UK to ratify the Paris Agreement this year, says Theresa May

UK Prime Minister Theresa May has vowed that the UK will have officially ratified the Paris Agreement by the end of 2016, although it is believed the ratification process could be finalised within a matter of weeks.

May’s announcement is expected to be followed by a raft of ratification announcements, with up to 20 countries ratifying the deal on Wednesday (21 September).

In her maiden speech at the United Nations (UN) general assembly in New York on Tuesday (20 September), May promised that the UK would “play [it’s] part in the international effort against climate change,” by joining the likes of the US and China in officially ratifying the deal.

“In a demonstration of our commitment to the agreement reached in Paris, the UK will start its domestic procedures to enable ratification of the Paris agreement and complete these before the end of the year” May said.
UK to ratify the Paris Agreement this year, says Theresa May

negotiations with the European Union (EU), and was expected to reduce emissions as part of a Member State burden-sharing commitment. While the Brexit vote led many to believe that the EU’s climate pledge would need adjusting, the UK could soon join France as one of the major European countries to officially ratify.

May’s announcement is expected to be followed by a raft of ratification announcements, with the UN secretary general’s chief climate adviser Selwin Hart claiming that up to 20 countries could ratify the deal on Wednesday (21 September). In fact, immediately following May’s speech, Poland’s president Andrzej Duda announced that the country had also begun the process of ratifying the agreement.

It remains to be seen whether the public commitments will be enough to surpass the double threshold of 55 countries representing 55% of global emissions ratifying the deal – which is needed to bring it into force.

Policy May-hem

May’s early decisions to abolish the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has sparked furor amongst green groups worried that climate change was “slipping down the agenda”. This scrutiny was heightened further with the recent approval of the controversial Hinkley Point C nuclear power station.

With cross-party calls to ratify the Paris Agreement “as soon as possible” surfacing, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy’s (BEIS) secretary of state Greg Clark revealed that the ratification process was already underway.
The Government is determined to tackle climate change to help create a safer and more prosperous future for us all. That is why we are now starting the process of ratifying the landmark climate deal signed in Paris.

The UK played a major role when the world came together last year and we will continue to play our part in the transition to a global low carbon economy as we continue to provide secure, affordable and clean energy at home.

Dept for BEIS
@beisgovuk

The UK will now start domestic approval process for the Paris Agreement, to complete before the end of the year.

8:41 PM - 20 Sep 2016
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In response to the announcement, politicians and green groups have welcomed the commitment, claiming that it sends a “strong signal” to business and investment prospects in the UK.

UK pledges to ratify - the green business reaction

Aldersgate Group’s executive director Nick Molho said:

“Theresa May has shown welcome leadership on the world stage today by announcing the UK’s upcoming ratification of the Paris Agreement. Together with the government’s recent approval of the fifth carbon budget, this decision will help the UK maintain an influential role alongside other countries such as China and the United States in international efforts to tackle climate change and help the UK secure an important share of the growing global low carbon economy, which was recently valued at $5.5tn.

“To deliver on the Paris Agreement and the UK’s own climate targets, the government’s focus should now be to put together a national policy framework that will increase affordable private sector investment in low carbon technologies, accelerate their reduction in cost and grow the UK’s low carbon supply chain, which already employs over 238,000 people directly. A detailed emissions reduction plan and an industrial strategy that supports low carbon investment will be critical in delivering these objectives.”
"We warmly welcome the news that the Government has committed to ratify the Paris Climate Change agreement. This is an exciting moment, and another step on the path towards a global low carbon future. Having also committed to reducing emissions in the UK in line with the fifth carbon budget, business looks forward to working with the Government to develop a clear and credible plan to meet this ambition.

“There is no magic solution to climate change, but with business and the Government working together – developing innovative new products and services, and leading the way in cutting emissions – we can all move towards a sustainable low-carbon path.”

Christian Aid's senior climate change advisor Mohamed Adow said:

“Led by both vulnerable developing countries, as well as the USA and China, the UK was in danger of falling behind. But this commitment shows the Prime Minister is keen to ensure the UK builds on its good work in Paris to secure the agreement and is determined to stay in the leading pack.

“Theresa May can now back up this international effort by ensuring all her Government departments put in place more ambitious low carbon policies to make the Paris deal a reality. Climate change is an urgent and pressing issue for the UK, so the Prime Minister should chair a cross-Government committee to ensure faster progress on cutting emissions.”

Conservative Parliamentarian MPs including Caroline Ansell, Richard Benyon, James Heappey, Jeremy Lefroy, Rebecca Pow, Zac Goldsmith MP, and Lord Barker of Battle said:

“This is terrific news. The UK, and Conservative ministers, played a strong part in securing the Paris Agreement. The world is moving to a more productive, efficient, low carbon economy. With China, the US and over 50 other countries ratifying, it is clear the Agreement has widespread support.

“The UK government led the way to a sustainable economy through the Climate Change Act and a number of other mechanisms. It had committed to ratifying as soon as possible, and we are very pleased to see this happening. We are confident it lays the foundation for a better future, and we look forward to the economic dynamism it will unleash.”

The Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change’s chief executive Stephanie Pfeifer said:

“IIIGCC warmly welcomes Prime Minister Theresa May’s announcement that the UK is firmly behind the Paris
opportunity for investors in renewable energy, energy efficiency, infrastructure and other areas.

"The Paris Agreement gives an unequivocal signal to investors, so we now look forward to swift action by ministers to implement the policy measures and regulatory frameworks required to ensure climate action and risk disclosure are placed front and centre of the UK’s efforts to secure strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth."

**We Mean Business’ chief executive Nigel Topping said:**

"The UK has long been a leader in climate policy. The commitment from the PM to ratify the Paris Agreement builds on the recent approval of the 5th carbon budget to maintain that leadership and provides a strong signal to business that will drive increased investments in the UK. It also sends a signal to other members of the EU that should lead to ratification from them, which will be enough to trigger entry into force this year."

**E3G’s chief executive Nick Mabey said:**

"In joining the US and China in ratifying the Paris Agreement Britain is upholding its long history of global climate leadership and showing it remains a major international player. Ratification will help protect the British people from climate change and open opportunities in the global clean economy for British businesses."

**The Climate Coalition’s chair Neil Thorns said:**

"We’re delighted that the voices of so many British people who have been calling for action on climate change have been heard today. We congratulate the Prime Minister on beginning the ratification process, demonstrating the urgent need to protect all the things we love that could be lost to climate change, and we look forward to working with her government to develop a low-carbon plan for the British economy."
Big news! UK to ratify the Paris Agreement this year, says Theresa May

bit.ly/2cBa5yD

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