

REPORT ON MARRAKECH AND AFTER

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Sally Tyldesley, CAFOD's policy analyst for climate and energy, has just returned from UN climate change negotiations in Marrakech. Here she answers our tricky questions about the Paris climate agreement, what has happened since it was adopted, and what next for climate action.

So, remind us, what exactly is the Paris Agreement?

197 nations came together in Paris last year to make a historic commitment to addressing climate change and cutting carbon emissions.

All international agreements need to go through the steps of being adopted, signed and ratified. The Paris Agreement is moving forward at record-breaking speed: it has become one of the quickest international agreements to come into force.

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What is the difference between the agreement being adopted, signed and ratified? It's all very confusing.

Adoption is the first step. It means that countries agree to the text included within the agreement. 197 countries adopted the Paris Agreement on 12 December 2015. Next, individual countries **sign** the Agreement, indicating their commitment to it and that they will not undermine its aims. The Paris Agreement was opened to signatures in New York on 22 April 2016, and will remain open for a year. So far, an incredible 193 countries have signed.

Ratification is the final stage, where countries formally join the Agreement by submitting an instrument of 'ratification, acceptance or approval' to the Secretary General at the UN. There is no time limit. Right now, 112 countries have ratified the Paris Agreement, including the UK, USA, China and India. [The UN is keeping track.](#)

What does "coming into force" mean, and how does it happen?

It means that countries that have ratified the agreement are legally bound to act on the commitments they made within it. Back-tracking is very difficult. Countries cannot withdraw from the agreement for three years, and will need to wait another year before they can formally leave.



CAFOD campaigners at Paris climate talks

For the Paris Agreement to come into force it needed to be ratified by at least 55 countries *and* for the countries that had ratified to account for at least 55% of global emissions.

By 4 October 2016, both thresholds were reached – and the Agreement came into force 30 days later, just in time for the start of talks in Marrakech.

So, what about the UK? When and how did our government ratify the Paris Agreement?

The process varies for different countries. The UK government laid a motion before Parliament for 21 days, then the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson signed the document ratifying the agreement on 17 November.

What happened in Marrakech?

Countries started work on the ‘rulebook’ for how the Agreement will be implemented. They also produced [the Marrakech Action Proclamation](#) – a declaration from countries that called for action, cooperation, increased ambition and solidarity with those most vulnerable to climate change. It reiterated the strong global commitment to dealing with climate change.

Hang on a minute. The Paris Agreement aims to keep global temperature rise below 1.5 °C, yet the combined pledges made to cut carbon emissions aren’t enough to achieve that. So, what happens now?

To address this gap, the Paris Agreement included a “ratcheting mechanism” to increase ambition over time. This mechanism involves a “global stocktake” and requires countries to submit new climate commitments every five years. This helps them see where progress is being made and where there are opportunities to do more.



Making green hearts with the Climate Coalition

So, everything’s in hand, we can sit back and relax now?

Now we have the agreement we need to make sure that we put in place policies that

help us to transform the way we live. CAFOD, together with other organisations in The Climate Coalition, has been calling on the UK government to put in place an ambitious low carbon plan which will map how we can meet carbon targets.

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The Marrakech negotiations were all about putting good intentions into action. It is only if people like us push our governments to implement more ambitious policies at the national or local level that climate negotiators can pledge greater commitments at international negotiations.

FOSSIL FUELS DISINVESTMENT



Trócaire has welcomed a Bill by the Irish Parliament to divest from fossil fuels. Yesterday afternoon a majority vote was passed in the Dáil to progress the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill to Committee stage. The Bill calls for the withdrawal of investments of the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) from fossil fuel companies and ban future investments in the industry by the Fund.

Executive Director of Trócaire, Éamonn Meehan said: "Major cities from Copenhagen to Berlin to Sydney have already committed to divest from the fossil fuel industry. However, if the Fossil Fuel Divestment Bill is passed, Ireland would be the first country to ban investment of public money into the fossil fuel industry.

"With a climate-sceptic recently inaugurated into the White House, this move by elected representatives in Ireland will send out a powerful message. The Irish political system is now finally acknowledging what the overwhelming majority of people already know: That to have a fighting chance to combat catastrophic climate change we must phase out fossil fuels and stop the growth of the industry that is driving this crisis."

"I have seen it on the ground, from Malawi to Honduras, climate change is decimating the world's poorest communities. The support of a majority in the Dáil for this Bill is an incredibly important moment for the climate justice movement in Ireland and will inspire other countries to follow our lead."