



Background: What are intended nationally determined contributions?

In the negotiations leading up to the [Paris Agreement](#) governments, at COP 19 in 2013, agreed that they would initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their intended nationally determined contributions ([INDCs](#)) towards achieving the objective of the Convention. At the time, the intention was to avoid a situation in which the Paris Agreement would have been agreed with no specific actions and timeframes for all its Parties. As such, INDCs were intended to cover this gap by inviting countries to outline the climate efforts they would undertake in the context of the Paris Agreement. The word “intended” was meant to indicate that these contributions were “intentions” with a view to formalizing them once the Paris Agreement had been adopted.

By the time of the adoption of the Paris Agreement, almost all Parties to the Convention had submitted their INDCs, all of which have been compiled on the [INDC portal](#). In response to a request by the COP the secretariat prepared a [synthesis report](#) on the aggregate effect of these INDCs. This report was published on 1 November 2015 and [updated in May 2016](#).

What are nationally determined contributions (NDCs)?

Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs, are at the heart of the [Paris Agreement](#). In short, they represent the contribution of each Party towards meeting the objective of this Agreement. For example, NDCs should, in aggregate, set the world on a trajectory towards peaking of global emissions as soon as possible and rapid reductions thereafter towards a balance of emissions and removals. This is why, through their NDCs, each Party should specify, among other things, its plans to reduce its emissions.

The Paris Agreement requires each Party to prepare, communicate and maintain successive NDCs that it intends to achieve, and to pursue domestic mitigation measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of such contributions. Parties are expected to do so every five years and to aim at increasing their ambition with each subsequent NDC. Further, the Paris Agreement expects developed country Parties to lead by undertaking economy-wide absolute emission reduction targets and encourages developing country Parties to move towards such targets over time, in the light of different national circumstances.

The decision adopting the Paris Agreement ([Decision 1/CP.21](#)) specifies that the first NDC of each Party will be its INDC at the time of ratification of the Paris Agreement, unless the Party decides otherwise. A Party, for example, may decide to revise its INDC and communicate a revision as its first NDC.

Parties should also submit and periodically update adaptation communications, which may be submitted as a component of a nationally determined contribution.

With a view to providing clarity on what each country’s NDC means, the COP specified several types of information, which include, for example, benchmarks of past emissions, periods (time frames) of implementation, assumptions and technical information, and an explanation of how the contributions is ambitious, fair and contributes towards achieving the objective of the Convention as set out in its Article 2.

In accordance with Article 4 paragraph 12 of the Agreement, NDCs communicated by Parties shall be recorded in a public registry, which is maintained by the secretariat and accessible [here](#).