

# Global Climate Governance: The Roles of the UNFCCC in shaping International Relations

## How has the UNFCCC and the treaties within it evolved over time?

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### What is the UNFCCC

- an international treaty adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 1994
- primary goal is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system
- ratified by 198 countries
- provides financial support mechanisms for developing countries implementing the agreement

### Kyoto Protocol

- 5% reduction goal below 1990 levels
- Binding commitments for developed countries
- Regulatory approach with legally binding targets

### Copenhagen Accords

- 2°C global limit
- Non-binding commitments
- Voluntary actions and pledges

### Paris Agreement

- 1.5–2°C global limit
- Hybrid, with binding procedural commitments and nonbinding national targets (NDCs)
- Catalytic, designed to increase ambition over time through regular reviews and updates of NDCs

Period	The paradigm underlying the UNFCCC regime	Activities outside the regime
1: Before 1990	Framing the problem	Scientific reports and declarations, political declarations, cities and states becoming engaged
2: 1991–1996	Leadership articulated	NGOs becoming engaged, industry and economists becoming more aware
3: 1997–2001	Conditional leadership	Climate sceptics more prominent UN agencies become engaged
4: 2002–2007	Leadership competition	Political declarations (G20, G7), new agreements (APP, IPHE, etc.)
5: Post-2008	Leadership during recession: Focus on developing countries The search for new ideas	Ideas: Low-carbon society; green economy; transforming the energy system UK Climate Act 2008: Changes in national governance patterns (three five-year periods needed simultaneously, commits future governments)

Source: Building further on Gupta (2010)

### Targets and Legality

**Kyoto:** Binding targets with strict regulatory control.

**Copenhagen:** Non-binding targets with voluntary pledges.

**Paris:** Hybrid model with binding procedural commitments and nonbinding national targets

### Governing and State Participation

**Kyoto:** Strict differentiation, minor role for non-party actors.

**Copenhagen:** Medium differentiation, larger role for non-party actors.

**Paris:** Soft differentiation, significant role for non-party actors determined by the UNFCCC

### Differentiation and Role of Non-State Actors

**Kyoto:** Regulatory approach with limited participation.

**Copenhagen:** Voluntary approach with broader participation.

**Paris:** Catalytic approach with near-universal participation.

### Which Countries Are Meeting Their Paris Agreement Goals?

Selected national emission reduction goals and projected achievements by 2030, by associated limit on global warming

	Target	Projected achievement
Saudi Arabia	+ >4°C	+ >4°C
Indonesia	+ >4°C	+ >4°C
United Arab Emirates	+2°C	+ >4°C
Russia	+4°C	+4°C
Mexico	+4°C	+4°C
South Korea	+3°C	+4°C
Egypt	+ >4°C	+3°C
China	+3°C	+3°C
India	+3°C	+3°C
European Union	+3°C	+3°C
Brazil	+2°C	+3°C
United States	+2°C	+3°C
United Kingdom	+2°C	+3°C
Norway	+1.5°C	+2°C
Morocco	+2°C	+1.5°C
Nigeria	+1.5°C	+1.5°C
Kenya	+1.5°C	+1.5°C

Source: Climate Action Tracker

