

Francois Hollande, activists gear up for critical climate talks

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Paris: French President Francois Hollande met with environmental groups today, pushing for an ambitious global deal to reduce man-made emissions blamed for global warming with emphasis on helping developing countries adapt to a changing world.

The talks in the Elysee Palace came as President Barack Obama, the leaders of China, Russia and more than 140 other countries prepare to converge on Paris to launch two weeks of high-stakes talks.

Leaders and climate negotiators from 196 countries meeting at the UN talks November 30-December 11 will try to hash out the broadest, most lasting deal to date to slow global warming.

Saturday's meeting and the talks are taking place under extra-high security after Islamic extremists killed 130 people November 13 in the deadliest attacks in France in decades.

Security was already planned to be tight even before the attacks, given the throng of government leaders attending.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said today that just under a thousand people thought to pose security risks have been banned from entering the country since tighter border controls were enforced earlier this month in the run-up to the COP21 climate talks and in the wake of France's deadliest attacks in recent memory.

Later today, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius is scheduled to symbolically hand over the keys to the climate conference to the UN climate change agency, which will oversee the two-week talks.

Fabius and Hollande have travelled the world this year and used France's diplomatic weight to try to rally international support for a tough and binding deal.

The last global climate treaty, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, required only rich countries to reduce emissions and the US, the world's biggest emitter, did not take part.

The talks are happening with France in a state of emergency and thousands of troops and police fanned out to ensure security after the Paris attacks.

A big march by environmental activists was canceled because of the security measures. Activists are still planning other small actions around France and other countries.

- AP