

# Lima talks map out path to climate treaty

But much remains undecided over goal of reaching international agreement next year in Paris.

- [Jeff Tollefson](#)

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Lima, Peru



Eitan Abramovich/AFP/Getty

Activists depicting world leaders demonstrate at the Lima climate meetings.

Two weeks of climate negotiations in Lima have wrapped up with a road map for the establishment of an international climate treaty in Paris next year. But the agreement has left crucial issues, including the structure of the eventual treaty, financial aid to help poor countries reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, and how to distribute the burden between developed and developing countries, to be settled next year.

“As a text, it’s not perfect, but it includes the positions of the parties,” says Peruvian

environment minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal.

The agreement, reached early on Sunday morning, advances preliminary material for the treaty and lays out basic rules for countries to develop and submit pledges to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. These reduction plans are expected in the first half of next year.

Faced with opposition from China and other countries that wanted a less-stringent assessment process for developing nations, negotiators abandoned language that would have established formal reviews for climate pledges. They also dropped a proposed requirement that countries include additional technical data that would have made it easier to evaluate those pledges.

Environmentalists and some scientists criticized the decision, arguing that it will be hard to judge the adequacy of the pledges and too push governments to do more. Discussions over how to assess climate pledges will remain on the table in Paris, where negotiators hope to create a treaty that enters into force after 2020 and that can then be updated regularly with new emissions commitments.

“In the next round, I expect things will become a little more formal,” says Jake Schmidt, director of the international programme at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington DC.

## **Failing pledge**

The importance of independent assessments became clear earlier in the week when a scientific review suggested that Australia is unlikely to meet the pledge it made at the 2009 climate summit in Copenhagen. The country committed to cut emissions to 5% below 2000 levels by 2020, but is instead on track for a 26% increase, according to an analysis by Climate Action Tracker, a consortium of scientific organizations based in Berlin.

“It’s a major scientific task to be able to monitor this process,” says Bill Hare, director of Climate Analytics, a member of the Climate Action Tracker consortium. Developing countries will need to bolster the science underlying their greenhouse-gas estimates, Hare says, and the consideration of forestry, agriculture and broader land-use trends will only make the task more complex.

Climate Action Tracker’s latest warming projection, conducted in light of recent pledges by the United States, China and Europe, suggests that the global average temperature could rise around 3 °C above pre-industrial levels on the basis of current commitments, well above the 2 °C target that countries have adopted as a threshold to avoid the worst impacts of global warming.

## **Under review**

Scientists are engaging in a technical review of the long-term temperature target, driven in part by some developing countries’ demands that it be revised from 2 °C to 1.5 °C. That assessment will look at the risks posed by different levels of warming, as well as the consequences of overshooting the 2 °C threshold.

“We’re exploring the risks, but it’s not easy to say what people are willing to accept and what we are not,” says Andreas Fischlin, an ecologist at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in

Zurich and co-facilitator of the review. That report is scheduled for release later in the spring. “The question is how much that will reverberate throughout the rest of the process,” he says.

Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington DC, says the Lima agreement is enough to keep the talks moving forward, but underscores the challenge going into Paris.

“This decision was not that big of a deal,” he says. “If this is any indication, it’s going to be a very hard-fought negotiation over the coming year.”

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## Lima talks set up climate deal for a 'bad outcome'

- 12:27 15 December 2014 by [Fred Pearce](#)
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The timetable is in tatters. Hopes of a successful climate deal in Paris next December suffered a setback at the UN climate summit in Lima, Peru, at the weekend as talks left the proposed timeline for a deal in pieces.

In particular, nations are now under no obligation to present detailed pledges of emissions cuts by March this year, as has been planned before Lima. The closing statement, the Lima Call for Climate Action, instead says countries are "invited" to "consider communicating their undertakings", which "may include, as appropriate... quantifiable information", and to send them in when they are "ready to do so".

Even if countries do present detailed pledges before Paris, a plan to allow other nations to comment on them – to see if they measure up to the professed desire to limit global warming to 2 °C – was thrown out. China, India and others said such a review would infringe their sovereignty.

### Watered down

UN secretary-general [Ban Ki-Moon](#) had asked the Lima conference to agree a draft text for Paris. Instead, it decided to "intensify its work" to deliver one before May.

Climate scientists left Lima feeling gloomy. The conclusion "is definitely watered down from what we expected", said [Alden Meyer](#) of the Union of Concerned Scientists in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the meeting.

It was "very important that [delegates] include rigorous and scientifically sound emissions information [in their] emissions pledges", said Bill Hare of the think tank [Climate Analytics](#) in Berlin, Germany.

China, the world largest polluter, [had recently pledged](#) that its emissions would peak by 2030, but without saying what level that might be. Such detailed information "is fundamentally

important to the likely level of global warming", Hare said.

## **Grave concern**

Policy specialists were no happier. "Twenty years of climate negotiations have shown that deferring critical decisions to the last minute often leads to a bad outcome," said [Mark Kenber](#), CEO of the Climate Group, which represents business leaders around the world who want a climate deal.

Delegates agreed a [conference closing statement](#) noting "with grave concern" the "significant gap" between informal pledges so far put on the table and the goal of limiting warming to 2 °C. But they had failed to address that gap.

The conference, like many climate negotiations before it, was beset by battles between rich and poor nations. Poor nations said they should be allowed to develop their economies unhindered by restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions. Most rich nations agreed with US secretary of [state John Kerry](#), who told delegates that "today, more than half of emissions are coming from developing countries, so it is imperative that they act too".

Economists also saw a conflict. A fair deal would concentrate the emissions cuts for rich nations, which have the highest per-capita emissions and have been emitting longer. But the cheapest cuts can be made in poor countries.

The obvious solution is to have the rich nations pay for emissions cuts in developing economies. In Lima, rich nations refused to put the money on the table. Without it, the Paris conference may fail as its predecessor did in [Copenhagen five years ago](#).

14 December 2014 Last updated at 09:23

# **UN members agree deal at Lima climate talks**



Big emitters like the US and EU want any deal to include emerging economies such as India and China

United Nations members have reached an agreement on how countries should tackle climate change.

Delegates have approved a framework for setting national pledges to be submitted to a summit next year.

Differences over the draft text caused the talks in Lima, Peru, to overrun by two days.

Environmental groups have criticised the deal as a weak and ineffectual compromise, saying it weakens international climate rules.

The talks proved difficult because of divisions between rich and poor countries over how to spread the burden of pledges to cut carbon emissions.

'Not perfect'

The BBC's Matt McGrath in Lima says none of the 194 countries attending the talks walked away with everything they wanted, but everybody got something.

There was a great sense of relief among delegates when the announcement came in the early hours of Sunday morning, he adds, following 48 hours of talks without a break.

Peru's environment minister, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, who chaired the summit, told reporters: "As a text it's not perfect, but it includes the positions of the parties."

[The agreement](#) was adopted hours after a previous draft was rejected by developing countries, who accused rich nations of shirking their responsibilities to fight global warming and pay for its impacts.

The final draft is said to have alleviated those concerns with by saying countries have "common

but differentiated responsibilities".



Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, who chaired the talks, announced the agreement to cheers from delegates "We've got what we wanted," Indian environment minister Prakash Javedekar told reporters, saying the document preserved the notion that richer nations had to lead the way in making cuts in emissions.

It also restored a promise to poorer countries that a "loss and damage" scheme would be established to help them cope with the financial implications of rising temperatures.

However, it weakened language on national pledges, saying countries "may" instead of "shall" include quantifiable information showing how they intend to meet their emissions targets.

The agreed document calls for:

- An "ambitious agreement" in 2015 that reflects "differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" of each nation
- Developed countries to provide financial support to "vulnerable" developing nations
- National pledges to be submitted by the first quarter of 2015 by those states "ready to do so"
- Countries to set targets that go beyond their "current undertaking"
- The UN climate change body to report back on the national pledges in November 2015

Environmental groups were scathing in their response to the document, saying the proposals were nowhere near drastic enough.

Sam Smith, chief of climate policy for the environmental group WWF, said: "The text went from weak to weaker to weakest and it's very weak indeed."

Jagoda Munc, chairperson of Friends of the Earth International, said fears the talks would fail to deliver "a fair and ambitious outcome" had been proven "tragically accurate".

The talks followed last month's agreement on emissions targets between the US and China, but

hopes it would encourage wider global agreement faded once talks began in Lima on 1 December.

On Saturday, US climate envoy Todd Stern had warned that the deadlock in the negotiations threatened the chances of a new global deal next year, saying it would be seen as "a major breakdown".

14 December 2014 Last updated at 01:41

## Lima climate talks face major breakdown, US warns



**By Matt McGrath**

Environment correspondent, BBC News, Lima



Exhausted delegates rest on beanbags during a break at the talks in Lima

**The head of the US delegation at UN climate talks has warned of a "major breakdown" in the process if negotiators fail to come to an agreement at a meeting in Lima, Peru.**

Talks remain deadlocked by divisions between rich and poor countries over the scale and scope of plans to tackle global warming.

The talks were due to have concluded on Friday but have now overrun.

Disagreements abound over a key building block of a new global treaty.

That element, known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) in the jargon of the meeting, is seen as a major step as developed nations are due to make pledges on how they will tackle climate change by the end of March next year.

The countries came to Peru to work out the details of what those pledges would entail.

It has not been smooth sailing.

The big emitters like the US and EU want these pledges to be focused mainly on cutting carbon - and they want to include emerging economies such as India and China.



Protesters outside the talks have made clear their frustration. Developing countries object strongly to any attempts to bring them into the fold - and they argue that the pledges of the rich must include substantial finance for the poor.

According to US climate envoy Todd Stern, the deadlock on this and other

issues threatens the chances of a new global deal next year.

"Failing to produce the decision before us will be seen as a major breakdown, and will deal a serious blow to the confidence of the parties and others as we approach Paris. And indeed to the hope of a Paris agreement," he said.

### **Two-tiered system**

The president of the meeting, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, has attempted to move things forward by producing a new draft text.

Developing countries were not impressed. They argued that the new text went too far in watering down a key element of the climate convention signed in 1992, the idea of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR).

This in effect divided the world between richer countries who have had to take on carbon cutting burdens and poorer countries who have no obligations.

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### **Lima climate talks**



The negotiations are being hosted by Lima, the Peruvian capital  
Conference scheduled to run from 1 to 12 December, attended  
by 195 countries

Negotiations aim to advance the outline text of an agreement on

climate change, to be finalised in Paris by the end of 2015

Progress on approving the text has been slow

Countries are divided over whether developing countries should take on obligations to cut emissions

The talks come amid some of the hottest global average temperatures ever on record

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The developed say the world is very different now than in 1992, with more than half the world's emissions coming from the emerging economies. But many of the delegates here rejected the idea of change.

"Many of you colonised us so we started from very different points... this you must appreciate," said a delegate from Malaysia, who was strongly arguing for a retention.

"There is a world out there which is different to your world," he warned the parties.

### **Ten-minute meetings**

Some of the negotiators believed that the president had gone too far in cutting out some of the elements that they felt were crucial to those most affected by climate change. They argued that language on finance and loss and damage had been weakened or removed.



China and other developing countries have become major contributors to climate change

"If you are submitting yourself for circumcision", warned Singapore's Environment Minister, Vivian Balakrishnan, "be very sure it doesn't become an amputation."

Many felt that a group of countries called the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) - which includes China, India, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela - were the key hold outs against a compromise.

"Three-quarters of the people in there are happy with the deal," said one delegate, gesturing to the hall where countries are gathered. "It's the like-minded group who are holding it up."

The president of the meeting has held a series of 10-minute meetings with all the parties and it is expected that a new or amended text will soon be presented for a final decision.

The worry is that to secure wide support, the document will be significantly weakened, with negative implications for a treaty in Paris.

12 December 2014 Last updated at 17:51

## **Lima climate talks: Final push amid**

# ongoing divisions

By Matt McGrath Environment correspondent, BBC News, Lima



Drought in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The talks have highlighted divisions between developed and developing nations

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Talks have reopened in Peru on the final day of a key UN climate summit aimed at advancing a new global treaty.

The negotiators in the capital, Lima, are tasked with preparing a text to serve as the basis for a new compact to be signed in Paris next year.

But long-running divisions between rich and poor continue to hamper progress.

US Secretary of State John Kerry warned the world was "still on a course leading to tragedy", saying a deal was "not an option, an urgent necessity".

Negotiators have been meeting in Lima for almost two weeks to prepare the elements of the new treaty.

'Red lines'

A new text has been produced by the chairman of the talks in an effort to get a decision.

But environmental groups say that it is far too weak and threatens to leave many issues

unresolved.

It is expected that the talks will go past their official closing time at 18:00 local time (23:00 GMT).

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### **Lima climate talks**



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- Conference runs from 1 to 12 December, attended by 195 countries
- Negotiations aim to advance the outline text of an agreement on climate change, to be finalised in Paris by the end of 2015
- Progress on approving the text has been slow
- Countries are divided over whether developing countries should take on obligations to cut emissions
- The talks come amid some of the hottest global average temperatures ever on record.

In his speech, Mr Kerry said no country should have a "free pass".

"I know this is difficult for developing nations. We have to remember that today more than half of emissions are coming from developing nations, so it is imperative that they act too."

But this approach is being resisted by a number of countries, including China and many others, who want to adhere to the idea of "common but differentiated responsibilities".

Some countries are suspicious that the text being developed here in Lima is an attempt to get round the concept of differentiation, which is embedded in the 1992 UN framework convention on climate change.

The issue has become critical as the chairs of the talks introduced a new draft text that many felt watered down the original commitment.

A large group of developing nations known as the G77 objected.

"This whole exercise is not meant to rewrite the convention, this is a firm basic position of the G77," said Antonio Marcondes, Brazil's representative at the talks.



Mr Kerry said the world is "on a course leading to tragedy"  
"We stand behind the differentiation, we stand behind 'common but differentiated responsibilities', these are issues we hold very strong and these are definite red lines."

Another key battle was over the initial commitments that countries are expected to make by the end of March next year.

Rich and poor are still divided over what should be part of this package, known in the jargon of the UN talks as the "intended nationally determined contributions" (INDCs).

Developed countries want to restrict them to carbon cuts. Developing ones want them to include finance for adaptation.

Long night ahead

A further argument is over the idea that there must be some sort of review process before a new deal is signed.

It would essentially be an effort to ratchet up ambition by comparing and contrasting what countries had promised in the run up to Paris.

The idea, called an "ex-ante review", is seen as very important by some, especially the European Union.

But developing countries including India are dead set against it.



More than 190 countries are represented at the talks

They say it is an issue of sovereignty. Outside parties, they argue, should not have the power to review what countries commit to by themselves.

"We favour a transparent presentation of country issues, but we think that an ex-ante review next year would be an unnecessary effort," said Mr Marcondes.

"It would detract from the main goal of reaching Paris with a new agreement."

These divisions are all variants of long-running splits between richer and poorer nations that have existed in the UN talks for 20 years.

The climate debate has often been neutered by the depth of these differences. It had been hoped that the positive signals from the US, China and the European Union before the meeting would help bridge the gaps, but trust is still short on the ground.

The president of the meeting, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal from Peru, told delegates that they would not "leave Lima with empty hands".

"We can deal with this problem and we can send a strong signal," he said. "Don't leave me alone, we can work together. It won't be me that thanks you, it will be the world."

Earlier this week, Mr Pulgar-Vidal had said that he was looking forward to drinking a pisco sour with the delegations at 6pm on Friday.

Few believe that the deadline will be met. Mr Pulgar-Vidal may well be sipping his drink alone.

1 December 2014 Last updated at 16:21

## **UN climate talks begin as global**

# temperatures break records

By Matt McGrath Environment correspondent, BBC News



In September, millions of people marched in support of a new approach to climate change

A key UN climate meeting in Peru has opened with negotiators attempting to advance a new global agreement.

One hundred and ninety-five nations have committed to finalising a new climate pact in Paris by 2015's end.

The process has been boosted by recent developments, including a joint announcement on cutting carbon by the US and China.

The two weeks of discussions have started amid record-breaking global temperatures for the year to date.

According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Noaa), the global average temperature over land and ocean from January to October was the hottest since records began in 1880.

Speaking at the opening ceremony in Lima, UN climate chief Christiana Figueres said that the conference had to make history.

"2014 is threatening to be the hottest year in history and emissions continue to rise, we need to act urgently," she told the negotiators.

"We should be able to lay the foundations for a strong agreement in Paris and raise the level of our ambitions so that gradually over the long term we are able to achieve climate neutrality - this is the only way to truly achieve sustainable development for all."

Forward momentum

Delegates will attempt to build on the this year's positive momentum that has seen a new political engagement with the process.

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## “Start Quote

I think the countries 'true colours' will start to come out a bit. That's useful for the public to know”

Liz Gallagher E3G

In September, [millions of people took to the streets of cities all over the world](#) in a demonstration of popular support for a new approach.

Days later, 125 world leaders attended a meeting called by the UN secretary general, where they [re-affirmed their commitments to tackle the problem through a new global agreement](#).

The chances of that happening were increased by [November's announcement from the US and China](#), with the Chinese signalling that their emissions would peak around 2030.

The European Union also contributed to the positive mood by [agreeing climate targets for 2030](#).

There has also been good news on climate finance. The UN's Green Climate Fund (GCF) secured over \$9bn in commitments at a recent pledging conference in Berlin.

Now in [Lima](#), the negotiating teams will try to boost these advances and maintain a momentum that will survive to Paris. But observers say there are many "formidable challenges" ahead.

"Ultimately this is not a problem that can be solved by just the US, China, and the EU," said Paul Bledsoe, senior climate fellow with the German Marshall Fund of the US.

"There's a whole series of countries - Canada, Australia, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Brazil and Indonesia - who have not made commitments (to cut emissions) and we don't know yet how robust their commitments are."

Form and function

One key element of the puzzle that needs to be resolved in Peru is the scale of "intended nationally determined contributions" (INDC).

By the end of March next year, all countries are expected to announce the level of their efforts to cut carbon as part of the Paris deal.

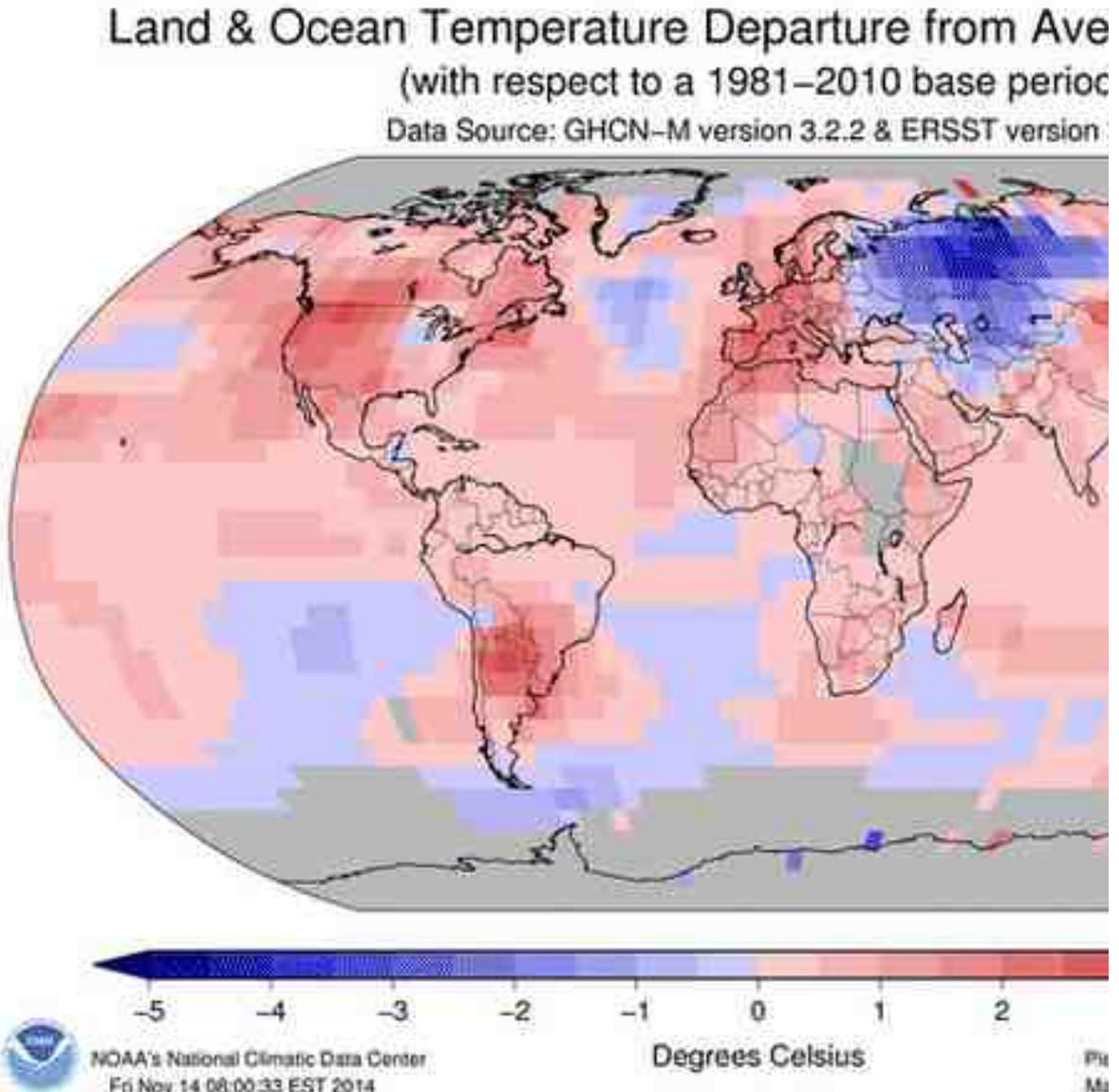
But, as yet, there is no agreement on what should be included or excluded from these INDC statements.

"Developed countries want a narrow scope for those guidelines, but developing countries are pushing for finance and adaption in them," said Liz Gallagher from the think-tank E3G, and a long-time observer of the UN talks process.

"That seems to be a tactical move to make sure that finance and adaptation get more political

attention than in the past - for me that's where the big tensions in Lima will be."

As well as the INDC discussion, there will be strong debate about what needs to be included in the final text. Parties are likely to clash over the long-term goal of any new agreement and its legal shape.



Data from the US suggests 2014 is on course for record temperatures  
Many countries, including the US, have signalled that they will be unable to enter a legally binding deal on emissions cuts.

There will also be pressure for countries to come up with significant contributions in the period up to 2020 when a new deal is likely to come into force.

There are concerns that the scale of division between the interests of richer and poorer countries could lead to stalemate.

"I believe the developing countries need to be careful who they allow to speak as their leadership," said Paul Bledsoe.

"I don't believe that petrol states like Saudi Arabia or Venezuela are the appropriate leaders for the interests of less rich countries, most of whom do not have fossil resources.

"It is important that the great majority of developing countries who don't have fossil resources don't get gamed by those who do."

Many attendees believe that the concerns about temperatures, and the engagement of political leaders, as demonstrated in recent months, will be positive for the process.

"I think, this top-down pressure will force countries to think they can't always retreat to their old school lines," said Liz Gallagher.

"Whether that will be positive or negative, I think that disruption to the negotiation dynamic is helpful at this stage.

"I think the countries' 'true colours' will start to come out a bit. That's useful for the public to know."

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