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Climate change - Opinion

The Paris agreement really does change everything

It's easy to be cynical about pledges on climate change. But the ratification of the treaty on carbon emissions sets us on an irreversible path towards clean energy.

Wednesday was a historic day for the climate. No, not another record-breaking hottest month. Not another devastating hurricane. For once, it was a good day.

5 Wednesday was the day enough countries—representing more than 55% of global carbon emissions—ratified the Paris agreement on climate change for the treaty to enter force.

10 A weary world, weighed down by Syria, Brexit and American presidential elections must wonder if fancy words like “ratification” actually mean anything. The answer is unequivocally “yes”. This treaty sets us on an irreversible trajectory on which all investment, all regulation and all industrial strategy must start to align with a global economy powered by 100% clean energy.

15 So dramatic is this change of direction that, as of last December, more than 500 global institutions with assets in excess of \$3.4 trillion had committed to divest themselves from the fossil-fuelled extractive industries of the past. Government policies globally are now aligned with real-world market forces pushing forward the next great industrial revolution: the clean low-carbon revolution that will transform how we power our lives.

Barry Gardiner, *The Guardian*, 7 October 2016.

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