



**19 November 2014 – In order to limit global temperature rise to 2°C and head off the worst impacts of climate change, global carbon neutrality should be attained by mid-to-late century.**

This would also keep in check the maximum amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) that can be emitted into the atmosphere while staying within safe temperature limits beyond 2020, says a new [report](#) by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Exceeding an estimated budget of just 1,000 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide (Gt CO<sub>2</sub>) would increase the risk of severe, pervasive, and in some cases irreversible climate change impacts.

Released days ahead of the UN Conference on Climate Change in Lima, Peru, [UNEP's Emissions Gap Report 2014](#)

is the fifth in a series that examines whether the pledges made by countries are on track to meet the internationally agreed under 2°C target. It is produced by 38 leading scientists from 22 research groups across 14 countries.

### **A limited amount of time to act**

The 2014 Report was launched in Washington D.C., today as well as in Berlin, Brussels, Mexico City and New Delhi. In Brussels Maroš Šefčovič, EU Commission Vice-President and Jacqueline McGlade, UNEP Chief Scientist presented the report at a Press Conference, organized by UNRIC.

Ms McGlade said: “There’s limited amount of time to act, and to avoid the dangers of climate change, we need to go beyond today’s pledges and actions.”

Building on the findings of the Fifth Assessment Report by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), UNEP’s Emissions Gap Report shows the global emission guardrails that would give a likely chance of staying within the 2°C limit, including a peaking of emissions within the next ten years, a halving of all greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century; and in the second half of the century, carbon neutrality followed by net zero total greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Reducing the need for more extreme action later**

“An increase in global temperature is proportional to the build-up of long-lasting greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, especially CO<sub>2</sub>. Taking more action now reduces the need for more extreme action later to stay within safe emission limits,” said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP.

“In a business-as-usual scenario, where little progress is made in the development and implementation of global climate policies, global greenhouse gas emissions could rise to up to 87 Gt CO<sub>2</sub> by 2050. Since 1990, global greenhouse gas emissions have grown by more than 45 per cent.

To have a likely chance of staying below the 2°C limit, global greenhouse gas emissions should drop by about 15 per cent or more by 2030 compared to 2010, and be at least 50 per cent lower by 2050 on the way to net zero.

### Useful Links

[The Executive Summary of the report](#)

[Information on the Emissions Gap Report 2013](#)

[UNRIC Library backgrounder on Climate Change](#)

Photo: The UNEP Gap Report presented at a press conference in Brussels by Maroš Šefčovič, EU Commission Vice-President and Jacqueline McGlade, UNEP Chief Scientist, with UNRIC's Christophe Verhellen. Photo: UNRIC/Julien Schreiber