



## **CAN THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES HELP US TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE?**

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### **Introduction**

Climate change is described by governments the world over as one of the most pressing threats of our time.

So for decades, leaders have come together for huge global conferences to try to find solutions.

We've become used to massive gatherings of this kind but rewind a hundred years they were a pretty new idea.

Four bitter years of World War One left millions dead and empires ruined.

This huge challenge needed a response on a scale that had never been seen before.

In 1919, leaders from the four corners of the world gathered in Paris to discuss and negotiate a peace deal together.

The Treaty of Versailles that they eventually signed is often criticised – usually for the perception that it led to the Second World War. Well, Versailles had another legacy as well as a model for international cooperation based for the first time on a permanent body – The League of Nations. And this in turn gave way to a body that we're familiar with today – the United Nations.

This is Central Hall in Westminster and this was the venue back in 1946 for the first ever meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

Just as in Paris almost 30 years earlier, delegates had high hopes as they gathered from around the world.

So I want to explore how useful the blueprint launched at Versailles has been for something as complicated as climate change.