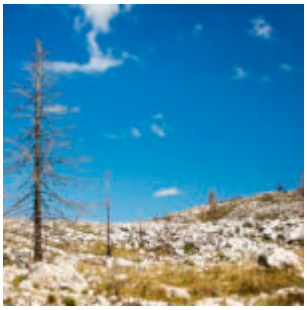
UN Report: World Must Act Quickly & Dramatically to Minimize Climate Change



In Oct. 2016, Canada formally ratified the Paris climate change agreement, the non-binding accord that aims to keep global warming below 2øC this century. The agreement took effect on Nov. 4, 2016.

Canada is among the 191 signatories to the international climate agreement, with more than 60 countries formally adopting it. But the Paris Agreement is just a move in the right direction'urgent action toward its goals is needed now.

According to the UN Environment Programme's annual Emissions Gap report, the world must urgently and dramatically increase its ambition to cut roughly a further quarter off predicted 2030 global GHG emissions and have any chance of minimizing dangerous climate change.

The report finds that 2030 emissions are expected to reach 54-56 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent'far above the level of 42 needed to have a chance of limiting global warming to 2′ this century (compared to pre-industrial levels).

Scientists agree that limiting global warming to under 2′ will reduce the likelihood of more-intense storms, longer droughts, sea-level rise and other severe climate impacts. Even hitting the lower target of 1.5 ' will only reduce, rather than eliminate, impacts.

The predicted 2030 emissions will, even if the Paris pledges are fully implemented, put the world on track for a temperature rise of 2.9-3.4 degrees this century. Waiting to increase ambition would likely lose the chance to meet the 1.5 ‘ target, increase carbon-intensive technology lock-in and raise the cost of a global transition to low emissions.

The need for urgent action has been reinforced by the fact that 2015 was the hottest year since modern record keeping began. The trend is continuing, with the first six months of 2016 all being the warmest ever recorded. But emissions continue to increase, the report says.

Steps are being taken, though. For example, the recent Kigali Amendment to the UN Environment-hosted Montreal Protocol aims to slash the use of hydrofluorocarbons, which could cut another 0.5 degrees if fully implemented, although emissions won’t begin to be reduced at any significant rate until 2025.

The Gap report includes an assessment of the technologies and opportunities to find the further cuts required, including through non-state actors, energy efficiency acceleration and crossover with the sustainable development goals.

Non-state actors, such as the private sector, cities, regions and other subnational actors like citizen groups, can cut several gigatonnes off the gap by 2030 in areas such as agriculture and transport, provided the many initiatives meet their goals and don’t replace other action.

Energy efficiency is another area where investment could bring bigger gains. Investments in energy efficiency increased by 6% to US$221 billion in 2015, indicating that action is already happening.