

# COP25 climate summit starts as UN chief says the planet faces a ‘point of no-return’

By Anmar Frangoul/ [cnbc.com](https://www.cnbc.com)/ Mon, Dec 2 2019

Key Points:

- The COP25 climate summit, in the Spanish capital of Madrid, got underway Monday.
- UN secretary general Antonio Guterres says “we simply have to stop digging and drilling.”



Eduardo Parra | Europa Press | Getty Images

The COP25 climate summit got underway Monday, with the UN secretary general warning that “the point of no-return is no longer over the horizon.”

The summit, which will end on December 13, is taking place in Madrid, Spain. It was originally due to be held in Santiago, Chile, but was moved to Europe after civil unrest in the South American country.

In remarks delivered Sunday, Antonio Guterres emphasized that his message was “one of hope, not of despair” but sought to highlight the urgency of the problems faced by the planet.

“We simply have to stop digging and drilling and take advantage of the vast possibilities offered by renewable energy and nature-based solutions,” he said.

“In the crucial 12 months ahead, it is essential that we secure more ambitious national commitments — particularly from the main emitters — to immediately start reducing

greenhouse gas emissions at a pace consistent to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050,” he went on to state.

While Guterres stressed the importance of unity and collaboration, ensuring that all countries are on the same page is a huge challenge.

China, for instance, is constructing more coal-fired power plants and approving new mines, according to Reuters. The country has built 42.9 gigawatts of new coal-fired power capacity since the beginning of 2018, Reuters said, compared with 35 GW in 2017.

As COP25 begins, the shadow of COP21, which took place in Paris in 2015, looms large.

As well as a commitment to make sure global warming stayed “well below” 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, world leaders at Paris also agreed to “pursue efforts” to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The Paris Agreement suffered a setback on November 4 when the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, officially announced in a statement that the country had started the process to withdraw.

“Per the terms of the Agreement, the United States submitted formal notification of its withdrawal to the United Nations,” he said. “The withdrawal will take effect one year from delivery of the notification.”