

China



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

Goals

China seeks to negotiate a global agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that can limit climate risks but also seeks the best outcome for our economy and vital national interests. At the 2015 UN climate negotiations in Paris, nations agreed to a goal of limiting global warming to “well below 2°C” compared to preindustrial levels. You must now decide on the following:

1. Actions to reduce China’s emissions, if any. Without action, China’s emissions are expected to grow significantly by 2100. You can decide when your emissions will stop growing, when they will begin declining, and at what annual rate emissions decline, if at all.
2. Whether to make a commitment to reduce deforestation or to increase reforestation or afforestation.
3. How much you will contribute to, or request from, the Green Climate Fund, which is intended to provide at least \$100 billion/year by 2020 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. China is vulnerable to climate change, as the country’s water, food, and energy systems are already stressed and expected to face increasing pressure due to rising sea levels, droughts, water scarcity, and heat waves.

Public Opinion

Our people, like everywhere else, want to live in a healthy environment, but they also want to increase their standard of living; this includes having decent jobs, housing, food, healthcare, mobility and national security. There is widespread acknowledgement in your country that climate change is real, though few support agreements to address the associated risks.

Opportunities

Besides slowing climate change, reaching an agreement to limit emissions would also reduce local air pollution, which is affecting the health of our people and, in some cases, creating political unrest. In addition, our economy is growing rapidly, and we are emerging as a superpower that can leverage business opportunities associated with an energy transition away from fossil fuels.

National Action

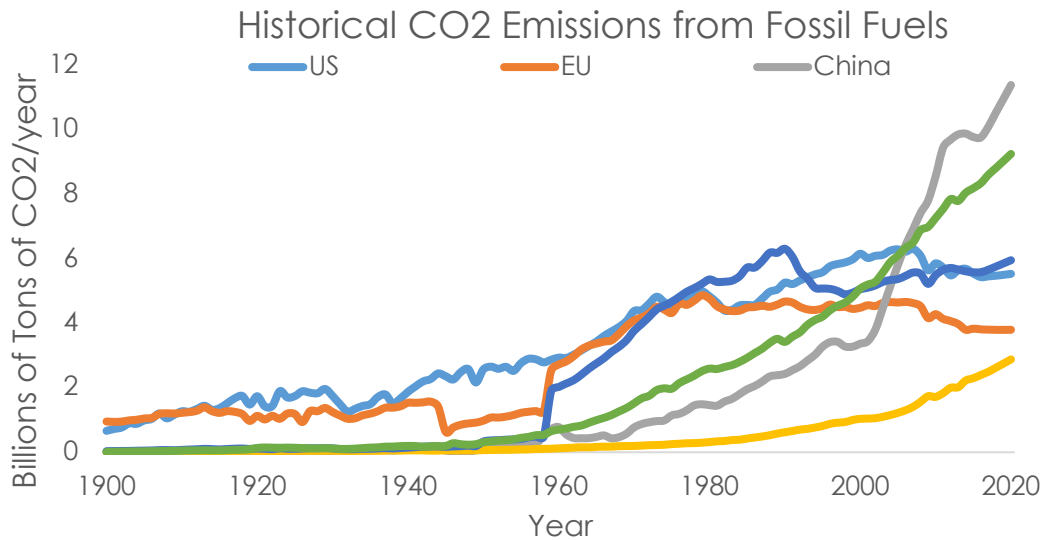
Above all, we must defend our right to develop. Nevertheless, we recognize that our reliance on fossil fuels, particularly coal, is causing negative health impacts. Ahead of the Paris climate talks in 2015, we pledged to peak our carbon dioxide emissions by no later than 2030. Meeting this goal requires increasing renewable and zero-emissions electricity generation capacity to a level equivalent to the entire coal-fired capacity in China today, or roughly all current US electricity generation capacity. The success of current efforts will determine whether we can meet our pledge and even improve on it.

Forests and land use

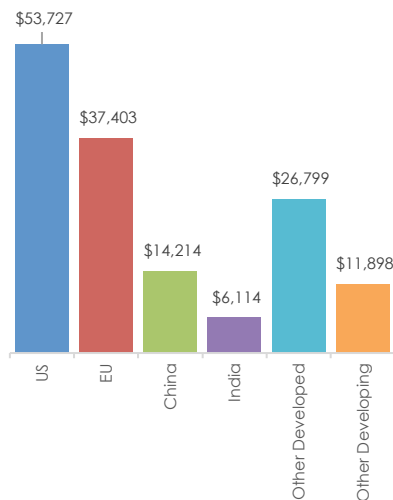
We have some opportunity to make reductions in emissions from deforestation and land degradation (REDD). Most of the world’s remaining tropical forests are in developing countries, and, unfortunately, there is substantial deforestation occurring. Programs to protect forests can reduce emissions.

Global Landscape

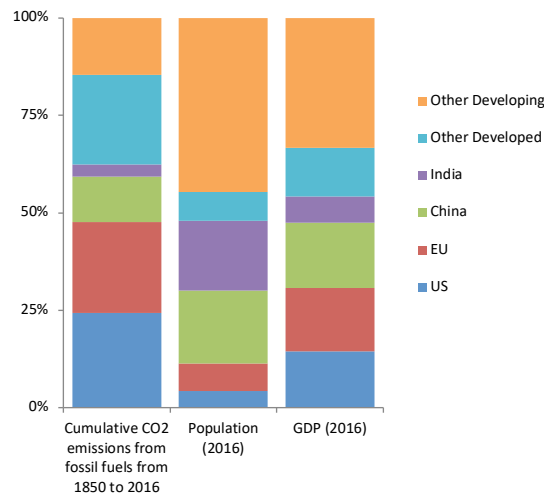
- The developed nations created the climate crisis and so should take responsibility for addressing it. These nations built their economies on fossil fuels, and now, while we are finally raising our own people out of poverty and manufacturing the bulk of their consumer goods, we cannot shoulder an unfair burden of reductions. Our emissions per person are still only about 40% of those of the US. Our average standard of living, though rising, is still far lower than that in the US, Europe, Japan, and other developed nations.
- China is a developing nation but may still face pressure to contribute to the Green Climate Fund since we are now the world's second largest economy. Any commitments we make should require significant commitments to action by the US, EU, and other developed nations.
- The developed nations fear the rapid economic development we are now, finally, enjoying, and may seek to use a global climate agreement to slow our growth, limit our markets, and constrain our diplomatic and military influence around the world. Meanwhile, the US has pledged to reduce their emissions by only 26- 28% by 2025 from 2005 levels. This pledge faces strong political opposition from members of the US Congress and business interests with a stake in continued fossil fuel consumption.



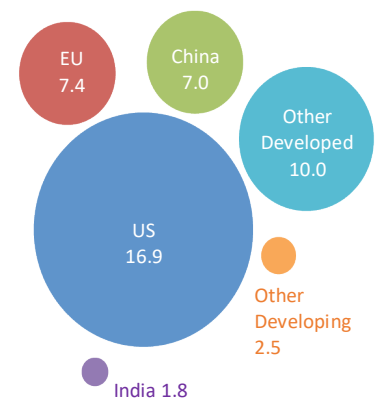
GDP per person (2016)



Population, Wealth, and Cumulative Emissions



Emissions per person 2016 (tons CO₂ 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. Under business-as-usual assumptions, cumulative emissions of all developed countries (**US**, **EU**, and **other developed**) are expected to fall to 37% of total by 2100.

Since 1980, emissions per person have risen dramatically in **China** and **India** (by 391% and 285%, respectively) but have fallen in the **US** and **Europe** (by 20% and 26%, respectively).