



Key messages of the Global NDC Conference 2019

Introduction

The Global NDC Conference 2019 took place from 12-14 June 2019 in Berlin, Germany. Its purpose was to inspire and enable policy-makers and practitioners to accelerate the pace and scale of transformational change, via NDC implementation, to reach the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. The conference convened governments, development cooperation agencies, businesses, scientists and civil society, from 80 countries, to discuss the technical aspects of NDC implementation (see www.globalndcconference.org/about). Conference discussions were clustered around the themes of: transparency, integrated governance and finance.

While this was a technical, rather than a political conference, the key messages can inform the efforts of governments, international agencies, development banks, researchers, non-governmental and private actors in their efforts to ramp up climate ambition. These key messages have been developed by the conference organisers as a summary of conference discussions. They do not represent a consensus view of participants, nor do they represent the official view of the sponsoring organisations. The organisers nonetheless invite readers to consider these messages and share them widely in your networks.

Achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement

The science from the IPCC is clear: to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C and achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, emissions must peak well before 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. To do so, leaders must adopt a long-term vision for phasing out emissions by 2050 and, on that basis, set mid-term targets, for which NDCs provide a main avenue. Societies must also strive for this systemic transformation within the context of planetary boundaries and informed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

Upcoming mandates in 2020 to communicate new or updated NDCs and long-term climate strategies provide an opportunity to enhance ambition. There are strong grounds for doing so. Since NDCs were first prepared, more information has become available on the aggregate effect of current NDCs, the science of 1.5°C, the rules of the Paris Agreement and the efforts of other countries. The context has shifted since NDCs were first developed: technology prices are falling, new policies have been adopted and citizens are demanding change.

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Cross-cutting messages of the conference

Gender and social inclusion. Climate action should be designed to meet different people's different needs. Women, indigenous people, ethnic minorities and other socially excluded groups are powerful agents of change and already play important roles in core sectors affected by climate change (such as energy, agriculture, water, forestry). Harnessing diverse human talent and ensuring equal rights and access to resources will help us to reach our collective goals more effectively and help us to set more ambitious targets for the future. Emerging good practice demonstrates that this is possible, especially with effective planning, monitoring and adaptive management. For those groups whose livelihoods and wellbeing currently depend on fossil fuel production and consumption, extra support is needed from governments and businesses to achieve a just transition.

Leadership and the change-makers. In tackling climate change, everyone is a stakeholder, and everyone is qualified to lead and speak out for higher climate ambition. To enable NDC implementation and raised ambition, we need a form of leadership that is more systemic, distributed, collaborative, reflective and in touch with the needs of the world around us. Now, young people have come to the forefront of a new moral crusade for climate action. With youth in the lead, we now see a diffusion of protest that is turning the moral tide against polluting behaviour. This reinvigorated climate movement is helping to create new global norms for what environmentally-acceptable production and consumption could be.

Private sector engagement. Committed international public finance is insufficient to meet the scale of the need. Private financial flows to climate adaptation and mitigation activities must increase many times over. Diverse private sector actors play a key role in delivering the Paris goals. They can contribute expertise, entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership to this end. NDC updates will provide a higher bar for climate ambition – which in turn can create the confidence for private financiers and businesses to re-channel investments toward net zero products and services and the mitigation of climate risks.

Transparency

Enhanced transparency, as set out in the Paris Agreement and its rulebook, captures core data and information on mitigation and adaptation action and support across sectors to inform governments, civil society and the international community of progress on climate action. Transparency is crucial for NDC implementation and updates as it:

- Supports evidence-based policy design;
- Enables effective and efficient implementation;
- Helps attract additional finance;
- Enhances trust and confidence amongst stakeholders; and
- Builds political buy-in; and accomplishes accountability, both at the national and international levels.

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Transparency enables enhanced ambition and transformational change, and development of long-term strategies towards net zero greenhouse gas emission economies. It has been applied in different countries and contexts and has been proven to sharpen policy formulation, help track progress (also, to ensure that there is no relapse) and evaluate funding proposals.

With the adoption of the Katowice rulebook, most rules are clear. Now is the time to implement them. The joint task is to translate the rules for decision-makers in national ministries such as planning and finance, for donors and for international implementing organisations.

Integrated governance

Implementing the Paris Agreement has to be a top political priority. It has to engage heads of state, as well as all line ministries, including ministries of environment, development, planning and finance. There is an urgent need for a whole-of-government approach across sectors and at all levels, as well as a whole-of-society approach through participatory and inclusive processes to ensure all voices are heard, particularly those most affected by the climate crisis.

It is clear that sub-national actors are key in helping to bridge the gap between ambitious national climate targets and the concrete actions required on the ground. Therefore, climate action must merge top-down and bottom-up approaches. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities will help facilitate effective collaboration among stakeholders to accelerate NDC implementation.

It is evident that the line between mitigation and adaptation is becoming increasingly blurred as we better understand the synergies and potential co-benefits of adaptation and mitigation actions. It is therefore critical to align NDC, National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and SDG processes to help foster low-carbon and climate-resilient development. We need to reframe how we see and communicate mitigation and adaptation measures, as they are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

Strong political will and a holistic approach to leadership and systems transformation is urgently needed. Leadership is taking a new form, as today's youth and local actors are looking beyond government solutions. Countries should be guided by integrated, resilient long-term visions and use sectoral planning processes to achieve mid-term targets. While efforts still need to be focused on NDC implementation, each NDC revision should be considered as a stepping stone to increasing ambition and achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

Finance

All finance impacts climate change and all finance must be aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Too often fiscal policies pull against climate protection. All national and international spending and all infrastructure investments need to be aligned with climate and with sustainable development objectives to avoid a carbon lock-in. Finance ministries, central banks and other major financial actors must be engaged. National planning and budgeting processes need to reflect NDCs. NDCs have to be translated in to investment plans to attract more investments from the private sector.

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International climate finance remains essential, and should be predictable and accessible for developing countries, not only at national level but also at the local level.

Subsidy reform, green taxation, carbon pricing and other fiscal instruments need much wider application to shift domestic economies towards lower emissions and greater resilience. Climate finance and green fiscal policy must also address social inequities exacerbated by climate change and of economic transformation, especially for marginalised groups such as women and the poor.

Private sector investment will be critical to reaching the scale of investment needed. Regulations, blended finance instruments, carbon markets, corporate disclosure requirements and other instruments are all valuable in steering private investment, and all should be used.

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