaptation Framework, COP16 established the [Adaptation Committee](#), with the aim of promoting the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention.



## Timeline of Events (2011-2021)



A number of significant milestones in climate diplomacy have been achieved in the last decade since the Cancun Agreements, including the Paris Agreement and the Paris Rulebook.



### ➤ 2011



COP17 in Durban was a platform for Enhanced Action (ADP).

ADP is a subsidiary body that was established to develop a protocol or a legal instrument with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties, to be completed before 2015 and adopted at COP21.



➤ **2013-2020**



At COP18, held in 2012, countries adopted the Doha Amendment to operationalize the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period.

As of 28 October 2020, 8 year after its adoption, the Doha amendment entered into forces, after the required number of countries had ratified it (i.e. 144 ratifications).

➤ **2015**



A successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol is reached at COP21 in Paris, France: the Paris Agreement.

**Note:** You can learn more about the Paris Agreement in Lesson 3 of this eLearning series.

➤ **2016**



On 4th November, 2016 the Paris Agreement entered into force.

➤ **2018**



The Paris Rulebook, which comprises the guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, was closed in 2018 in COP24 held in Katowice, Poland. However, some details still need to be finalized. Their negotiation will continue in 2021.

➤ **2019**

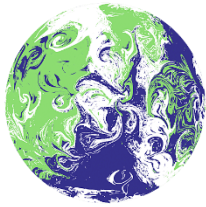


COP25 Santiago / Madrid – Important elements such as Loss and Damage, Response Measures, Gender and Capacity-building were discussed.

**Note:** You can learn more about some of these concepts in Lesson 5 of this eLearning series.



## The Road Ahead...



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, COP26 has been postponed to 2021.

The Pre-COP26 in **Milan** is scheduled to be held from 30 September-2 October 2021, and COP26 in **Glasgow** is scheduled from 1-12 November 2021.

The Presidency of the COP will be assumed by the Government of the United Kingdom in partnership with the Government of Italy.

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This concludes our lesson on the history of the climate negotiations. In the next segment, we will recap the key points covered in the lesson.

# Recap

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## ➤ Key Milestones in the Climate Negotiations

Here's a summary of key milestones in the climate negotiations:

1979	First World Climate Conference (Geneva, Switzerland) Climate change appears in the global agenda.
1992	Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) Birth of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and 'climate diplomacy'.
1995	COP1 - UNFCCC (Berlin, Germany) The first Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC is held.
1997	COP3 - Kyoto Protocol (Kyoto, Japan) Kyoto Protocol setting binding targets for industrialized countries to reduce GHG emissions.
2010	COP16 - Cancún Agreements (Cancún, Mexico) Cancún Agreements to support developing nations to deal with climate change.
2015	COP21 - Paris Agreement (Paris, France) Paris Agreement sets an ambitious goal to keep temperatures "well below 2°C" and "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C".
2018	COP24 - Paris Rulebook (Katowice, Poland) The Paris Rulebook, a set of guidelines implementing the Paris Agreement, accepted.

## ➤ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty. So far, it has been ratified by 197 countries.

The objective of the UNFCCC is to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system".

The Convention integrates health in articles 1 and 4.1.f.

## ➤ The Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the UNFCCC. It establishes binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the EU to reduce GHG emissions to 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2012.

The Kyoto Protocol introduced three market-based mechanisms to allow for the trading of GHG emissions among countries and companies.

1. International Emissions Trading
2. Joint Implementation Mechanism
3. Clean Development Mechanism

These provide incentives for countries to reduce emissions or keep them within an agreed limit. Notwithstanding, global emissions increased by nearly 40% from 1990 to 2009.

### ➤ **The Cancún Agreements**

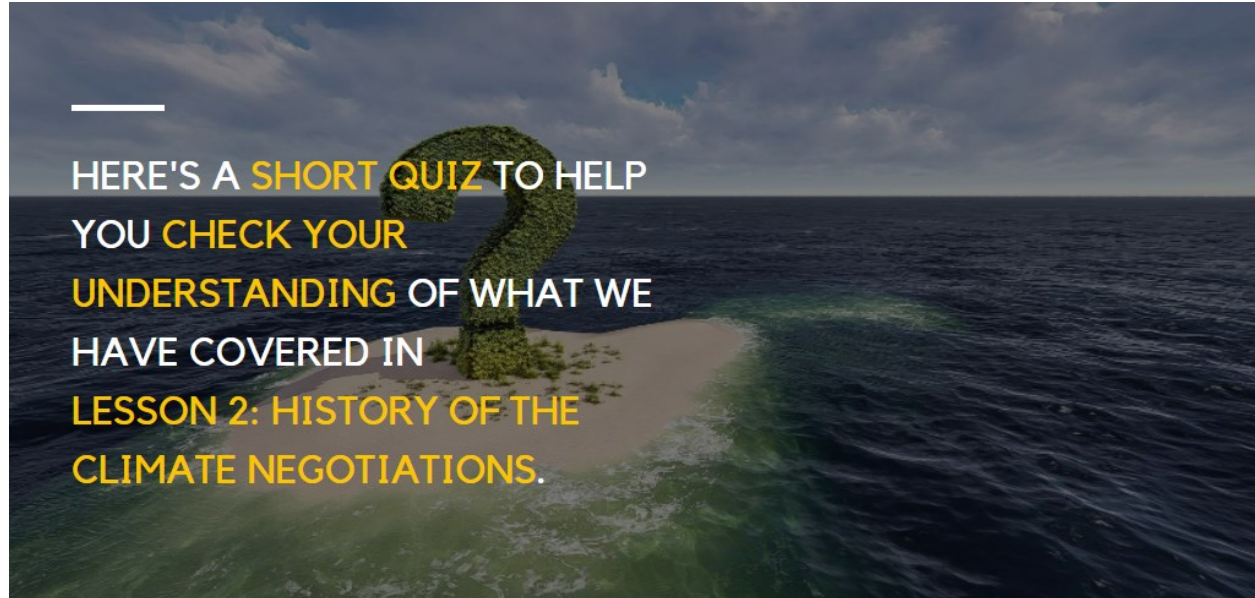
In 2010, the Parties attending the Cancún Climate Change Conference reached the Cancún Agreements, agreeing to commit to a maximum temperature rise of 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and consider lowering it to 1.5°C in the near future.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was established to support developing countries and assist them in mitigating climate change and adapting to its impacts.

The Agreements also included decisions on adaptation and pledges to provide funding approaching USD 30 billion for the period 2010–2012.

# Check Your Understanding

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**1. Which of the following set binding targets for industrialized countries only to reduce GHG emissions?**

- a. Paris Agreement
- b. Kyoto Protocol
- c. Cancún Agreements
- d. Bali Roadmap

**2. Which of the following are market-based mechanisms introduced in the Kyoto Protocol?**

- a. Joint Implementation Mechanism
- b. Carbon Credit Exchange Mechanism
- c. International Emissions Trading
- d. Clean Development Mechanism

**3. Match each milestone with the correct event.**

- a. 1992
- b. 1997



- c. 2010
- d. 2015

- 1. Cancún Agreements
- 2. Paris Agreement
- 3. Earth Summit
- 4. Kyoto Protocol

**4. Match each abbreviation with the corresponding description.**

- a. NAP
- b. GCF
- c. SBSTA
- d. UNFCCC
- e. ADP

- 1. Subsidiary body established in 2011 to develop a new legal instrument under the UNFCCC to be adopted at COP21.
- 2. Strategy to identify and address medium-/long-term national adaptation needs and actions.
- 3. An international environmental treaty founded in 1992 with almost universal ratification.
- 4. Fund set up to support developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- 5. Subsidiary body to provide information/advice on scientific and technological matters.

*Answers:*

- 1. *b*
- 2. *a, c, d*
- 3. *a-3, b-4, c-1, d-2*
- 4. *a-2, b-4, c-5, d-3, e-1*

## Useful Resources

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- [COP24 Special report: Health & Climate Change](#)
- [WHO Guidance to Protect Health from Climate Change through Health Adaptation Planning](#)
- [Quality Criteria for Health National Adaptation Plans](#)
- [Climate Change International Legal Regime e-course](#)