

Committee: Environment

Topic: The question of achieving goal 13 of the sustainable development goals

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Summary

What are the SDGs and what is Goal 13?

Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is 'climate action: take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.' It was created to reaffirm the global community's commitment to tackling the climate crisis, and to encourage member states' governments to take action. (For more detail on the targets and indicators within goal 13, see table below).

It is important to be aware of the wider framework for sustainable development in which goal 13 on climate action sits. The UN website describes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by all UN member states in 2015, as 'a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.'¹

While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to establish national frameworks to achieve the goals, and it is governments who hold primary responsibility for follow-up, data collection and review of the progress made in their implementation.²

	Targets ³	Indicators
13.1	Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people ✓ Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies ✓ Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies

¹ UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform website: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

² British Council website: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sustainable-development-goals/what-are-they>

³ All information in table from 'Targets and Indicators' section of UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform website: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg13>

- 13.2** Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- ✓ Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their 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 (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other)
- 13.3** Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning
- ✓ Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula
 - ✓ Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions
- 13.A** Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible
- ✓ Mobilised amount of United States dollars per year starting in 2020 accountable towards the \$100 billion commitment
- 13.B** Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities
- ✓ Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing
- * Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international,

intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

What is climate change?

Climate change is the process of a 'large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures'⁴ Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the average global temperature has risen by around 1°C (some countries have experienced much greater increases) – this is an extremely rapid change when compared with similar increases in history which have taken thousands of years. As of 2018, all of the 20 warmest years on record globally have been in the past 20 years, and scientists are warning that if temperature rises are not slowed down soon, even more exponential increases could occur in the coming decades – if we fail to take appropriate climate action, scientists say we will not stay below a 1.5°C increase (largely because as temperatures rise, ice caps melt and more of the Earth's surface becomes water – water absorbs more solar energy than land, so the vicious cycle will continue in dangerous proportions).

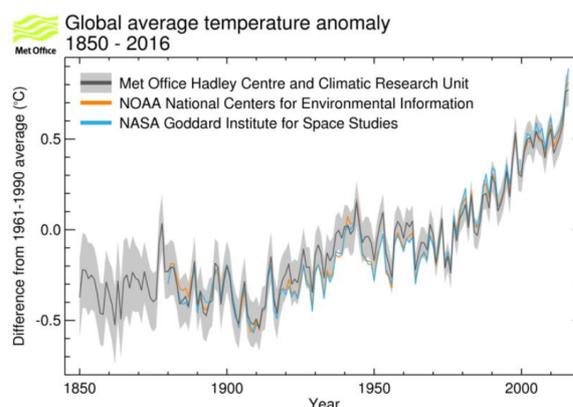
Scientists and activists claim that fighting climate change is a desperate race to save the planet and everything on it, however it has only recently been treated as an emergency by national governments.

What are the causes of climate change?

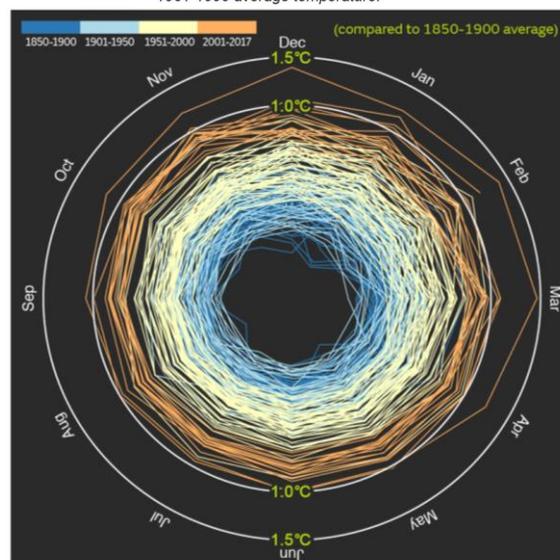
The greenhouse effect is the leading cause of climate change; greenhouse gases make the blanket of the Earth's atmosphere thicker, trapping infrared radiation and increasing surface temperatures. Human activity contributes significantly to this – in their most recent report, the IPCC states that human activity is 'extremely likely' to be the primary cause of climate change.

Burning fossil fuels – over the last 11,000 years before the Industrial Revolution, the average temperature across the world was stable at around 14°C, however since we started burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas in the late 18th century (which released greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous monoxide into), large quantities of greenhouse gases have built up in the Earth's atmosphere, resulting in rapid temperature change. The level of CO₂ in the atmosphere rose by 40% during the 20th and 21st centuries and is now over 400ppm, more than it has been at any time in the past 800,000 years.

Agriculture, forestry and other land use – three-quarters of mankind's contribution to climate change comes from this. Deforestation is hugely detrimental, as trees take in CO₂, release oxygen, use water, and provide habitat/nutrition for animals, and so are vital to sustaining life on Earth.



This plot shows the global temperature change from 1850 to 2018, compared to the 1961-1990 average temperature.



This graph shows the average global temperature for each month, from 1850 to 2017.

⁴ Met Office: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/learn-about/climate-and-climate-change/climate-change/index>

The land created is often used for crops and rearing animals – these animals produce gases like methane, which further adds to the crisis.

Other human activity – the production of cement and pollution from aeroplanes and other transport are other sources of greenhouse gases.

Natural causes – volcanic activity, solar variation and natural sources of CO₂ also contribute to climate change. It should be noted, though, that scientists have consistently reported that these factors have a minimal impact compared with human activity.

What are the direct impacts of climate change?

Human life – during the period 1998-2017, it is estimated that climate-related and geophysical disasters claimed an estimated 1.3 million lives.⁵ Natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods and droughts are made more severe and more frequent by climate change; pollution causes illness; and extreme weather causes famine and temperature-related illness.

Biodiversity – natural disasters such as floods and wildfires are destroying animals' habitat and food sources, and rapidly changing temperatures are making animals' homes inhospitable without giving them time to adapt. These factors are forcing mass migrations and leading to extinctions. It is, of course, tragic to see species become extinct, however the wider impact of extinction on the food chains and ecosystems in which they lived are even more worrying. Ocean acidification (often called the 'evil twin' of climate change has the same impact for marine life).

Farmers' livelihoods – in the past, temperature changes have occurred at a rate that allows farmers to adapt, however the rapid changes currently being seen in some regions is threatening farmers' livelihoods as the crops they grow / the animals they rear are no longer able to survive in the climate. Increased risk of natural disasters has the same effect.

National security – in Margaret Beckett's famous speech of 2006 soon after becoming the UK's Foreign Secretary, she made the case for climate security. She spoke of the huge impact of climate change on the global community, saying that the tensions between developed and developing states would culminate in war if not addressed.⁶ Other issues which could create political instability are conflict over resources and climate refugees.

Economy – during the period 1998-2017, direct economic losses from disasters were estimated at almost \$3 trillion.⁷ In 2003 alone costs were estimated at \$60 billion. (See timeline for details of IPCC reports on costs of preventing and coping with climate change).

Land – many low-lying island states and coastline regions are in danger of being submerged by rising sea levels. Many, such as coastal parts of Bangladesh, are already suffering from increasingly ferocious flooding, and some smaller uninhabited Pacific islands have already disappeared.

⁵ Progress & Info 2018, UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform website:
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg13>

⁶ Find full speech in '21 Speeches That Shaped Our World' (Chris Abbot) or a summary at:
<https://rusi.org/publication/urgent-case-climate-security>

⁷ Progress & Info 2019, UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform website:
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg13> (cited there as paragraph 22 of review of Goal 1)

Definition of Key Terms

Climate change – the process of a ‘large-scale, long-term shift in the planet’s weather patterns and average temperatures.’⁸ The UN calls it ‘the defining issue of our time’

Greenhouse effect – ‘the exchange of incoming and outgoing radiation that warms the Earth’⁹ (find more detail in section on the causes of climate change in the summary).

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

BRICs

The BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China) are huge, both in terms of population and area, are industrialised, and are becoming increasingly economically and politically powerful. China in particular, as the biggest emitter of both CO₂ and greenhouse gases generally, and with a population of 1.38 billion, must reduce its carbon footprint. Brazil and Russia are also particularly important geographically as Brazil is home to the Amazon, and Russia to large swathes of ice-covered land.

Thailand

Thailand is one of the most vulnerable countries – surface temperature change could bring about famine, food droughts, floods and severe storms. Crops are also currently at high risk in Thailand.

Guatemala

Much of Guatemala is covered in dense forest and volcanoes, making the country at high risk of climate change,¹⁰ particularly considering that it is poor and not well prepared.

Vietnam

Rising sea levels could, in a worst case scenario, displace 3 million people from the Mekong Delta region.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua is at severe risk of drought and water shortages, having lost 60% of its water in recent years. Food crises and drinking water problems are expected in the near future if action isn’t taken.

Bangladesh

As a small country with a large population, Bangladesh has suffered a lot of deforestation and soil degradation. The country also suffers from floods, which have been becoming more severe in recent years – population increase has led to density in coastal regions, making the danger to human life even greater.

⁸ Met Office: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/learn-about/climate-and-climate-change/climate-change/index>

⁹ ‘What is the Greenhouse Effect?’ – LiveScience, Marc Lalallina, 8 March 2018: <https://www.livescience.com/37743-greenhouse-effect.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.whichcountry.co/top-10-countries-most-affected-by-climate-change/>

UK

While the UK is itself a large emitter of greenhouse gases, it has recently begun to take practical steps to reduce its carbon footprint and has made changes in the political forum. It recently became the first country to declare a 'climate emergency' and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2050. Major political figures have also met with activists including Greta Thunberg, and international representatives have tried to establish themselves as the global leader for climate action. There have, however, been major protests in the UK with activists (and scientists) saying 2050 is not soon enough.

Top emitters of greenhouse gases (2011)¹¹

Total	Per capita (world average: 4.5 tonnes)
1. China: 7,216 MT or 16.4%	1. Qatar: 36.9 tonnes
2. US: 6,931 MT or 15.7%	2. United States: 17.3 tonnes
3. Brazil: 2,856 MT or 6.5%	3. Australia: 17.0 tonnes
4. Indonesia: 2,046 MT or 4.6%	4. Russia: 11.6 tonnes
5. Russia: 2,028 MT or 4.6%	5. Germany: 9.3 tonnes
6. India: 1,870 MT or 4.2%	6. UK: 7.8 tonnes
7. Japan: 1,387 MT or 3.1%	7. China: 5.4 tonnes
8. Germany: 1,005 MT or 2.3%	8. India: 1.4 tonnes
9. Canada: 808 MT or 1.8%	9. Africa average: 0.9 tonnes
10. Mexico: 696 MT or 1.6%	10. Ethiopia: 0.1 tonnes

Timeline of Events

Date	Description
900-1300	The Age Medieval Warm Period (Europe) – due to unusually strong North Atlantic Oscillation
1350-1850	The Little Ice Age (parts of the northern hemisphere) – peak comes in 1709 as Europe experiences an extremely cold Winter
1760-present	Industrialisation – the process begins in Britain, and spreads to Europe and North America in the following decades, and then spreads to Asia and elsewhere in the following centuries; industrialisation is ongoing in much of the developing world

¹¹ 'Which Nations are most Responsible for Climate Change?' – The Guardian, Duncan Clark, 21 April 2011: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/apr/21/countries-responsible-climate-change> (cited as data compiled by Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency in 2011)

1827	Polymath Jean-Baptiste Fourier predicts an atmospheric effect keeping the Earth warmer than it would otherwise be; he is the first to use the greenhouse analogy ¹²
1890s	Scientists Svante Arrhenius and P.C. Chamberlain independently investigate the problems caused by carbon dioxide building up in the atmosphere; both find that the burning of fossil fuels could lead to global warming, although neither suspect that the process may have already begun
1890-1940	Average surface air temperatures increase by around 0.25°C; some scientists see the American Dust Bowl as a sign of the greenhouse effect
1940-1970	Average surface air temperatures decrease by around 0.2°C; interest in the greenhouse effect wanes and some climatologists predict an ice age
1957	Oceanographer Roger Revelle warns that humanity is conducting a 'large-scale geophysical experiment' on the planet by releasing greenhouse gases. Colleague David Keeling sets up the first continuous monitoring of CO ₂ levels in the atmosphere, and soon finds a year-on-year increase – he then creates the 'Keeling curve' and warns the world of the likelihood and impacts of global warming
1979	<u>World Climate Conference</u> ¹³ (Geneva, Switzerland) – attended largely by scientists; led to the creation of 4 working groups investigating climate data and the establishment of the World Climate Programme and the World Climate Research Programme; scientists call on governments 'to foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate'
1980s	Warmest decade since records began – seven of the eight warmest years on record, including the warmest (1987); even the coldest year in the 1980s was warmer than the warmest of the 1880s
1988	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) created by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – the organisation was endorsed by the UN later that year, and now works closely alongside it
1988	Scientists at Congressional hearings (Washington DC, USA) blame major US drought on global warming – climate change garners widespread media and public attention
1988	Climate scientists in Toronto call for a 20% reduction in global CO ₂ emissions by the year 2005

¹² 'Timeline: Climate Change' – New Scientist, Michael Marshall, 4 September 2006:

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn9912-timeline-climate-change/>

¹³ 'Climate Chronology' website: <http://climatechronology.com/1979/climate-conference/>

- 1990 [First Assessment Report¹⁴](#) – the IPCC, led by Bert Bolin published a report composed of three sections: the first was a scientific assessment of climate change (finding that the planet had warmed by 0.5°C over the last century and stating that emissions resulting from human activity were significantly contributing to global warming), the second was an impacts assessment (including estimates of temperature and sea level rises), and the third was a set of response strategies
- 1991 Mount Pinatubo erupts in the Philippines – throws debris into the stratosphere which temporarily shields the Earth from solar energy, helping to interrupt the warming trend; average temperatures drop for two years before rising again
- 1992 Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) – 178 countries adopted [Agenda 21¹⁵](#), a plan of action to secure multilateral agreement to work towards improving human lives and protecting the environment; sets initial target of reducing emissions from industrialised countries by 2000
- 1994 Alliance of Small Island States adopt a demand for 20% cuts in emissions by the year 2005 (they fear rising sea levels, and say a 20% reduction would cut rises at 20cm)
- 1995 [Second Assessment Report¹⁶](#) – the IPCC published a report composed of three sections: the first was titled ‘The Science of Climate Change’, the second covered the impacts and possible mitigation options, and the third was the ‘Economic and Social Dimensions of Climate Change’
- The report concludes that current warming is not ‘entirely natural in origin’ and that ‘the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate.’ The report predicts that under a ‘business as usual’ scenario, global temperatures will have risen by between 1°C and 3.5°C by the year 2100
- 1995 First meeting of the Climate Change Convention (Berlin, Germany) – the [Berlin Mandate¹⁷](#) is adopted by signatories; industrialised nations agree on the need to negotiate real cuts in their emissions to be concluded by the end of 1997
- 1996 Second meeting of the Climate Change Convention (Geneva, Switzerland) – influential players such as the US agree for the first time to legally binding emissions targets; scientists warn that most industrialised countries will not meet the [Rio agreement¹⁸](#)

¹⁴ Find online copy of report at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar1/>

¹⁵ Find PDF of agreement at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf> (p8-22)

¹⁶ Find online copy of report at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ipcc-second-assessment-full-report/>

¹⁷ Find PDF of agreement at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop1/07a01.pdf>

¹⁸ The Rio agreement called upon nations to stabilise emissions at 1990 levels by 2000

- 1997 UNFCCC meeting (Kyoto, Japan) – the [Kyoto Protocol¹⁹](#), entailing legally binding emissions cuts, are agreed for industrialised nations, averaging 5.4% to be met by 2010
- There are 192 parties to the protocol (the EU, Cook Islands, Nieu and all UN member states except Andorra, Canada, South Sudan and the USA); 84 states have signed the agreement and 55 have ratified it
- The Kyoto Protocol continues to be a point of controversy – a series of talks are held in Buenos Aires (1998) and The Hague (2000) over the ‘Kyoto Rule Book’ leading to tensions between the EU and USA, and a breakdown in support for the agreement. When new guidelines were set after the original deadline passed, a number of nations withdrew and are no longer subject to the Protocol (the only remaining nations are in Europe and Oceania)
- It was not until 2002 that Parliaments in the EU, Japan and elsewhere ratified Kyoto, and even then the protocol’s rules requiring ratification by nations responsible for at least 55% of industrialised emissions before it can come into force caused issues – after Australia joined the US in renouncing the deal, Russia was left to make or break the treaty. It wasn’t until November 2004 that they finally ratified it
- 1998 1998 is the hottest year since records began. The decade was also the hottest on record, and the century was the hottest of the millennium
- 2000 Millennium Summit (UN HQ, New York, USA) – UN member states unanimously adopted the [Millennium Declaration²⁰](#) & 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were set to reduce extreme poverty by 2015 and work towards ecologically sustainable development
- 2000 IPCC scientists warn that, if things go badly, the world could warm by 6°C within a century
- 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WWSO), (Johannesburg, South Africa) – [Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation²¹](#) adopted; built on Agenda 21 and the Millennium Summit, focussing on the environment
- 2002 The ‘Larsen B’ ice sheet in Antarctica breaks up
- 2003 The hottest year for Europe in at least 500 years – it is estimated that there were around 30,000 fatalities. Researchers later concluded that climate change at least doubled the risk of the heat wave
- One of the hottest years globally since records began – extreme weather cost an estimated record \$60 billion

¹⁹ ‘What is the Kyoto Protocol?’ – UNFCCC: https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol

²⁰ Find resolution of adoption at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Millennium.aspx>

²¹ Find PDF of agreement at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/wssd/documents/wssd_pol_declaration.pdf

- 2005 Kyoto Protocol comes into force – signatories agree to discuss emissions target for the second compliance period beyond 2012, and countries without targets (including China and the USA) agree to a ‘non-binding dialogue’ on future plans for emissions reductions
- 2005 [Emissions Trading Scheme²²](#) – launched by the European Union
- 2005 The second hottest year globally since records began; accelerated melting of Arctic sea ice and Siberian permafrost; record North American hurricane season – researchers link extreme weather to temperature change
- 2005 Climate meeting (Exeter, UK) – scientists warn that the West Antarctic Ice Sheet is beginning to collapse
- 2006 [Stern Review²³](#) – commissioned by the UK government, argues that the costs of coping with climate change will be greater than the costs of preventing it
- 2006 Carbon dioxide levels are found to be rising faster than in the 1990s; new evidence leads to the creation of the ‘hockey stick’ graph
- 2006 The US Environmental Protection Agency is taken to the Supreme Court over its refusal to regulate CO2 emissions
- US agencies, including NASA, are accused of trying to censor climate experts
- 2007 [Fourth Assessment Report²⁴](#) – the IPCC published a report which places the blame for global warming firmly on mankind, estimates the cost of stabilising greenhouse gases at \$1830 billion, and calls for governments to begin planning adaptive measures. The synthesis warns of ‘abrupt and irreversible’ climate change
- Some of the most extreme scenarios are left out of the report, leading to accusations that it has been watered down
- 2007 Al Gore and the IPCC are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (although a UK judge criticises Al Gore’s climate change film An Inconvenient Truth for containing ‘factual inaccuracies’)

²² ‘European Trading in Carbon-emissions begin’ – New Scientist, Fred Pearce, 6 January 2005:

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn6846-european-trading-in-carbon-emission-permits-begins/>

²³ Find summary at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/publication/the-economics-of-climate-change-the-stern-review/> and find PDF of review at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407163608/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/Summary_of_Conclusions.pdf

²⁴ Find online copy of agreement at: https://archive.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg2/en/contents.html

- 2007 The US Supreme Court rules that the EPA has the authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions
- 2008 Measurements of solar activity show a decline since the 1990s – this debunks the claim that it is responsible for global warming
- 2008 Annual UN Climate Summit (Bali, Indonesia) – nations around the world agree a timetable to a post-2012 replacement for the Kyoto Protocol
- Interesting to note that the US delegation were publicly booed, and agreed to the pledge at the eleventh hour
- 2008 The polar bear is added to the endangered species list
- 2009 Scientists (Eric Steig and colleagues) show that both poles are warming faster than expected, and a crucial study suggest that humanity can emit no more than 1 trillion tonnes of carbon if we are to avoid temperature rises of 2°C or more
- 2009 A thin strip of ice protecting the Wilkins ice sheet from collapse breaks apart, hastening the sheet’s demise
- 2009 Indigenous peoples from around the world meet in Alaska to agree a common position on climate change
- 2009 Italy and Switzerland agree to redraw their borders in response to melting glaciers
- 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) – the General Assembly adopted the outcome document ‘[The Future We Want](#)’²⁵ from which arose an agreement to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs and establish the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
- 2013 The General Assembly set up a 30-member Open Working Group to make proposals for and on the SDGs
- 2015 UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai City, Japan) – Heads of state, ministers and delegates from around the world agree the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)²⁶ to strengthen measures on both prevention and cure for disasters; acknowledges large impact of climate change on ferocity and frequency of disasters

²⁵ Find resolution 66/288 at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E

²⁶ Find resolution of adoption at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/283&Lang=E, find PDF of agreement at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2157sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf>

- 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit (UN HQ, New York, USA) – the General Assembly adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)²⁷, with its 17 SDGs
- 2015 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (Paris, France) – [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#)²⁸ signed by 175 countries (now 184 members), aims to ‘combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future’ and gives ‘enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so’²⁹
- 2018 School Strike for Climate movement begins – millions have attended over the last year worldwide, putting pressure on governments to act
- 2019 Goal 13 reviewed at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
- 2019 A number of countries and dependencies have declared a ‘climate emergency’ – the UK, Jersey, Ireland, Isle of Man, Holy See, Canada, France, Austria and Argentina (in that order)
- In nations which have not made declarations, some local authorities have: 18 towns in the USA (including New York and San Francisco), 17 towns in Australia (including Sydney, Darebin and Melbourne), the Catalonia region and 7 towns in Spain, 4 towns in Italy (including Milan and Naples), 6 towns/regions in Switzerland, 49 towns in Germany (including Cologne and Potsdam), 4 towns in New Zealand (including Auckland and Wellington), Amsterdam in the Netherlands, 5 towns in Austria, Bacalod in the Philippines, and Warsaw and Krakow in Poland
- 2019 UK become first nation to commit to zero carbon emissions by 2050³⁰ – activists and scientists say 2050 is not soon enough, UK government encourages other nations to follow
- 2019 Major wildfires across the world, most notably in the Amazon, Russia and Indonesia
- 2019 UN Climate Summit to take place in September – the UN website describes its purpose as ‘to bring world leaders of governments, the

²⁷ Find resolution of adoption at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313&Lang=E and find PDF of agreement at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> (p25)

²⁸ Find resolution of adoption at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1 and find PDF of agreement at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf>

²⁹ ‘Global Issues-Climate Change’ on UN website: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/climate-change/>

³⁰ ‘Climate change: UK government to commit to 2050 target’ – BBC News, Roger Harrabin, 12 June 2019: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-48596775>

private sector and civil society together to support the multilateral process and to increase and accelerate climate action and ambition’

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Please see descriptions of treaties and major events (all of which are underlined and coloured) in the timeline, along with their footnotes for access to the documents.

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Again, please see timeline.

Possible Solutions

- Creating new international treaties or making current ones either more effective, more extreme or more binding
- Investment in research into technological solutions
- Aid from MEDCs to LEDCs to help them to cope with climate change and make changes
- National education or national/international mass media campaigns on ways to reduce emissions for ordinary people
- Encouraging all member states to declare a ‘climate emergency’ or ‘climate crisis’
- Encouraging member states to legislate for carbon offsets by public and private companies
- Encouraging member states to legislate for bans or taxes on high-carbon items/programmes
- Afforestation programmes

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IPCC Second Assessment Report <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ipcc-second-assessment-full-report/>

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Find online copy of agreement at:

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