



C4ET
factsheet

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An introduction to International Negotiations on Climate Change

The reality of climate change can no longer be denied. The increase in global temperatures leads to perturbations in the climate balance and to significant changes in terms of precipitation, rising sea levels, ice sheets and glacier melting, intensification of extreme climatic events, etc. Of course, natural causes such as solar output and volcanic activity have historically been the source of significant changes. However, all scientific evidences demonstrate that the current phenomena is mainly caused by human activities, through our energy systems and the related greenhouse gas emissions and though the pressures imposed on natural carbon sinks (forestry, wetlands, etc.). Projections show that perturbations in the climate system are likely to increase in the next decades, with significant impacts on our societies and on the environment.

The issue is not something new; in 1992, during the third Earth Summit in Rio, was created the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC came into operation in 1994 and constitutes a framework for international cooperation to combat climate change. Every year, the Parties (the States which signed the convention) gathers since 1995 to debates and agree on solutions to tackle this phenomena, during the Conference of the Parties (COP). This marked the beginning of



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the international negotiations on climate change, with two major achievements in terms of international binding agreements:

- the Kyoto protocol, adopted during COP3 in Kyoto and which came into force in 2005, following its ratification by Russia;
- The Paris agreement, adopted during COP21 in Paris and which came into force less than a year after COP21, on November 4th 2016, just ahead of COP22 in Marrakesh, Morocco.



COP21, Paris – Le Bourget (crédit ENERGIES 2050)

The Paris Agreement adopted during COP21 in December 2015 marks a great step in the history of the negotiations on climate. It will enable to define the global plan for climate action for the period 2020-2030, focusing not only on mitigation (reducing GHG emissions) but also on adaptation, loss and damages, finance, transfer of technologies and know-how, international cooperation, etc.

However, it must be stressed here that the current engagements of the Parties (formulated in the form of a frame paper, the INDCs, Intentional Nationally Determined Contributions, which became for the Parties having ratified the agreement NDCs, Nationally Determined Contributions – i.e. concrete engagements) are not sufficient if we want to reach the global target, set in the Paris agreement, of limiting global warming to 2°C by 2100.

As such, and as underlined in the agreement, the action of all actors, including non-Parties - that means, the civil society, companies, local authorities, and of course the citizens - will be critical to contain the climate change phenomena to sustainable levels..