

South Africa and the UK's climate change plans

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Over the last two weeks, 196 countries met at the UN summit in Paris to agree on a new global agreement on climate change. In preparation, countries were asked to pledge intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs)—in effect their national plans to achieve emissions reduction. This note will examine the INDCs filed by South Africa and the United Kingdom, and in turn provide an outline of how these countries intend to tackle climate change.

South Africa

Setting the scene

South Africa's INDC (SA INDC) highlights that South Africa is a developing country, whose overriding priority is to end poverty and inequality. It relies heavily on coal, with a fleet of old and inefficient coal-fired power plants that are nearing the end of their design life-cycles. South Africa's National Development Plan provides a "2030 vision" for transforming South Africa's energy mix—replacing coal with new clean technology—and this provides the context for the INDC.

However, the INDC states that in the short term (up to 2025), any plan to transition to a low carbon economy must have regard to the overriding priority to address poverty and inequality.

Contents of the SA INDC

The SA INDC is split into three sections:

- **Adaption measures** —including developing an early warning framework, building institutional capacity for climate change response planning, and developing a vulnerability assessment.
- **Mitigation measures** —providing that national greenhouse gas emissions will peak between 2020 and 2025, plateau for approximately a decade and decline in absolute terms thereafter. Measures to achieve this include expanding the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REI4P), carbon capture and storage and increasing use of electric and hybrid electric vehicles.
- **Investment needs** —for adaptation and mitigation. This is a key challenge for South Africa, and it may, with other developing countries, be seeking support from the Green Climate Fund. The Fund was established as part of the Cancun Agreements, and through it developed countries are aiming to mobilise US\$100 billion per year by 2020 to support developing countries' efforts to cut emissions and tackle climate change.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom's INDC is part of a wider submission by the European Union. The EU INDC is short and clear cut, with a single main pledge that the EU and its Member States are committed to a binding target of an at least 40 percent domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990.

The pledge is in line with the EU objective to reduce its emissions by 80–95 percent by 2050 compared to 1990. EU Member States have already passed legally binding legislation to deliver the EU's 2020 climate and energy package. Member States are currently submitting legislative proposals for the 2030 climate and energy framework to the European Commission.

A more detailed analysis of the EU's contribution in respect of emission targets can be found in the EU Climate and Energy Package launched in October 2014. This outlines targets such as increasing the share of renewables in energy consumption from 12 percent today to at least 27 percent by 2030 and reducing energy consumption by 27 percent against projections by 2030 through energy efficiency.

The UK government has also implemented several domestic regimes to encourage energy efficiency and address climate change, including the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme and the Climate Change Levy.

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