

PRE-2020 COMMITMENTS AND THE NEED FOR MORE AMBITIOUS NDCS

DECEMBER 2019

By 2020, Parties to the Paris Agreement are expected to enhance their mitigation commitments for the period to 2030, by submitting updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). About 10 years ago, many of these Parties submitted mitigation actions for 2020 as an outcome of COP15 in Copenhagen. With an outlook to updated NDC, we assess how Parties are expected to do in terms of achieving their 2020 target and what are the implications for their post-2020 emissions trajectories.

Following COP15 in Copenhagen, Annex I parties submitted quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets for 2020 and many non-Annex-I Parties submitted nationally appropriate mitigation actions to achieve emissions reduction by 2020.

Annex-I Parties, on aggregate, will overachieve the 2020 target emissions levels. Assessment of collective progress toward emissions reduction targets for 2020 for non Annex-I Parties is not possible with currently available information. At the individual level, several Annex-I as well as non-Annex-I are on track to (over)achieve their targets nominally or effectively, while some are on track to miss them by a large margin (Climate Action Tracker 2019; UNEP 2018; UNFCCC 2018).

Current NDCs would bring the world on to a long-term emission trajectory consistent with 2.9°C. It is extremely urgent that all countries increase ambition in their new and updated NDCs submitted by 2020 to bring the world on track for the 1.5°C limit.

The fact that individual countries may not achieve their 2020 targets must not be used as an excuse for inaction by others. Rather, all countries need to adopt targets and measures that align their emissions trajectories with the Paris Agreement. Those countries that are not on track to meet their 2020 targets need much faster post-2020 emissions reductions and even more ambitious NDCs by 2030 than would otherwise have been the case.

Annex I Parties

- All Annex I Parties, except Turkey, have communicated their quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets for 2020, which allows to assess their individual and collective progress towards their 2020 targets.
- **Annex-I Parties, on aggregate, will overachieve the 2020 target level:** expected 2020 emissions levels of Annex-I Parties are projected to be below the aggregate emissions level derived from the set of Annex I 2020 emissions reduction pledges. On aggregate the Annex I Parties reduced emissions by 18.5% from 1990 levels by 2016 (UNFCCC 2018). Reductions of 25-40% from 1990 levels by 2020 for Annex I were referred to in the preamble to Kyoto Protocol Decision 1/CMP.7¹.

¹ Decision 1/CMP.7 Outcome of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol at its sixteenth session, preamble "Aiming to ensure that aggregate emissions of greenhouse gases by Parties included in Annex I are reduced by at least 25–40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, noting in this regard the relevance of the review referred to in chapter V of decision 1/CP.16 to be concluded by 2015" <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2011/cmp7/eng/10a01.pdf>

- **Individual Annex-I Parties have made varying progress towards their 2020 targets** submitted during or following COP15 in Copenhagen. Some Annex I Parties' emission levels were already below their 2020 targets in 2016, while others are not on track to meet their targets or are relying on the use of market-based instruments, or land use change and forestry accounting to meet them.
 - Annex-I Parties that are not on track to meet their 2020 targets or are relying on market-based mechanisms or LULUCF credits (if allowed) include the United States of America (USA), Liechtenstein, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and Iceland.
 - Annex-I Parties that are on track to nominally (over)achieve their unconditional 2020 targets include the European Union, Japan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine², Australia, and the Russian Federation. Some of these are overachieving their unconditional 2020 targets because these targets were set in comparison to a usually high base year (e.g. Russian Federation and Ukraine), or are intending to use a range of land use change and forestry accounting arrangements to meet their targets (e.g. Australia and New Zealand). Nominal achievement does not imply that emissions to the atmosphere have been reduced to levels implied by the country's targets (see Climate Action Tracker individual assessments for further details).

Non-Annex I Parties

- Many non-Annex-I Parties submitted nationally appropriate mitigation actions with emissions reductions targets for 2020³, but given that not all Parties submitted a target⁴, or many target submitted cannot clearly be translated into specific 2020 emissions levels, it is not possible to assess collective progress of non-Annex-I Parties towards their 2020 targets.
- Many non-Annex-I Parties have submitted nationally appropriate mitigation actions with emissions reductions targets for 2020⁵, against which progress can be tracked. For all non-Annex I Parties, the last official compilation and synthesis of National Communications and Biennial Reports by the UNFCCC for non-Annex I Parties was produced in 2005. In absence of an official classification by the UNFCCC, we rely on the independent assessment of Parties' progress by the Climate Action Tracker⁶, which covers 11 out of 153 non-Annex I Parties, representing around 39% of global emissions in 2017 (excluding LULUCF).
- **Individual non-Annex-I Parties have made varying progress towards their 2020 targets** agreed at the 2009 COP15 in Copenhagen:
 - The last official compilation and synthesis of National Communications and Biennial Reports by the UNFCCC for non-Annex I Parties was produced in 2005. Therefore, we rely on independent assessments here to assess the progress of non-Annex I Parties towards their 2020 targets.

² Based on Figures 3-4 of the report, given that they are not included in the official UNFCCC classification based on 3BR due to the fact that these parties had not submitted a 3BR when the report was produced.

³ See individual communications here: <https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/pastconferences/copenhagen-climate-change-conference-december-2009/statements-and-resources/4>

⁴ For instance Argentina, The Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.

⁵ See individual communications here: <https://unfccc.int/process/conferences/pastconferences/copenhagen-climate-change-conference-december-2009/statements-and-resources/4>

⁶ If the same source were to be used for Annex-1 countries, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, and Switzerland would not be on track to meet their 2020 targets.

- Based on independent assessments, **the majority of non-Annex-I Parties which have set a 2020 target are on track to meeting their targets** excluding LULUCF, including China, India, Chile, Singapore, South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil, and Peru.
- Similar to Annex-I countries, there are some non-Annex-I Parties which are set to miss their 2020 reduction targets excluding LULUCF, including Mexico, South Korea and Costa Rica⁷

2020 targets and enhanced ambition

Enhanced climate ambition and action is urgently needed by all parties to bring the world on track for the 1.5°C limit. This has different implications for Parties with a 2020 target, depending on their progress to the achievement of these targets.

From now until the end of 2020, **Parties that are not on track to meet their 2020 targets must make further efforts to meet their targets** by strengthening implementation of their existing mitigation policies and measures, and using units from market-based mechanisms, if needed.

Parties which end up missing their 2020 targets, will need much faster post-2020 emissions reductions and even more ambitious NDCs by 2030 than would otherwise have been the case. To be **consistent with environmental integrity**, the compensation required should achieve the same cumulative total greenhouse-gas emissions from 2010 to 2030 compared to a pathway where 2020 targets were achieved, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Parties which end up (over)achieving their 2020 targets nominally or effectively must not use this as an excuse of inaction or to not update their post-2020 commitment. Any attempt to carry over any emissions units resulting from the overachievement of pre-2020 targets to the post-2020 period would be completely against the urgent need for increased ambition.

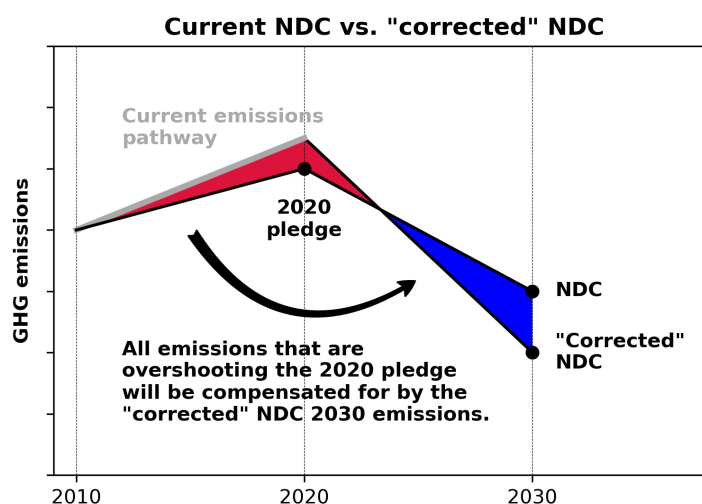


Figure 1. Illustration of compensating emissions around 2020 that exceed the 2020 Copenhagen target. The red area shows the total emissions overshooting a “target pathway”, which would lead from actual 2010 emissions to the 2020 target, and onwards to the NDC level in 2030. To compensate emissions overshooting the 2020 target, the NDC could be “corrected” to lead to emissions levels by 2030 that are lower, with the lower emissions in the blue area fully compensating for the overshooting emissions earlier on (red).

⁷ According to assessment of individual targets and projections by the Climate Action Tracker (Climate Action Tracker 2018).