

# Decoding Carbon

## #DECODINGCARBON

Backgrounder: What role can Canada play in global climate action?



Canada has historically played a vital role as a global leader in addressing **climate change**. By being an active member of many climate agreements, Canada has committed to tackling climate change on the global front for a long time, where these agreements have shaped various national climate policies. Below are some of the global agreements that Canada has been a part of.

### Canada's Climate Change Agreements

- Montreal Protocol, 1987:** The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is a landmark agreement that drastically reduced the consumption and production of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS). Signed in Montreal in 1987, Canada was one of the first countries to ratify the Montreal Protocol. Under this agreement, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) that are used in refrigeration, air-conditioning and foam applications were phased out, as CFCs deplete the ozone layer (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2019).
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 1988:** Canada has been an active participant in the IPCC since its inception in 1988. Tasked with assessing climate change based on the latest science, IPCC is in its Sixth Assessment Reporting cycle. Canada has made significant scientific contributions to IPCC's assessment reports, informing decision makers of scientific information needed for setting policies on climate action (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2019)
- Earth Summit, 1992:** At Earth Summit, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was presented, with the objective to stabilize the level of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to a level that would prevent dangerous harm to the environment. Canada signed the framework, committing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to the 1990 level by the year 2000. Canada was the first G7 nation to ratify this treaty (Canadian Geographic, 2016).
- Kyoto Protocol, 2002:** The Kyoto Protocol was designed to be an extension to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. By signing the Kyoto Protocol, Canada committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 6 percent from 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. However, Canada withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol in 2011, as the national emissions increased by over 30 percent in this period (Canadian Geographic, 2016).
- Copenhagen Accord, 2009:** Canada signed the Copenhagen Accord at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2009. By signing this agreement, Canada committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2050 (Canadian Geographic, 2016).
- Paris Agreement, 2015:** In 2015, Canada signed the Paris Agreement, with the newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committing to spending \$2.65 billion over five years towards

climate action. The agreement sets a target of limiting global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to limit increase to 1.5 by achieving a carbon-free world before 2100 (Canadian Geographic, 2016). To meet this goal, Canada committed to reducing 30% of its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels and 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 compared to

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