International negotiators at the Lima climate change talks have agreed on a plan to fight global warming that would for the first time commit all countries to cutting their greenhouse gas emissions.

The plan, agreed at United Nations talks on Sunday, was hailed as an important first step towards a climate change deal due to be finalised in Paris next year. The proposals call on countries to reveal how they will cut carbon pollution, ideally by March next year.

“As a text it’s not perfect, but it includes the positions of the parties,” said Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, the Peruvian environment minister, who presided over the talks.

However, negotiators acknowledged they had put off the most difficult decisions for later.

And with 2014 on course to be the hottest year on record, campaigners warned the plan was far too weak to limit warming to the internationally agreed limit of 2C above pre-industrial levels, or to protect poor countries from climate change.

“It’s definitely watered down from what we expected,” said Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

They also warned negotiators had left too many contentious issues unresolved before the deadline for reaching a deal in Paris. “The countdown clock to Paris is now ticking. Countries had the chance to give themselves a head start on the road to Paris but instead have missed the gun and now need to play catch up,” said Mohammed Adow, Christian Aid’s senior climate change advisor.

But after a difficult negotiation – which over-ran by two days– officials said they were satisfied with the outcome.

“It was contentious along the way but it fundamentally accomplished what we wanted it to,” Todd Stern, the US State Department’s climate change envoy, said.
As sketched out in Lima, all countries, rising economies as well as rich countries would pledge action on climate change.

Wealthy countries would help developing countries fight climate change, by investing in clean energy technology or offering climate aid.

Countries already threatened by climate change – such as small island states which face being swallowed up by rising seas – were promised a “loss and damage” programme of financial aid.

The all-inclusive nature of the emissions cuts constitutes a break with one of the defining principles of the last 20 years of climate talks – that wealthy countries should carry the burden of cutting carbon dioxide emissions.

“I think for the first time ever the world can contemplate a global deal applicable to all and Lima has helped that process,” the UK’s energy and climate change secretary, Ed Davey, said.

If all goes well, China, whose emissions have overtaken the US, will as part of the agreement formally pledge to cut its greenhouse gas emissions, as will India, Brazil and other rising economies.

But much remains uncertain about the prospects of a strong deal emerging from Paris – not least because of the problems that arose during the negotiations in Lima.

The Lima negotiations had opened on 1 December amid a spirit of optimism following an agreement last month between the US and China to cut carbon pollution.

But it soon became apparent that the US-China deal on its own would have no effect on bridging the perennial dividing line of climate negotiations - the responsibility for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The talks over-ran by two days because of clashes over which countries should carry the burden of fighting climate change.

There were also disputes over climate finance. Wealthy countries were accused of failing to live up to their earlier promises of mobilising billions to help developing countries fight climate change.

But after a day of brinkmanship on Saturday – with Stern warning of a “major breakdown” - the deal was done.

“We got what we wanted,” Prakash Javadekar, India’s environment minister, said.

But much now remains to be done if the broad outlines agreed at Lima are to materialise in a full-fledged climate deal.

The US, China, and the European Union have already come forward with pledges for cutting greenhouse gas emissions after 2020.

Under the plan, countries are due to come forward by March 2015 with their proposed emissions reductions targets.

The United Nations would then weigh up those pledges and determine whether the collective action was enough to limit warming to 2C.

But much remains vague or poorly defined. The countries put off decisions about the legal structure of the agreement, and deferred decisions about ensuring a flow of finance to developing countries.

The biggest issue left unresolved for Paris is the burden for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. The draft text retains language of “common but differentiated responsibilities” that has over the years given developing countries a pass on cutting emissions. That language remains in the text although with a rider “in light of different national circumstances”. Stern acknowledged to reporters the issue was likely to come up again at Paris.

And the text adopted on Sunday no longer makes it mandatory for countries to provide detailed information about their prospect reductions targets.
Campaigners said that would make it increasingly difficult to be sure the deal would manage to keep warming within the 2 degree threshold.

**POSITIONS:**

The **European Union** welcomed the outcome of the United Nations climate conference in Lima as a step forward on the road to a global climate deal in Paris next year.

**Gian Luca Galletti, Minister of Environment of Italy**, holding the EU Presidency, said: "We have spent many long days and nights seeking a compromise. We thank the Peruvian COP Presidency for its leadership and guidance during these intense negotiations. Although this was a difficult conference, it is important to maintain the spirit of optimism and political momentum that brought us to Lima. The Lima outcome provides a solid basis for the forthcoming negotiations."

**Miguel Arias Cañete, EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy**, concluded: “The EU came to Lima to lay the groundwork for the negotiations in Paris. Now, we are on the way to Paris. And although the EU wanted a more ambitious outcome from Lima, we believe that we are on track to agree to a global deal in Paris next year.”

**MEP Giovanni La Via (EPP, IT)** stated: “The agreement reached today represents the lowest common denominator, but it is important to keep the process going in order to reach a global agreement in Paris. The most problematic question, climate finance, will remain open in 2015. While it is clear that developed parties want to act on a voluntary basis, developing countries want higher financial commitments before taking themselves the necessary steps on reducing their emissions”, La Via added.

MEP and co-leader of the **European Parliament**’s delegation **Jo Leinen (S&D)** commented: “If we want a climate agreement in Paris next year, we will have to clear the path of a number of stumbling blocks”. A number of issues are yet to be resolved, such as the financing of global climate protection or commitments by individual states.

As the host of next year’s climate summit in Paris, the European Union will have the responsibility of overcoming the differences between developing and industrialised countries and be a bridge-builder between the two fronts. "The Climate Summit in Paris will be a tough test for the EU's capacity to lead climate diplomacy", says Jo Leinen.

A lot more trust could be created between the parties if a roadmap for the financing of global climate protection beyond 2020 could be established. Financial commitments are crucial for the developing countries' readiness to accept a compromise. „After the disaster of the COP15 in Copenhagen, the EU cannot afford another embarrassing failure. Mankind is running the risk of losing the race against global warming and to not be able to contain it to a maximum of 2°C“, says Leinen.

Environment Spokesperson for the **Liberal and Democrat group** in the **European Parliament**, **MEP Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy** (Netherlands) said: "This agreement can hardly be described as ambitious, but there is some hope it will stimulate countries to address climate change more intensively. It is very disappointing that the Lima Call for Climate Action does not contain a clear process for assessing the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions."

Without reviewing country's planned actions it will remain unclear whether national ambitions will be enough to achieve our climate goals,” Gerbrandy said.

**Greens/EFA** climate change spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** said: “The good news is that no one is questioning the need to reach a global deal on climate change in Paris in 2015, despite the fraught nature of the Lima summit. Unfortunately, the momentum created by the US-China agreement on climate change has not led to any further concrete steps however.

“The UN climate negotiations and politicians are lagging behind the shift that is already taking place in our economies, driven by civil society and businesses. Most importantly, there is still no clarity on the crucial issue of aid for developing countries to adapt to and take measures to prevent climate change, meaning the bridge between the rich and the poor countries has not been built yet. Meanwhile, it is already clear that the greenhouse gas reduction pledges major emitters will submit for the March deadline will not be sufficient to keep us on a safe path to staying below the goal of limiting warming to 2 Degrees. Public pressure must step up if we are to close this gap.”
Corporate Europe Observatory accused the dirty energy industry of driving the world off a climate cliff on the road to Paris. “If COP20 is supposed to lay the road to Paris, then polluters have taken control of the steering wheel and are driving us off a climate cliff,” said Pascoe Sabido, campaigner and researcher at Corporate Europe Observatory. "They may have left Lima triumphant, but through building our power at the local, national and international level, we can put the voices of people before polluters, reclaim the wheel and steer the world towards the real, bottom-up solutions that are not just necessary but already out there."

"What's on the table only deepens the climate crisis. It does nothing for those already being affected by climate change, like in the Philippines, or those who will be affected in the future, i.e. all of us. Rich countries and their dirty industries are setting the agenda. Like in Warsaw, the voices of polluters are drowning out the voices of real people and communities on the front line. Instead of an energy transformation the message appears to be fossil fuels full steam ahead," Sabido said.

BusinessEurope Director General Markus J. Beyrer said: “The Lima Conference brings some extra clarity on the collective working method towards the Paris talks, but we've now much work to do to provide a successful global climate deal in December 2015. To make Paris a success, all negotiators must acknowledge that climate change is a global problem that needs a global solution and efforts from all. Europe has stepped forward with a very ambitious emissions reduction target. We need comparable efforts and willingness from China, the US, India and all other large carbon emitting economies. On the way to Paris, all negotiating governments should support the idea of a level playing field for global industrial production. Business not only has a responsibility to tackle climate change, it's key to the solution if the global framework gives confidence and security it needs to invest and innovate."

Martin Kaiser, the head of international climate politics at Greenpeace, said: “Governments have just kicked the can further down the road by shifting all the difficult decisions into the future. The momentum of the China-US agreement has slammed into nearly immobile climate talks. Time is running out and solutions must be delivered before climate chaos becomes inevitable.”

The success of the Paris agreement next year relies now on the decisions politicians make when they get home.

“Early next year, governments must show us something tangible and explain how they will cut emissions, support vulnerable countries and pay for clean energy by 2025. If weak goals are agreed upon for 2030, we'll be locked into fifteen years of high pollution and more lives damaged by environmental catastrophes as we have just seen in the Philippines,” said Kaiser.

Friends of the Earth Europe called the Lima agreement “a weak text from world governments, which contrasted sharply with the real leadership and inspiration demonstrated by social movements”.

Susann Scherbarth, climate justice and energy campaigner at Friends of the Earth, said: “We have to tell the truth – the progress is pitiful and fails us given the scale of the planetary emergency. World governments remain far from where they need to be if they are to make an adequate equitable agreement to tackle climate change in Paris 12 months from now. An agreement must include strong action to cut emissions by 2020.

The European Union has come here claiming to be committed to very ambitious action, but the truth is that Europe and other industrialised countries are at the root of climate injustice. People around the world, especially the poorest, are already suffering from the changing climate, yet rich country governments refuse to quit dirty energy and embrace a clean renewable future,” Scherbarth said.

TIMELINE:
• Dec. 2015: COP 21 in Paris

EXTERNAL LINKS:
• UNFCCC: Full text of the agreement (12 Dec. 2014)
The twentieth Conference of the Parties (COP20) of signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Lima from 1 to 12 October 2014, is the second of three conferences that, it is hoped, will culminate with the adoption of a new international agreement on climate change action in Paris in December 2015.

At the end of current conference, France will become the "incoming President-Designate" of the COP. As such, it will work alongside the current Peruvian Presidency and will take part in daily meetings in the COP offices. The Peruvian presidency will have the power to summon French ministers for meeting and negotiations.