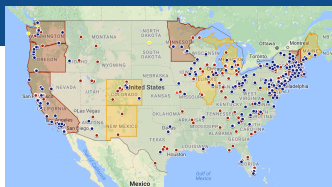


U.S. Cities and States



To: US Cities and States at United Nations World Climate Summit
Subject: Strategy Briefing

Goals

You are attending the UN conference as a representative of the more than 200 cities and states in the U.S. that have pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the Paris Agreement. You have no official standing in the negotiations—you can only create results via your influence on the official parties. Unlike other groups, however, you are not beholden to vested interests and are free to advocate for policies to swiftly and effectively address climate change. Throughout the conference, strive to use your influence to:

1. Persuade the U.S. government to set strong targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Show other parties (e.g., China, the EU, etc.) that despite current U.S. federal policy, many Americans are committed to ambitious climate action—both emission reductions and financial contributions. Highlight the work you are doing at the state and city level helping to solve the problem, with the goal of persuading them to increase their emission cuts and contributions to the Green Climate Fund, and to put pressure on the US to do the same.

Context

At the 2015 UN climate negotiations in Paris, nations agreed to a goal of limiting global warming to “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.” The scientific consensus on climate is clear: over 97% of climate scientists agree that climate change is happening, that it is caused primarily by use of fossil fuels, and that the impacts could be devastating. US government research has shown that climate change is harming all 50 states today and that without dramatic reductions in global emissions, the damage will become far more severe.

Subnational Actions

The states and cities we represent are already committed to action on climate change. Some examples:

- Led by the Governor of California, the Under2MOU coalition of 176 cities and states have committed to reduce their emissions 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Nine northeast U.S. states are successfully reducing their greenhouse gas emissions while growing their economies under a regional carbon pricing system.
- From Atlanta, Georgia, to San Diego, California, over 25 U.S. cities have committed to using 100% renewable energy before mid-century.
- The city of Seattle voted to contribute to the UN Green Climate Fund.

Scale

- You represent governments presiding over more than half the US population and responsible for 39% of US emissions.
- Your states' combined GDP is over \$6.7 trillion/year—larger than that of Japan, the world's 4th largest national economy.

Motivation

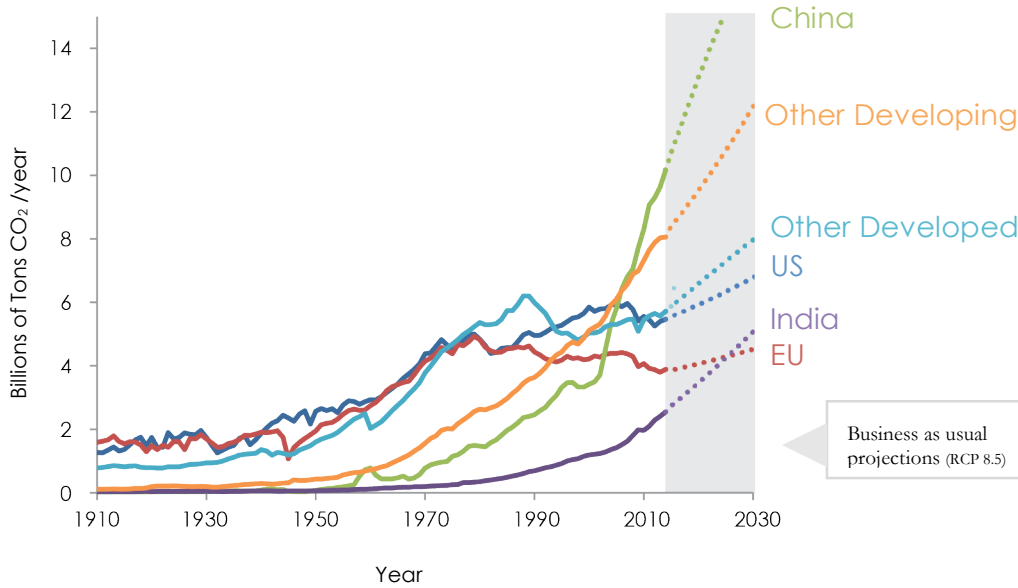
Evidence shows there are many benefits to taking action on climate change that extend to people's health, jobs, and the economy. For example:

- Particulates from fossil-fuel-driven power plants are estimated to trigger over 600,000 asthma attacks in the US. Less fossil fuel use means less asthma.
- Replacing all coal-powered electricity in the US with solar power would save 52,000 lives per year, which is more than the number of people employed by the coal industry.
- A study in New York City showed that asthma prevalence was 29% lower in neighborhoods with the most trees.
- Renewable energy and low carbon initiatives generate more jobs than fossil fuels. One study estimated that a policy to produce 30% of electricity through renewable energy and increase energy efficiency throughout the US would generate over 4 million jobs by 2030.

Public Opinion

A majority of the public in the US believes climate change is real and that human activity contributes significantly to it. Most support policies that could be implemented to address climate change but oppose those actions that raise the cost of living.

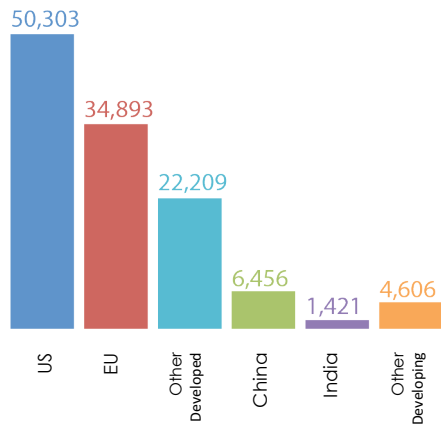
CO₂ Emissions from Fossil Fuels and Cement



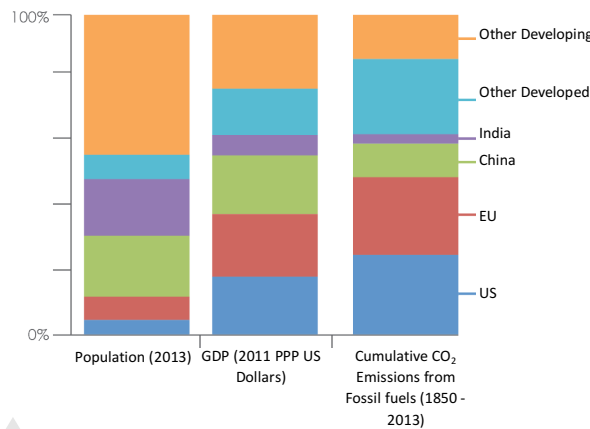
China is the world's largest emitter of CO₂. Without action, developing countries' emissions from fossil fuels are projected to more than triple by 2100.

Sweden sustained annual emissions reductions of 4.5% to reduce their dependence on oil (1976-1986). France and Belgium saw similar reductions around this time. Otherwise, most significant historical emission reductions have come from financial or political crises. According to UNEP, a 3.5% annual reduction rate is extremely ambitious.

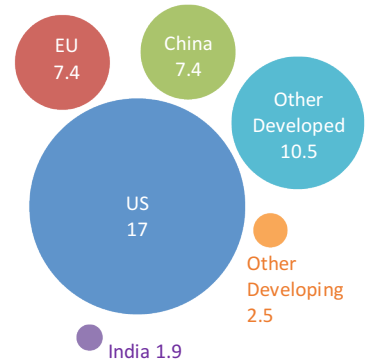
GDP per person (2011 PPP US Dollars)



Population Wealth and Cumulative Emissions



Emissions per person 2013 (tons CO₂ per year)



While cumulative emissions so far have been higher in the developed countries (i.e., the **US**, **EU**, and **other developed countries**), the growth of population, GDP per person, and emissions in the developing nations far outpaces growth in the developed countries. Under business-as-usual assumptions, cumulative emissions of all developed countries (**US**, **EU**, and **other developed**) are expected to fall to 37% of total by 2100.

Since 1980, emissions per person have risen dramatically in **China** and **India** (by 391% and 285%, respectively) but have fallen in the **US** and **Europe** (by 20% and 26%, respectively).