



Analytical Brief on Climate Ambition and Sustainability Action

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Subnational Initiatives and Actions

Commitments and actions by sub-national actors key towards the 1.5°C goal

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Key Questions >>>

- How can contributions of sub-national actors and companies be better factored in the Nationally Determined Contributions?
- What concrete steps are needed in terms of time-based initiatives for implementation, financing and monitoring of climate actions to meet the 1.5°C temperature goal?
- What mechanisms are needed to drive sub-national actions in terms of sustainable development goals, climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation?
- How can sub-national actors, in both developed and developing countries, be more empowered to take climate actions?

Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2018 special report on warming of 1.5°C stressed on the need for all actors including state, sub-national, and non-state to strengthen climate action, and highlighted cooperation between actors as a critical mechanism for halving emissions by 2030 in order to meet the 1.5°C goal (IPCC 2018). Commitments by individual cities, regions and companies can help in the momentum in countries where national governments are rolling back policies on climate change. In the case of the US, for instance, while federal policies have moved backwards, fortunately at the level of the states and

cities, there are encouraging signs of action on climate change.

Impact of sub-national actions towards the 1.5°C goal

Based on available quantifiable commitments by sub-national governments and companies, a recent report by the New Climate Institute (NCI et al. 2019) has quantified the impacts of sub-national and company climate actions. The report finds that global GHG emissions in 2030 would be 1.2 to 2.0 GtCO₂e lower than the current national policies scenario if the recorded and quantified commitments by individual cities, regions and companies in the ten major emitting economies are

fully implemented. This range is roughly equivalent to Canada and Japan's combined emissions in 2016. For the United States, the aggregate potential impact of recorded and quantified individual commitments would bring the country close to the upper bound of its 2025 NDC target.

Synergies with adaptation and sustainable development goals

Sub-national governments are best placed to respond through climate change adaptation policies. While climate change is a global problem, the impacts of climate change will be felt at the local level and hence actions by sub-national governments, communities and companies is essential. Moreover there are synergies of sub-national measures with the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Besides Goal 13 (climate actions), sub-national actors are absolutely crucial for Goal 7 (sustainable energy), Goal 9 (industry, infrastructure and innovation); Goal 11 (sustainable cities), Goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production); and Goal 17 (means of implementation).

Leadership

While multilateral organizations and many national governments still do not have formal institutional

Questions

The above discussion raises the following questions:

1. How can contributions of sub-national actors and companies be better factored in the Nationally Determined Contributions?
2. What concrete steps are needed in terms of time-based initiatives for implementation, financing and monitoring of climate actions to meet the 1.5°C temperature goal?
3. What mechanisms are needed to drive sub-national actions in terms of sustainable development goals, climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation?
4. How can sub-national actors, in both developed and developing countries, be more empowered to take climate actions?

mechanisms in terms of holistically engaging with sub-national governments, companies and communities are forging ahead with their own climate change policies. Former Governor of California, Hon'ble Arnold Schwarzenegger has been responsible for focusing on initiatives at the subnational level in which entities across the globe are taking action at the subnational level. R20 - Regions of Climate Action is one of the many networked initiatives which has directed its efforts to implement the transition to a low-carbon green economy, whereby natural resources are conserved, fossil fuel use is limited, public health is protected and enhanced, while societies promote equality.

Ways forward

More than 6,000 cities and regions have made quantifiable commitments to reduce GHG emissions and about 1,500 companies report quantifiable climate action commitments to the Carbon Disclosure Project. This would need to be up-scaled and more sub-national governments, companies and communities need to assume a leadership role. There is a lot that leaders at the subnational level can do. These now need to be identified with time based initiatives and concrete goals in terms of ambition, planning, financing and monitoring of emission targets.

References

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Analytical Brief on Climate Ambition and Sustainability Action

The brief series, brought out jointly by the World Sustainable Development Forum and the Protect our Planet Movement, seeks to highlight a topical issue relevant to the realization of the sustainable development goals and ambitious climate actions. This brief is to feed into the discussions of the Second World Sustainable Development Forum to be organized in Durango, Mexico (5-7 March, 2020).

About WSDF

The World Sustainable Development Forum (WSDF) is a not-for-profit organization incorporated separately in Europe, Norway and the U.S. Its North American arm WSDF-NA, headquartered in Washington, DC carries 501c3 tax exempt status. WSDF is a global initiative to promote and mobilize global action for effective implementation of both the Paris agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly. WSDF's relevance and role lies in acting as a facilitator for helping with implementation of actions required under these two sets of agreements.

About POP Movement

Protect our Planet (POP) Movement believes that the impacts of climate change will not affect a single country but the planet, in its entirety. POP believes that the power of the youth of the world will unite and to address this challenge. POP believes that the time to act is now and that knowledge is the true currency of changing the future.



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