

POSITIONING BEFORE PARIS CLIMATE TALKS

India and China urge wealthier countries to increase efforts; Canada makes a commitment; US and Germany make progress

China and India, the world's first and third highest greenhouse gas emitters respectively, teamed up on climate change with a rare joint statement that [urged rich countries](#) to increase efforts to reduce global carbon dioxide emissions. Specifically the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's and China's premier Li Keqiang asked wealthy countries to "provide finance, technology and other necessary support to emerging countries to help reduce their own emissions."

Meanwhile, Canadian Environment Minister, Leona Aglukkaq, [announced Friday](#) that Canada will pledge to cut greenhouse-gas emissions by

approximately one-third by 2030. Some critics were quick to dismiss the plan as "lacking detail and unrealistic without major policy changes."

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy will also support the U.S.'s effort to decouple economic gains and [environmental impacts](#). McCarthy stressed that there has never been a better time for innovators "to take actions that turn the challenge of climate change into economic opportunity."

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel is also seeking a [global emissions-trading system](#) to help curb climate change. "Extending Europe's emissions-trading system, the world's largest, to other regions would level the playing field," Merkel said this week.

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WARNING OF SEA LEVEL RISE

NASA: Antarctic shelf weakening and now close to disintegration

NASA released a study last week which found that the last intact section of Antarctica's ice shelf (approximately 625 square miles) is quickly weakening and may disintegrate completely in the next few years.

"This study of the Antarctic Peninsula glaciers

provides insights about how ice shelves farther south, which hold much more land ice, will react to a warming climate," said Eric Rignot, co-author of the study and a glaciologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

The disintegration of the ice shelf will trigger the collapse of glaciers held in place by the ice shelf, which will in turn contribute to sea level rise.

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THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

200

GW of wind power is the Chinese government's target by 2020, requiring annual investments of USD 27 bn.

70%

was the rise in volume of sustainably managed assets in Germany, reaching a total of [Euro 53bn \(subscription required\)](#) in 2014.

14.4%

was the return that the Church Commissioners for England made in 2014 for their Euro 9.3bn portfolio.

5

million new accountants are needed in mainland China if the country is to raise corporate governance standards.

5

is the terminal number in Seattle Port where Shell's Polar Pioneer drilling rig is docked before undertaking exploration in the Arctic Ocean.

1 (subscription required)

percent is the amount of the world's electricity consumption that comes from solar energy.

GERMANY TIGHTENS SUGGESTED GOVERNANCE RULES

The Deutscher Corporate Governance Kodex (DCGK), the commission that oversees Germany's corporate governance code, announced this week three recommended changes to the code:

1. Listed companies set age limits on board directors;
2. Ensure board directors have enough time to serve;
3. Inform shareholders when directors miss more than half of the board meetings.

Regarding the second recommendation, the DCGK noted that it was recommending companies ensure that candidates had enough time to devote to their board responsibilities. "Experience shows that the time pressures on board members have increased. Beyond board meetings and annual shareholder meetings, the work in the committees is more involved, as are the preparations."

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WE'RE KEEPING AN EYE ON...

El Niño. We reported in [Insights 90](#) that scientists are saying that [climate conditions](#) this year are meeting or exceeding levels associated with an El Niño weather event, a phenomenon which warms sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific. It now looks more certain.

The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center ([CPC](#)) said last week that an El Niño had a 90 percent likelihood of continuing through the summer. In April the odds were estimated at 70 percent.

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USDA TO LAUNCH VOLUNTARY 'NON-GMO' CERTIFICATION

The [USDA](#) has developed a new certification and labeling program for 'non-GMO' foods. The voluntary program is the first of its kind, and manufacturers would have to pay for it. If approved, the foods would have a "USDA Process Verified" label along on their [food product packaging](#) with a claim that they GMO free.

Currently, there aren't any government labels that only certify a food as GMO-free. Many food and beverage companies use a private label developed by a nonprofit called the [Non-GMO Project](#) and other use terms such as "all natural" – which is not defined by the USDA.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

[This CDC map](#) depicts a variety of distinctive causes of death per state. Some of the findings make intuitive sense (influenza in some northern states, pneumoconioses in coal-mining states) but others are more surprising.