
Contemporary Issues in Climate Change and Sustainable Development

The United States of America (USA), is a federal republic composed of 50 states, 3.8 million sq. miles (9.8 million km²) and with a population over 325 million, the United States is the world's third largest country by total area. According to the Census Bureau (United States Department of Commerce), median household income was \$59,039 in 2016. After years of stagnant growth, in 2016, according to the Census, median household income reached a record high after two consecutive years of record growth. The United States with Canada and 18 European countries founded the OECD, Americans have benefited from their country's strong voice and leadership role at the organization. With decisions of huge importance being made every day on complex matters like international taxation and making trade work for all, it made the United States vital to have a seat at the table and to be fully engaged in the process. There is the importance of US support to the OECD as the US contributed \$71 million.

America leads at the OECD; it keeps American businesses competitive in the world. The US was simultaneously the world's largest producer and consumer of oil; and the world market was dominated by a group of multinational companies, five of which were headquartered in the US following the breakup of John D. Rockefeller's original Standard Oil monopoly. Oil-exporting countries were eventually motivated to form OPEC as a counterweight to this concentration of political and economic power. During 2014–2015, OPEC members consistently exceeded their production ceiling. These developments led in turn to a plunge in US oil import requirements (moving closer to energy independence), a record volume of worldwide oil inventories, and a collapse in oil prices that continued into early 2016.

As OPEC members grew weary of a multi-year supply contest with diminishing returns and shrinking financial reserves, the organization finally attempted its first production cut since 2008. The U.S. is not expected to join BRICS soon for the purpose of economic growth. Its estimated growth to be around 2% over the next few years. The U.S. GDP is the biggest in the world at 18 Trillion-plus dollars, although BRICS combined has a GDP of 37 Trillion dollars. Majority of its energy comes from fossil fuels, 65% i.e., from coal, petroleum, and natural gases, and around 20% energy comes from nuclear energy sources while 15% is derived from renewable energy sources.

Summary of INDC: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered into force in 1994, US signed the convention on June 12, 1992, ratification accepted on October 15, 1992, and came into force on March 21, 1994. Figure 1: Shows participation in

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different global climate actions by US (Image source: USA First NDC Submission pdf)Kyoto Protocol:A primary driver for the failure of the U.S. to ratify the Kyoto Protocol was the domestic concern that middle-income developing countries were not required to take action to address their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions despite their growing capability. Pressure from the U.S. gas and oil lobbies to scuttle the deal had been strong prior to the deal, and after George W. Bush became president in 2001 he announced that America was pulling out. For the other nations, the Kyoto Protocol took effect in February 2005. Attempts to work out another deal that would include developing nations continued to create tensions, especially between the U.S. and a rapidly growing China. The Copenhagen Accord, drifted with the US in one side and others united with not wanting to legally binding or commit to a binding successor to Kyoto protocol. Kyoto protocol was continued. After completion of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period in 2012 in Doha amendment, it was decided to extend the period to 2020. But only 96 countries ratified the Doha Amendment, which would have kept their reduction goals under the Kyoto Protocol in place until 2020. 144 countries more are needed for the amendment to go into force.

Paris Agreement, after years of failure to reach an international consensus on a plan of action to replace the Kyoto pact, U.N. negotiators agreed in Paris that all nations would work to keep the global temperature rise this century "well below" 2° above pre-industrial levels and to make serious efforts to keep the rise at just 1.5°. More financing was promised for developing countries in particular to reduce emissions, and new structures for reporting national GHG emissions and mitigation policies were agreed upon.

However, President Donald Trump withdrew his country from the Paris Agreement, which has since been ratified by 162 parties, including all of the major developed and emerging economies, leaving the U.S. as the sole major polluter to opt out.

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