



THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Climate change is one of the most urgent and profoundly complex challenges we face. That's why, everywhere I travel as Secretary of State – in every meeting, here at home and across the more than 280,000 miles I've traveled since I raised my hand and took the oath to serve in this office – I have made this issue a top priority.

Today, all the scientific evidence is telling us that we cannot afford to delay the reckoning with climate change. With each passing day, the case grows more compelling and the costs of inaction grow beyond anything that anyone with conscience or common sense should be willing to contemplate.

The IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report is another wakeup call. It marshals unassailable evidence of the perils of inaction: Summertime Arctic sea ice volume has shrunk by 70 percent since 1979, 12 of the hottest 13 years on record have occurred since 2000, and the oceans are 30 percent more acidic than they were a century ago. Bottom line: Climate change is real, it's happening now, and human beings are the cause.

In the face of these risks and these warnings, it is time for all of us to do what the science tells us we must, to do what our faiths require of us, and to do what our fragile planet demands of us: It's time to take strong action to combat a truly life-and-death challenge.

Today, people all over the world are demanding action on climate change, and those of us in positions of authority globally have a responsibility to lead the way toward progress. The United States is committed to doing its part.

That's why I am pleased to present this 2014 Climate Action Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This report contains our national communication – a quadrennial report detailing actions the United States is taking at home and internationally to mitigate, adapt to, and assist others in addressing climate change as part of our commitments under the UNFCCC.

The report builds on the most authoritative assessments of climate change. It outlines U.S. efforts to promote the research, development, and deployment of technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It highlights our substantial and growing efforts to support developing countries in the global response to climate change. It also details the financial assistance, education programs, and policies and measures we've implemented both to reduce greenhouse gases and to adapt to the effects of climate change.

I am especially pleased that the 2014 Climate Action Report contains the United States' first-ever Biennial Report, which outlines our plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions trends even further through 2020. The agreement within the UNFCCC to submit biennial reports represents one of the most significant outcomes from recent negotiations. It is a critical means of ensuring that the parties are implementing the pledges they made under the Cancun decisions. The U.S. Biennial Report shows we are working toward meeting our Cancun commitments by taking action to reduce emissions across our energy economy, as well as in the land sector.

The path to progress has been long. But I'm proud to say that we are closer than we've ever been to a breakthrough.

Under President Obama's leadership, we have doubled wind and solar electricity generation; adopted the toughest fuel economy standards for passenger vehicles in U.S. history; advanced environmental standards to expedite the transition to cleaner and more efficient fuels in power plants; and increased the energy efficiency of our homes, industries, and businesses.

We know from history that fundamental change never comes easily or without a fight. But we're already seeing results. Just look at the facts: Since 2005, our emissions have fallen 6.5 percent, even as our economy continues to grow. What's more, we significantly scaled up our financial assistance to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

We know we must do more, and believe me: we are. President Obama's Climate Action Plan will keep the United States on track to reach our goal of reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in the range of 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. Commitments like this are an important signal to the world that America is ready to act.

This is a test of our leadership in the century ahead. We are not just the “indispensable nation” – today we must be the indispensable stewards of our shared planet. Strong, transparent action from all countries contributing to climate change is necessary to solve the global climate challenge. I am pleased to present this report, which demonstrates this Administration’s commitment to leading the fight to confront climate change head-on, for our children and generations to come.



John F. Kerry
Secretary of State