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## Industrial Nations Agree Step to New Climate Pact

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VIENNA - Industrial nations agreed on Friday to consider stiff 2020 goals for cutting greenhouse gases in a small step towards a new long-term pact to fight climate change.

About 1,000 delegates at the Aug 27-31 UN talks set greenhouse gas emissions cuts of between 25 and 40 percent below 1990 levels as a non-binding starting point for rich nations' work on a new pact to extend the UN's Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012.

"These conclusions...indicate what industrialised countries must do to show leadership," said Yvo de Boer, head of the UN Climate Change Secretariat, welcoming a compromise deal on the range of needed cuts.

"But more needs to be done by the global community," he told a news conference at the end of the 158-nation talks. Many countries want to broaden Kyoto to include targets for outsiders such as the United States and developing nations.

Delegates agreed that the 25-40 percent range "provides useful initial parameters for the overall level of ambition of further emissions reductions".

It fell short of calls by the European Union and developing nations for the range to be called a stronger "guide" for future work. Pacific Island states said that even stiffer cuts may be needed to avert rising seas that could wash them off the map.

Nations including Russia, Japan and Canada had objected to the idea of a "guide", reckoning it might end up binding them to make sweeping economic shifts away from fossil fuels, widely seen as a main cause of global warming.

Delegates in the Vienna conference hall applauded for 10 seconds after adopting the compromise text by consensus.

### STARTING POINT

"This is a small step," Artur Runge-Metzger, head of the EU Commission delegation, told Reuters. "We wanted bigger steps. But I think the 25-40 percent will be viewed as a starting point, an anchor for further work."

The UN's climate panel said in a study in May 2007 that rich nations would have to cut emissions by between 25 and 40 percent to help avert the worst impacts of climate change from droughts, storms, heatwaves and rising seas.

"The process is moving along," said Leon Charles from Grenada, who chaired the final session. "By and large we have achieved our objectives".

De Boer said that the decisions might help environment ministers who will meet in Bali, Indonesia, in December, to agree to launch formal negotiations on a new global climate treaty to be decided by the end of 2009.

"This meeting has put the Bali conference in the starting blocks," de Boer said.

Environmentalists also hailed the conclusions as a step in the right direction. "The road to Bali is clear but it's time to switch gears," said Red Constantino of Greenpeace.

"We have a clear message from most governments that they will take seriously" scientists' calls for deep cuts, said Hans Verolme, climate expert of the WWF.

Kyoto binds 36 industrial nations to cut emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2008-12 in a first bid to contain warming.

The United States has not ratified Kyoto, rating it too costly and unfair for excluding 2012 goals for developing states, and thus was not involved in Friday's session. President George W. Bush has separately called a meeting of major emitters in Washington on Sept. 27-28 to work out future cuts.

Story by Alister Doyle, Environment Correspondent

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[Back to Top](#)

[Back to Headlines](#)

[See yesterday's headlines](#)



All Contents

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