

PARIS AGREEMENT

Notes by Quentin Gee, April 23, 2016 Forum

How much should the world limit warming?

The solution: The final Paris agreement retains the two-degree target, while recognizing the importance of pursuing 1.5 degrees. **Article 2, Section 1** deals most directly with temperature limits:

The agreement also directed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—the climate-science arm of the UN—to draw up a report by 2018 on how to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius.

How quickly will the world abandon fossil fuels?

The solution: The final version of the Paris text, **Article 4, Section 1**, resolves to peak global greenhouse-gas emissions as soon as possible. Then, after 2050, it says that all anthropogenic emissions should be balanced with “removal by sinks”:

Forests and oceans can both serve as carbon “sinks”—that is, both absorb carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

Who should pay for the costs of climate change, and how much should they give?

The solution: So here’s something counter-intuitive. The text commonly called the “Paris Agreement” is actually two different documents: the agreement itself, which is legally binding, and the Paris decision, which passes the agreement and sets out a number of less legally binding ways to approach and observe it.

The Paris agreement includes no new specific commitments to finance.

How often should nations check and reassess their emission reductions?

The first is *stock-taking*, when countries will announce how they’ve reduced carbon emissions.

The second is *ratcheting*, when countries will announce more ambitious emissions reductions.

It announces that the first stocktake will occur in 2023, then every five years,

Who should make sure nations meet their reduction goals?

The solution: No outside agency will approve and oversee whether nations are keeping their words—this was a red line for China and India,

But under **Article 13**, nations will be subject to a common framework of transparency

Who is responsible for the loss and damage caused by climate change?

And **item 52** in the Paris decision lets developed countries recognize the importance of funding for loss and damage without being liable for climate reparations.

Who bears responsibility for protecting the climate, anyway?

The framework convention establishes the principle of “[common but differentiated responsibility](#)” for protecting the climate system: That is, everyone has a role to play in keeping the world safe, but highly developed countries have the most responsibility