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What Is the Paris Agreement?

The Paris Agreement is a landmark international accord adopted on December 12, 2015, during the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, France. The agreement aims to combat climate change **and accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low-carbon future.**

Key Goals of the Paris Agreement:

1. Limit Global Warming: The primary objective of the Paris Agreement is to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
2. Global Peaking of Emissions: The agreement aims for global greenhouse gas emissions to peak as soon as possible, recognizing that this will take longer for developing countries. It also calls for rapid reductions thereafter to achieve a balance between emissions and the removal of greenhouse gases by the second half of this century.
3. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): Each country that is part of the agreement must develop, communicate, and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve. These NDCs represent efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
4. Support for Developing Countries: The Paris Agreement acknowledges the need to support developing countries financially and technologically to help them reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Developed countries are expected to provide financial resources to assist developing countries.
5. Transparency and Global Stocktake: The agreement includes a framework for transparency and global stocktaking to monitor and review progress. Countries must report on their emissions and progress made in implementing and achieving their NDCs, with a global stocktake occurring every five years to assess collective progress.

Significance of the Paris Agreement:

The Paris Agreement is significant because it represents a global consensus on the need to address climate change and provides a framework for action. It involves commitments from almost all countries, recognizing that climate change is a global challenge that requires a unified effort. The agreement also promotes the importance of climate justice, acknowledging that developed countries have historically contributed more to global emissions and therefore have a greater responsibility to lead in mitigation efforts and support developing countries. The agreement has catalyzed various initiatives and policies aimed at reducing emissions, fostering innovation in renewable energy, and enhancing resilience to climate impacts. While it is a significant step forward, the success of the Paris Agreement depends on the willingness and ability of countries to meet their commitments and enhance their efforts over time.



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Discuss Questions

Discuss the following in pairs or in small groups. Write your answers on a separate piece of paper.

Understanding Goals:

- What are the primary objectives of the Paris Agreement?
- Why is it important to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and ideally to 1.5 degrees Celsius?

National Contributions:

- What are Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and why are they essential to the success of the Paris Agreement?
- How can countries improve their NDCs to ensure more significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions?
- Support for Developing Countries:
- Why does the Paris Agreement emphasize the need to support developing countries?
- What kinds of support (financial, technological) are necessary to help developing countries reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts?

Global Collaboration:

- Why is global collaboration crucial in addressing climate change?
- How can countries hold each other accountable to their commitments under the Paris Agreement?

Challenges and Solutions:

- What are some of the challenges in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement?
- What role can individuals, communities, and local governments play in supporting the objectives of the Paris Agreement?

Future Outlook:

- How can the global stocktake mechanism help in assessing progress and enhancing climate action?
- In your opinion, what are the most critical steps that need to be taken to ensure the success of the Paris Agreement in the coming years?