United States of America

WORLD CLIMATE SIMULATION

To: United States Negotiators at United Nations World Climate Summit
Subject: Briefing on Negotiating Goals

Goals

In 2015, the United States played a key role in negotiating the Paris Agreement, in which nations agreed to limit global warming to "well below 2°C" compared to preindustrial levels and, in 2021, passed the national climate legislation, the "Inflation Reduction Act" (IRA), which encourages renewable energy, energy efficiency, and electric vehicle adoption. However, in 2025, President Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, prioritizing fossil fuel development and rolling back key climate policies. You must decide on the following:

1. U.S. actions to reduce carbon emissions, if any. U.S. emissions have fallen ~21% from 2005 to 2023. However, U.S. emissions are expected to grow modestly without further action and given current policies to promote production of oil, coal, and natural gas. You can decide when U.S. emissions will stop growing, when they will begin declining, and at what annual rate emissions decline, if at all. See the gray boxes on the next page for additional guidance.
2. Whether to make commitments to reduce deforestation or plant new forest area.
3. How much to contribute, if at all, to a global climate fund. The fund is intended to provide at least $300 billion/year until 2035 for developing countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change.

Context

The scientific consensus on climate is clear: over 97% of climate scientists agree that climate change is happening, that it is caused primarily by use of fossil fuels, and that the impacts could be devastating.[1] U.S. research has shown that climate change is harming all 50 states today and that without dramatic reductions in global emissions, the damage will become more severe.

Public Opinion

A majority of the public in the U.S. believes climate change is real and that human activity contributes significantly to it.[2] Most support policies that could be implemented to address climate change but oppose those actions that raise the cost of living. Climate change ranks near the bottom of most people's priorities, far below national security, the economy and jobs. Most people are opposed to any agreement that places undue burden on our own economy, while developing nations' emissions continue to grow.

Opportunities

Extreme weather events amplified by climate change ranks among the top global risks.[3] These impacts also pose major risks to the U.S. economy and financial system.[4] Meanwhile, renewable energy costs have fallen substantially in the last decade and are now competitive with fossil fuels in many areas.

National Action

In 2023, the U.S. updated its NDC, pledging a 50-52% reduction in U.S. emissions from 2005 levels by 2030. Fulfilling this pledge depends on the successful implementation of federal policies to limit power plant emissions and improve fuel efficiency in cars, as well as action at the city, state and regional levels. After the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement it is unclear if the U.S. can maintain steady emission reductions. Division among political parties and entrenched business interests with a stake in the fossil fuel industry make ambitious climate action challenging.

Forests and Land Use

The U.S. has about 304 million hectares of forested land covering about a third of its territory. Protecting existing forests and promoting the growth of new ones could sequester carbon from the atmosphere and into forests.

[1] https://skepticalscience.com/global-warming-scientific-consensus.htm
[2] https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us/
[3] https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2025/digest/
[4] https://www.cftc.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/9-9-20

Global Landscape

- China's economy is approximately equal in size to that of the U.S., is growing far faster than that of the U.S., and generates over one quarter of global CO_2 emissions. China has pledged to peak its CO_2 emissions by 2030, when its emissions are projected to be over twice those of the U.S., but while it is leading the clean energy transition, it also continues to invest in coal. China must cut its emissions for the U.S. to consider action.
- Meanwhile, emissions from rapidly developing countries, such as India, continue to grow. Without emissions cuts from rapidly developing and less developed nations, by 2050, their combined emissions will rise to over twice those of developed countries. Emissions from these nations must fall. It is not acceptable for these nations to demand that the U.S. and other developed nations cut their emissions while they continue to increase theirs.
- The less developed nations continue to emphasize that reductions in their emissions would require extensive financial assistance from developed countries, but corruption pervades many of these countries and financial assistance often fails to reach its intended use.
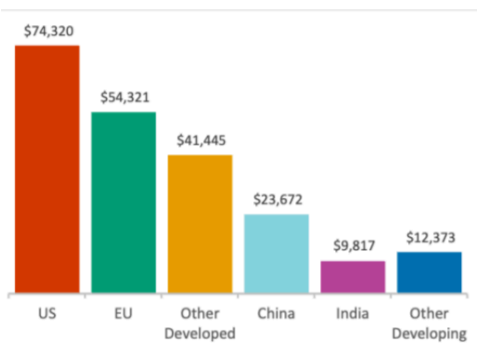
CO$_2$ Emissions from Fossil Fuels

China

Other developing

Other developed
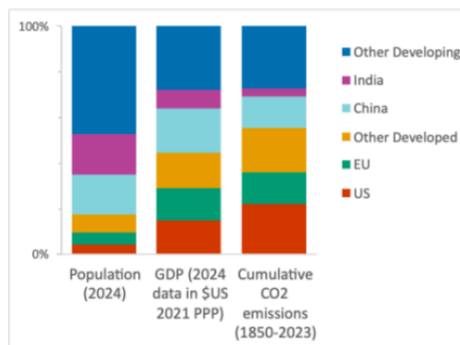India
US

EU

Baseline projections if no action taken
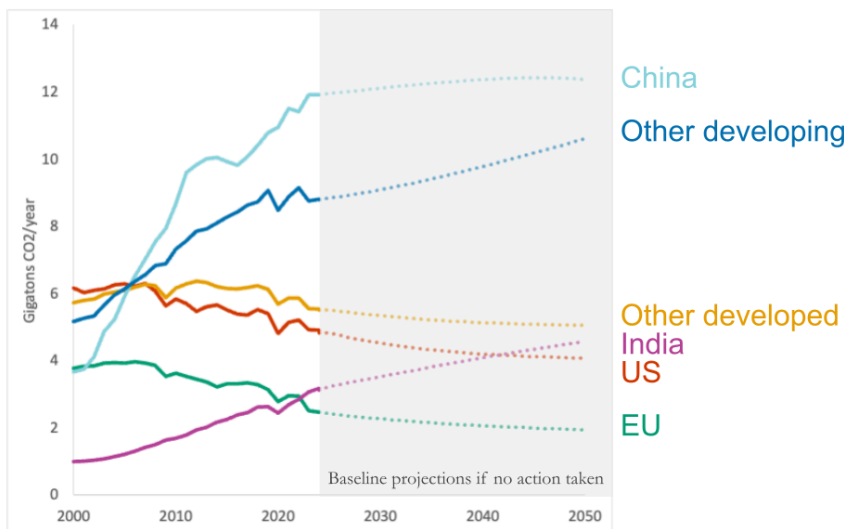
China is the world's largest emitter of CO_2. Without action, developing countries' emissions from fossil fuels are projected to increase about 21% by 2050.

Sweden sustained annual CO_2 emissions reductions of 4.5% to reduce their dependence on oil (1976-1986). **France** and **Belgium** saw similar reductions around this time. Otherwise, most significant historical emission reductions have come from financial or political crises.
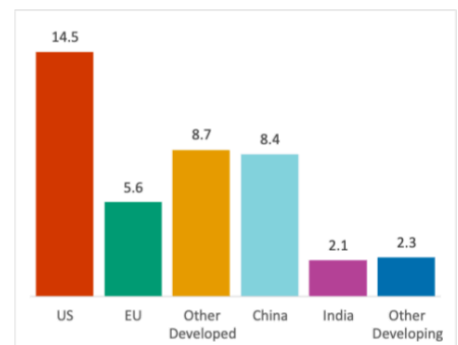
GDP per Person in 2024
(2021 $US PPP)

Population, Wealth, and Cumulative CO$_2$ Emissions

Emissions from Fossil Fuels per Person in 2023
(tons CO$_2$ per year)

While cumulative emissions so far have been higher in the developed countries (i.e., the **US**, **EU**, and **other developed** countries), the growth of population, GDP per person, and emissions in the **developing nations** far outpaces growth in the **developed countries**.

Since 1980, emissions from energy per person have risen dramatically in **China** and **India** but have fallen in the **US** and **Europe**.

Graphs source: C-ROADS v.25.10

Developed by Climate Interactive, MIT Sloan, and the UML Climate Change Initiative. Updated: November 2025