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GREENPEACE

URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO KEEP PARIS 1.5°C GOAL WITHIN REACH

The 2024 exceedance must spark stronger climate action and biodiversity protection in 2035 NDCs on road to fossil fuel phase-out.

In a year of record carbon emissions from fossil fuels[1], global temperatures soared above the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target for the first time in 2024[2]. As the average global temperature hit 1.6°C above the pre-industrial level[3] multiple extreme weather impacts were experienced. Record rainfall led to flash flooding in California, the Persian Gulf and Spain while significant heatwaves hit multiple other regions of the world as hot and dry extremes fuelled wildfires in Canada and South America. These and other escalating impacts are the clear, hard evidence of political inaction.

International efforts must now focus on radically lowering the emissions trajectory because the world is well off track on keeping temperatures within the limits set by the Paris Agreement. Halfway through this critical decade of action, we are headed instead towards a temperature increase of up to 3.1°C this century[4].

Successive years and months of record temperatures and the 1.5°C exceedance over 2024[5] are casting doubt on the feasibility of achieving the Paris goals[6], or prompting speculation of an 'inevitable' breach.

It's important we recognise the global climate has entered a danger zone, but also stay focused on the possible pathways to get global heating under control and to minimise any potential overshoot.

Staying focused on the Paris goal

Achieving the 1.5°C goal is still technically possible. Despite the challenges, from a physical perspective, the long-term goal is still within reach. The IPCC has said pathways still exist for getting to 1.5°C by 2100, the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement[7]. This finding is supported by the UNEP, which said it's technically possible to achieve the emissions cuts needed, but a "massive effort" is needed[8].

The 2024 exceedance of 1.5°C is deeply alarming. One year is only a single indicator, however the fact that 2024 exceeded 1.5°C may be the start of a long-term trend and eventual breach of the Paris 1.5°C goal, but we cannot know at this stage. Of real concern, however, is the fact that April 2025 was the 21st month in the past 22

[1] Global Carbon Budget: 2024 report
[2] Copernicus: Global Climate Highlights 2024
[3] Copernicus: Global Climate Highlights 2024
[4] UNEP: Emissions Gap Report 2024
[5] Copernicus: 2024 is the first year to exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial level
[6] The Conversation: Earth is already shooting through the 1.5°C global warming limit
[7] IPCC: Sixth Assessment Report
[8] UNEP: Emissions Gap Report 2024

months for which the global average temperature was above the 1.5°C threshold[9]. Despite this, we will only be able to say the Paris goal has been breached if temperatures are above an average of 1.5°C over a period of at least 20 years,[10] but by then it will be far too late to achieve the emissions cuts needed now.

However, the 1.5°C goal is becoming harder to achieve. As time goes on and emissions continue unchecked, our chances of limiting warming to the Paris goals recede. This is the reality and we must redouble our efforts to give ourselves the best chance possible. Some regions are warming faster than others, for example, the Arctic[11], leading to serious regional impacts, while Europe as a whole is the fastest warming continent[12].

Current levels of warming are unsafe and are wreaking havoc in the lives of millions of people around the world.[13] Under current levels of global warming some people and ecosystems have already experienced dangerous, destructive and, in some cases, even irreversible impacts. Every increment in global warming will make climate impacts more dangerous and severe.[14]

Every fraction of a degree matters! Any suggestion that we should abandon hope of 1.5°C is both misguided and unhelpful. There's a huge difference between the impacts likely at 1.5°C and at 2°C warming, as outlined by the IPCC 1.5°C Special Report[15] published in 2018. Risks escalate dramatically at higher levels of warming. An overshoot could result in potentially irreversible damage to natural and human systems irrespective of any actions that could be taken to reduce global temperatures later. That means we must act now.

What's the current situation?

Global average temperatures were 1.1°C above the pre-industrial temperature in the years 2011-2020[16]. Global emissions have continued to increase since then and the past ten years (2015-2024) have been recorded as the 10 warmest years on record[17]. Global average temperatures are now 1.3°C above pre-industrial times[18]. But global emissions are yet to peak and the UN's most recent annual analysis of 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)[19] showed there's still a long way to go in terms of GHG emissions cuts. The report projected emissions in 2025 would be 54 percent higher than in 1990 and in 2030 they would be 50 percent higher than 1990.

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[9] Copernicus Climate Change Service: Monthly Climate Bulletin
[10] Climate Analytics: Is the 1.5°C limit still in reach?
[11] NOAA: Arctic Report Card 2024
[12] World Meteorological Organization: European State of the Climate 2024
[13] IPCC, AR6 Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers, *Id.* A.2 and IPCC AR6 SYR, Longer Report (LR), Section 2.1.2, p. 16.
[14] IPCC, AR6, SPM, B.3.2.
[15] IPCC: 1.5°C Special Report
[16] IPCC: Sixth Assessment Report
[17] World Meteorological Organization
[18] UNEP: Emissions Gap Report 2024
[19] UNFCCC: Synthesis report

Year	GHG vs 1990	GHG vs 2010	GHG vs 2019
2025	54.0 % higher	11.3 % higher	0.1 % higher
2030	49.8 % higher	8.3 % higher	2.6% lower
2035	**IPCC 1.5°C scenario calls for 60 % lower GHG emissions vs 2019 level (and 43 % by 2030)** [20]		

The synthesis report also estimated that GHG emissions were likely to peak between 2025-30. However, the IPCC's AR6 report said that global GHG emissions need to peak and then start to decline between 2020 and at the latest before 2025 in a 1.5°C-aligned pathway. Emissions have still not yet peaked, however, much less begun to decline and accordingly, more action is needed.

Greenhouse gas emissions grew 1.3 % year-on-year in 2023[21] and given the rate of carbon emissions from fossil fuels - which hit a record high in 2024[22] - the Global Carbon Budget 2024 Report has estimated there is a 50 percent chance annual global warming will exceed a global average of 1.5°C consistently in about six years time[23].

1.5°C overshoot is increasingly likely. As emissions continue, staying within the 1.5°C goal is challenging. With the lowest emission pathway assessed by the IPCC's AR6, there would be more than a 50% likelihood of staying below 1.6°C, implying a potential temporary overshoot of no more than 0.1°C above 1.5°C global warming.

We can't give up and there is still hope! The IPCC acknowledges there will be some overshoot, but has stressed that 1.5°C is still within reach. Solutions exist: emissions could be cut by almost half by 2030 from 2019 levels, on the way to a fast and fair fossil fuel phase-out.

At the same time there needs to be effective action to ensure other critical sectors such as large-scale industrial agriculture are not repeatedly let off the hook when it comes to setting emission reduction targets.

Closing the 1.5°C ambition gap

Ten years after the Paris Agreement was reached and ahead of the UNFCCC climate negotiations in Belem, Brazil, 2025 is a critical year for the climate and biodiversity, coinciding with the deadline for submission of 2035 NDCs.

Urgency lacking as countries miss NDC deadline. Some of the world's biggest emitters missed the February deadline for submitting their 2035 NDCs, forcing the UN to extend the deadline, urging countries to submit "first-rate" climate targets by September, when the annual UN General Assembly takes place. The UNFCCC's 2025 climate action synthesis report - an assessment of aggregate ambition in the 2035 NDCs to be published after the September deadline - will be a key marker on the road to COP30 in Brazil.

[20] IPCC: Sixth Assessment Report
[21] UNEP: Emissions Gap Report 2024
[22] Global Carbon Budget: 2024 report
[23] Global Carbon Budget: 2024 report. This estimate is subject to large uncertainties. However, it's clear that the remaining carbon budget has almost run out.

There is no time to waste. Lack of climate action is costing lives! National emission reduction targets for 2035 must align with what the IPCC says is needed to limit temperature increases to 1.5°C: global emissions reductions of 60 percent by 2035 compared to 2019 (and 43 percent by 2030), according to the global stocktake agreed at COP28[24]. To achieve this, it will be essential for developed country emissions to decline at a faster rate in line with their outsized responsibility for causing the climate crisis and their greater capacity to act.

Governments must do everything in their power to limit warming and protect peoples' human rights. Governments have legal obligations under different sources of law, including international human rights law that they must adhere to alongside their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

COP30 = climate and biodiversity action

As COP30 moves to the Amazon, and under Brazil's presidency, there is a significant opportunity at a multilateral level to accelerate efforts to protect and restore high integrity carbon-rich ecosystems. COP28 delivered a global stocktake decision that for the first time included a negotiated global goal to halt deforestation and forest degradation by 2030. But there is no UNFCCC plan yet to implement that goal beyond the expectation that parties include it in their NDCs and act at the national level.

COP30 a moment for ecosystem protection. One of the priorities of the Brazilian COP30 presidency is to increase global support for environmental preservation, including the protection of essential biomes as well as combatting the degradation of ecosystems and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

The Amazon may be approaching a tipping point, however, threatened by deforestation and degradation - indicative of the need for global action to phase out deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, while providing direct access to finance for Indigenous People and Local Communities to help protect forests. COP30 therefore presents an opportunity to clarify the role of the UNFCCC in achieving the COP28 goal to halt deforestation, increase accountability for achieving it as well as incentivising action at the national level. The scattered nature of forest action within and beyond the UNFCCC should be addressed through a forest action plan to support implementation.

Climate mitigation cannot wait for the next global stocktake. If the collective ambition of 2035 NDCs submitted this year falls short of what is needed to keep the 1.5°C goal within reach, it is essential that COP30 responds by agreeing to accelerate implementation of the COP28 global stocktake. Not least commitments on energy and deforestation as outlined above.

The COP28 global stocktake called on parties to transition away from fossil fuels and set a goal to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency gains by 2030[25]. While renewables are set to meet half of global electricity demand by 2030,

[24] UNFCCC: COP28 Global Stocktake
[25] UNFCCC: COP28 Global Stocktake

more effort will be needed to meet the goal[26].

We also need ambitious action to accelerate a just transition away from fossil fuels - ensuring that renewables growth displaces, rather than comes on top of, existing fossil fuel use. The energy goals can still be met with bolder action in 2035 NDCs and Greenpeace is urging all parties to step up their efforts, with rich developed countries going furthest fastest.

The next global stocktake will take place in 2028, but parties failed to break a deadlock in March over the next reporting cycle of the UN's climate science panel IPCC[27] - a delay that only serves those who wish to delay climate action. While it's critical that the IPCC's Seventh Assessment Report is completed in time for the 2028 stocktake, rapid mitigation efforts must also be implemented as soon as possible in this decade if we're going to rein in emissions in time to meet the Paris goals.

Climate action and finance should make polluters pay. The inadequate finance agreement reached at COP29 on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) risks undermining all aspects of the climate negotiations and effectively limiting climate action in developing countries requiring support. The imperative of rich developed countries scaling up climate finance - particularly public grant-based and concessional support - cannot be ignored. Making polluters pay is a vital part of the solution.

The call to hold polluters to account for causing the climate emergency, financially and otherwise, is gaining traction. As the economic - and human - costs of climate impacts continue to rise, the question of who pays is getting louder. The 'Baku to Belem Roadmap to 1.3T' - agreed at COP29 - is focused on scaling up climate finance to developing country parties.

This roadmap should become a pathway to making fossil fuel and other big polluters pay by affirming this principle and outlining concrete steps to operationalise it. This must help unlock substantial flows of public finance from rich developed countries for international climate finance.

Increasing direct flows of finance to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, who are at the frontlines of the fight against climate change and who also lead in biodiversity and ecosystem protection, is also essential.

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[26] IEA: Renewables 2024 report
[27] IPCC: 62nd Session