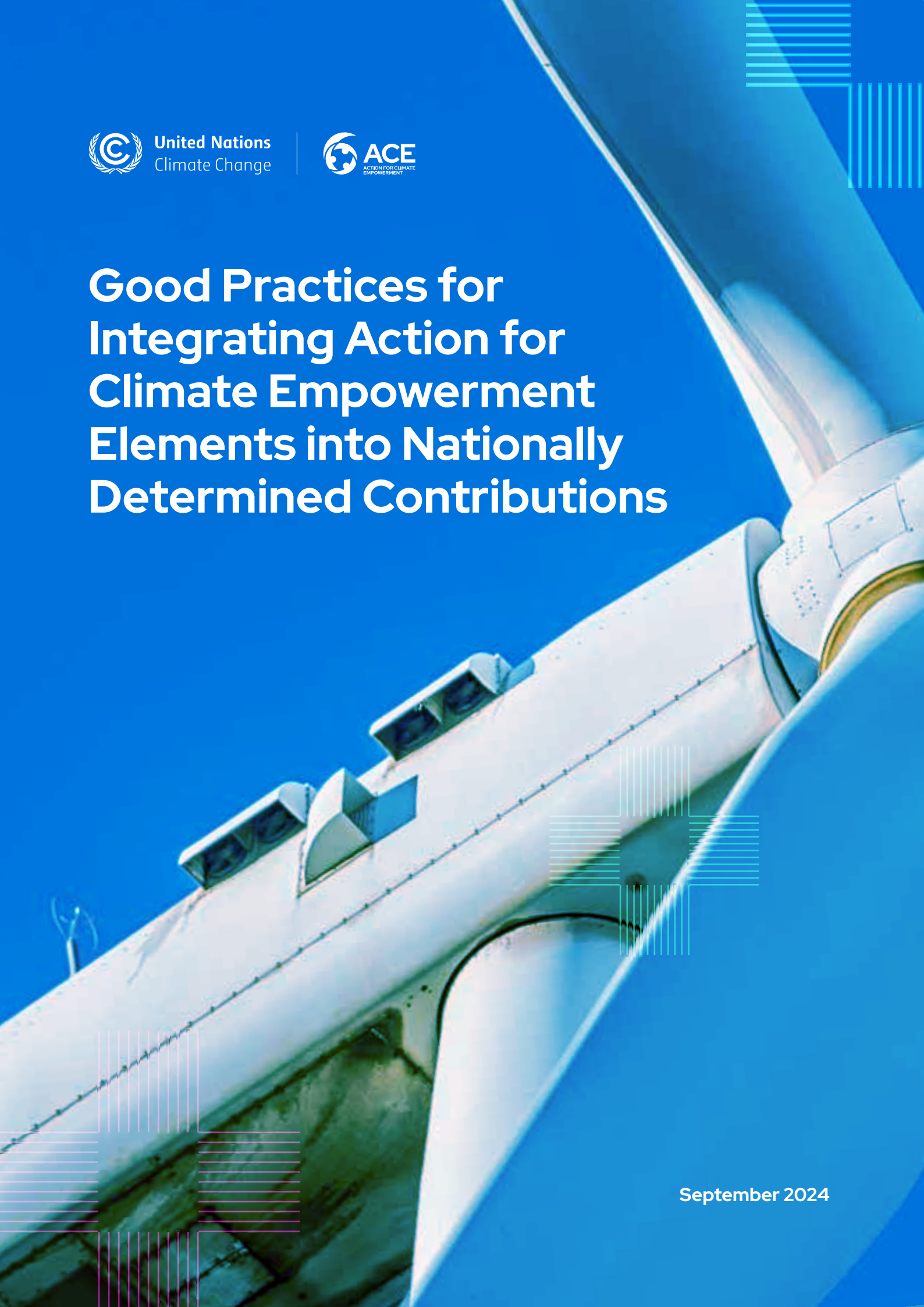
United Nations Climate Change

ACE ACTION FOR CLIMATE EMPOWERMENT

Good Practices for Integrating Action for Climate Empowerment Elements into Nationally Determined Contributions



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Introduction

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) is a term adopted by Parties to denote work under Article 6 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement. The overarching goal of ACE is to educate, equip and empower all members of society to engage in climate action through the six ACE elements – climate change education and public awareness, training, public participation and access to information, and international cooperation on these issues.

Over the years, Parties to the Convention and the Paris Agreement have reaffirmed the importance of ACE and its elements to achieving the objective of the Convention and the purpose and goals of the Paris Agreement. In this sense, the Glasgow work programme on ACE encourages Parties to strengthen the integration of ACE into developing and implementing national climate policies, plans, strategies and action,[1] including nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

The UNFCCC secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other members of the United Nations Alliance on ACE, published a short guide on integrating ACE into NDCs in 2020 to provide countries with advice on how to address ACE and its elements in their respective NDCs.[2] Parties are strongly encouraged to refer to this guide when preparing their NDCs.

The most recent synthesis report by the secretariat on NDCs shows that a total of 98 per cent of Parties provided information on using one or more ACE elements to promote implementation of mitigation and adaptation activities. Compared to their first NDCs, Parties have generally communicated more clearly, and in more detail, than previously on general principles, past achievements, future commitments, and needs and gaps in relation to ACE.[3]

The conclusion of the first global stocktake at COP 28 in 2023 and the mandated update of NDCs in 2025 present a vital opportunity for Parties to enhance their ambition and commitments to ACE and bring more clarity and depth on how they will boost ACE implementation in transitioning to low-carbon, climate-resilient societies.

Complementing the original guide, this compendium looks at good practices and showcases potential ways of strengthening the role of ACE in developing and implementing the new NDCs.[4,5] It should be noted that the broad categories of action and examples provided in this document are not exhaustive. Further discussions and sharing of experiences on how ACE and its elements can be integrated into NDCs and other climate policies and plans, such as national adaptation plans (NAPs) and long-term low-emission development strategies (LT-LEDS) will benefit Parties and non-Party stakeholders at all levels.

1 Decisions 18/CP.26, para. 7; and 22/CMA.3, para. 7.
2 The guide is available in English, Arabic, French and Spanish.
3 FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/12, para. 115.
4 NDCs considered in this document are those recorded in the NDC registry as at 31 December 2023.
5 The good practices in this document are not presented as the exact quotations from the original NDCs. All translations are unofficial. For significant discrepancies, please contact ace@unfccc.int for correction.

02

Action for Climate Empowerment

The implementation of the six ACE elements should be advanced in a balanced manner, with a focus on the holistic integration of ACE in NDCs. While ACE implementation should be multi-stakeholder and multilevel, the government can take on primary responsibility by mainstreaming ACE across multiple sectors and strategies at the national level.

Compared to their first NDCs, an increasing number of Parties have holistically integrated ACE into NDCs. More Parties are referring to ACE as a necessary means of mobilizing and empowering society to deliver the mitigation and adaptation objectives outlined in their NDCs.

The submitted NDCs present three comprehensive approaches to integrating ACE in a holistic manner:

1. Upholding ACE as one of the **guiding principles or cross-cutting priorities** of climate policies and action, including mitigation and adaptation objectives and measures put forward in NDCs, to empower all members of society in delivering climate action:

- **Cabo Verde** (2021) is committed to ensuring that ACE becomes a key horizontal instrument to involve all levels of society in climate action, in particular vulnerable groups, in support of all elements of mitigation and adaptation. The government stresses that while ACE is a non-GHG target, without such civic empowerment, NDC cannot be achieved.
- The **Philippines** (2021) recognizes the importance of traditional knowledge, education and public awareness, and enhancement of climate actions through measures embodied in Article 12 of the Paris Agreement and shall endeavour to institute a multilevel mechanism in this regard in the implementation of NDC.
- The **State of Palestine** (2021) acknowledges the overarching goal of ACE to empower all members of society to engage in climate action. The government also regards the implementation of ACE initiatives as an ideal opportunity to engage youth, women and other vulnerable groups in NDC implementation.
- **Uganda** (2022) recognizes that supporting climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information is crucial to the implementation of the updated NDC. The government will apply a whole-of-society approach to promote knowledge, awareness-raising and information sharing.

2. Developing and implementing **national ACE strategies or policies and plans dedicated to ACE**, which should be developed and implemented through a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder participatory process, to guide ACE implementation at the national level:

- **Chile** (2020) planned to develop a strategy for capacity development and climate empowerment with the aim of strengthening the national, subnational and sectoral capacities of citizens and organizations to achieve national mitigation and adaptation targets. With support from the EUROCLIMA+ programme and through a multi-stakeholder participatory process, the government published this strategy in 2024.
- **Zambia** (2021) acknowledged its national climate change learning strategy developed in 2020 that strengthens individual, institutional and systemic capacities of the energy, forestry, health, agriculture and education sectors and enables them to deliver climate change action. The strategy was developed in 2021 with the support of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) under the UN CC:Learn initiative. The recently launched FACE-NDC project (see box 1 below) will further support the government in implementing this strategy.

3. Incorporating ACE and its elements into **climate change and other sectoral policies and plans,** such as energy, agriculture, education and health, to ensure that ACE is mainstreamed across sectors and implemented by all actors:

- **Andorra's** (2022) National Energy and Climate Change Strategy consists of five action programmes, which includes raising awareness, educating and training the population. The strategy is also guided by the principle of protection and information, which ensures the provision of comprehensible information for citizens to make informed decisions, as well as the effective participation of citizens and stakeholders in the development of climate policies and action.
- **Brunei Darussalam's** (2020) National Climate Change Policy has a dedicated strategy on awareness and education, which is recognized as having importance in enabling the realization of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. This strategy seeks to foster awareness and increase education in matters pertaining to climate change efforts in all sectors of society, in line with a whole-of-nation approach.
- **Peru** (2020), recognizing the importance of increased capacities and broad participation of all social groups, strives to articulate and operationalize the ACE elements. The Framework Law on Climate Change Regulation incorporates the ACE elements in its conceptual framework for the comprehensive management of climate change, while NDC incorporates them in all its stages, from formulation to implementation.
- **Seychelles'** (2021) National Climate Change Policy affirms the commitment to strengthen capacity and social empowerment at all levels to adequately respond to climate change. NDC highlights that helping citizens and professionals understand how their sector contributes to climate change, how it is affected by climate change and what can be done to adapt is critical to the achievement of its commitments.

Box 1. Zambia's Facility for Action for Climate Empowerment to achieve Nationally Determined Contributions Project

The Facility for Action for Climate Empowerment to Achieve Nationally Determined Contributions (FACE-NDC) is a transformative project supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of Germany through International Climate Initiative (IKI) financing.

FACE-NDC has the aim of supporting countries in achieving their NDCs through ACE interventions. The project supports climate change education, training and capacity of national stakeholders to ensure green transitions in agriculture, forestry and energy sectors as well as in public participation and responsible consumer behaviors. Innovative ACE methodologies developed by the project, including behavioural science informed approaches, monitoring and evaluation, and IT systems and tools to develop interventions and assess impacts for improved policy and decision-making processes.

For more information, please contact: FACE-NDC@fao.org.

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03

Climate change education

Climate change education can enable all learners, of all ages and walks of life, to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to meet the objectives and goals set out in NDCs. A climate-literate society is a vital precursor for the effective implementation of climate action, as education seeks to achieve profound and long-term change in people's understanding of the causes and impacts of climate change and allow them to take appropriate actions.

Often described as a soft measure that does not require a huge financial outlay, climate change education, nevertheless, is one of the most powerful yet underexplored tools to create enabling conditions for a transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient societies.

In total, 49 per cent of Parties elaborated on climate change education measures in their NDCs, with five main categories of action:

1. Establishing **laws and policies** to ensure the provision of climate change education, including by mainstreaming climate change into the national educational strategies and plans or by integrating climate change education into the national climate change strategies and plans:

- **Cambodia** (2020) considers mainstreaming climate change into the Education Strategic Plan 2019-2023 and SDG 4 Roadmap for Education 2030 as one of the prioritized adaptation actions to be led by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport that will play an enabling role in facilitating the implementation of all other actions within the NDC.
- **Colombia** (2020) plans to update and redefine the National Environmental Education Policy and associated regulations by 2030 to highlight the importance and urgency of addressing climate change in education at all levels, in accordance with the national, regional and local context, and with a human rights, intergenerational, differential and gender approach.
- The **United Kingdom** (2022) referred to the Department for Education Strategy for Sustainability and Climate Change for Education and Children's Services published in April 2022. The strategy sets out key actions in climate education and green skills to equip children, young people and adult learners with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to the green economy.

2. Updating the **education curricula** to integrate climate change at all levels, from primary, secondary and tertiary to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), using an inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach:

- The **Gambia** (2021) highlighted that since the submission of the first NDC, a new basic education curriculum that integrates climate change has been developed. However, while the environmental and social studies at pre-tertiary level incorporate elements of climate change, a recent audit identified significant gaps in the current curriculum. The planned Long-term Climate Change Capacity Development Strategy will propose effective ways to build on and extend the current efforts to mainstream climate change into educational curricula.

- **Pakistan** (2021) will include climate change in the curriculum of all secondary schools, and specialized courses will be offered at colleges and universities by 2030. The Ministry of Climate Change will engage with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the Higher Education Commission, universities and civil society organizations to propagate climate education curriculum.
- **Uruguay** (2022) states that, as a cross-cutting measure, the National Public Education Administration will promote and incorporate environmental education for climate change in all education subsystems, from initial, primary and secondary to technical and vocational education and training, by 2030, recommending disciplinary contents and didactic methodologies for the respective curricula.

3. Implementing **educational programmes and activities**, including those that are informal and non-formal, to further educate and equip learners with the knowledge and skills needed for climate change mitigation and adaptation:

- The **Democratic Republic of Congo** (2021) includes, as a priority adaptation action, a measure under the coastal zone sector to develop disaster and climate-risk-sensitive educational and information programmes. Under the water resources sector, another measure focuses on strengthening the resilience of rural communities, particularly women and children, through the National Healthy School and Village Program.
- **Jordan** (2021) plans to raise the awareness and engagement of learners on climate change issues through formal and informal education with an enhanced entry-level education curriculum that includes new themes on climate change and contextualized materials to be disseminated through social media, informal settlements, schools, youth centres and youth innovation incubators.
- In **Venezuela** (2021), within the framework of the Play and Learn Program carried out by the Venezuelan Fund for Industrial and Technological Reconversion (FONDOIN), a series of educational activities and materials were developed and delivered to education centres, training 4,600 children and 572 teachers. In addition, 100% of the primary schools will deliver the Water in our Lives Program and other educational programmes to raise children's awareness of water resources by 2030.

4. Utilizing **schools and educational institutions** as grounds for mitigation and adaptation action, often leveraging their status as public infrastructure to achieve the economies of scale for increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy:

- **Saint Lucia** (2021) plans to take measures in renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions and technologies in school buildings as well as renewable energy generation on school sites. The government is building the resilience of children and youth by enhancing food security through school gardening programmes. Several schools are outfitted with greenhouses, and students are involved in gardening with the support of caretakers, farmers from the community and extension officers.
- **Ukraine** (2021) has taken many steps to develop energy efficiency and renewable energy, including by extending the Energy Efficiency Fund to budgetary institutions, such as schools. Since 2016, Ukraine has also operated an energy service mechanism to implement energy efficiency measures at municipal and state-owned facilities, including schools and kindergartens.
- In the **United Arab Emirates** (2023), several initiatives directly target the reduction of power and water demands in schools. In 2010, the Emirates Nature-WWF's Eco-Schools Program was endorsed by the government to award schools that reduce their energy and water consumption and waste production a Green Certificate. For 2023, the Ministry of Education targeted to ensure that 50% of schools and universities are accredited.

5. Providing training and resources for pre- and in-service **teachers and educators** to enable them to teach learners about climate change and climate action more systematically and effectively:

- The **Dominican Republic** (2020) set the goals to, by 2030, include the topic of climate change education in the national professionalization system and the training of technical, administrative and teaching staff at all levels of the national education system; by 2030, create and apply specialization in climate change education through the curricular training regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology; and by 2024, train 200 teachers to carry out a timely approach to climate change education in the classroom.
- **El Salvador** (2022) plans to carry out education and training to improve sustainable production chains in the agriculture sector. With the support of the National School of Agriculture, a diploma course on adaptation and mitigation to climate change has been provided to 27 teachers. In addition, the curriculum is being reviewed to integrate the climate change component into the subjects and topics of the teaching process.
- **Qatar** (2021) is eager to foster climate change education in the daily routines of educational institutions. The government plans to enhance teachers' training on climate change topics to enable educators to present the topics of sustainability and environmental development in an appealing manner to students and to foster behavioural changes in the long term.

Box 2. Greening Education Partnership

The Greening Education Partnership is a global initiative that takes a whole-of-system approach to support countries in tackling the climate crisis by harnessing the critical role of education. As a collaborative platform for governments and other diverse stakeholders, the Greening Education Partnership is structured around four key pillars of transformative education – greening schools, greening curriculum, greening teacher training and education systems' capacities, and greening communities.

Most recently, the Greening Education Partnership published the greening curriculum guidance and the greening school quality standard that aim to assist countries in delivering strong, coordinated and comprehensive action that will prepare every learner to acquire the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to tackle climate change and to promote sustainable development.

For more information, please contact gep@unesco.org.

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04

Public awareness

Lack of awareness or negative public perception, which can lead to a lack of support and political commitment, affects the effective implementation of climate policies and plans. There is a strong need to continuously improve understanding of climate change risks and impacts and public awareness of relevant policies and measures through effective communication and outreach.

Stakeholders in awareness efforts include governments, non-governmental organizations, United Nations and international organizations, educational and cultural institutions, the private sector, the media, communities, households and the general public as both providers and recipients. Public awareness campaigns should engage all these groups to encourage climate-friendly behaviour and sustainable lifestyles and persuade them to support timely implementation of and investment in climate change policies and plans.

In total, 65 per cent of Parties elaborated on public awareness measures in their NDCs, with four main categories of action:

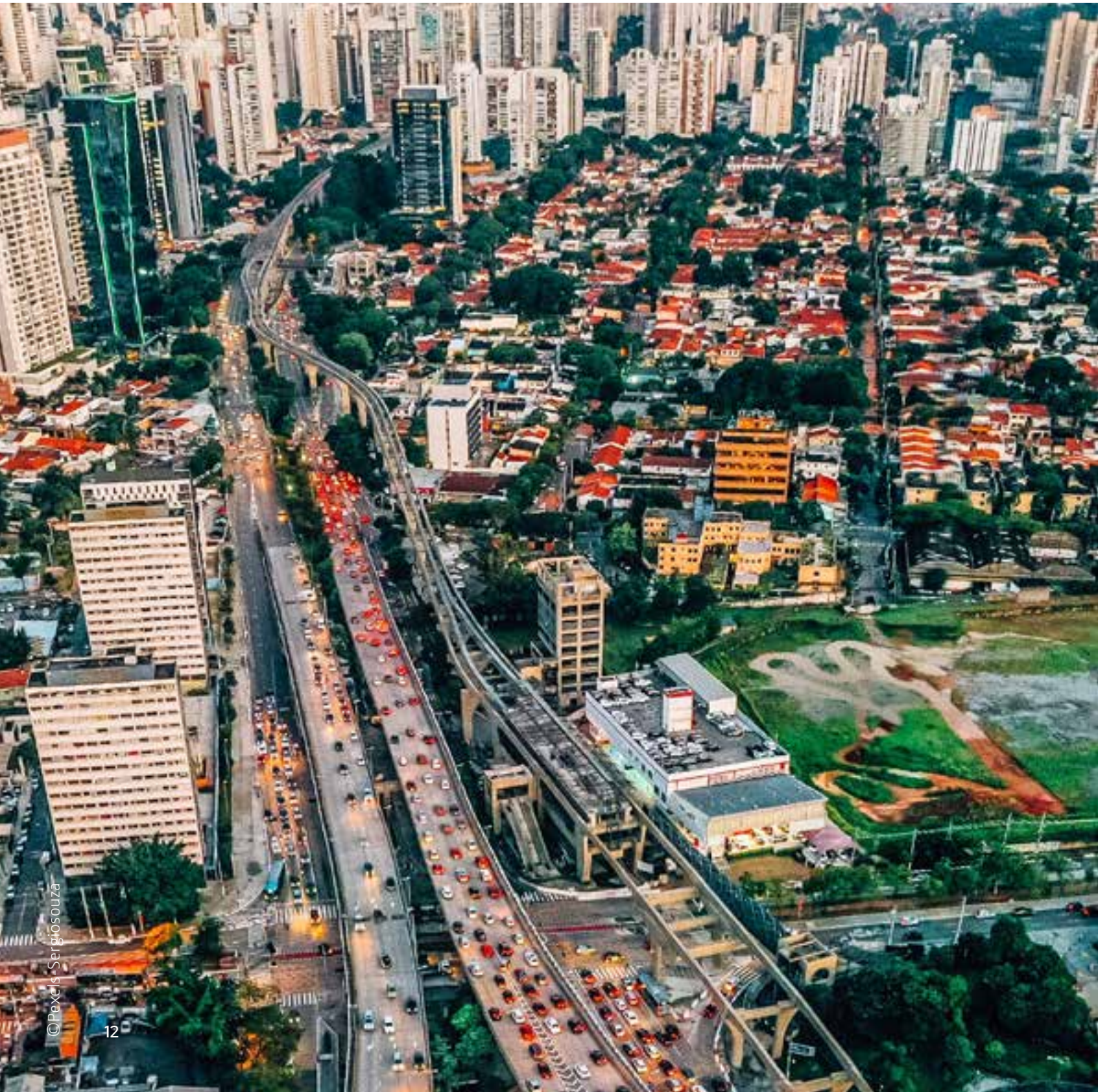
1. Developing **dedicated communication strategies or plans** to ensure effective, targeted and systematic communication of climate policies and measures and assigning responsibilities for awareness-raising to specific governmental and non-governmental organizations:

- **Fiji** (2020) has already envisioned developing a communication plan under its NAP process to ensure the effectiveness of its planned adaptation measures. The government now aims to develop dynamic communication plans with its NDC to build awareness for fully implementing its necessary climate adaptation plans and mitigation ambitions.
- **Nicaragua** (2020) includes a communication strategy in its NDC, which follows a multi-sectoral and multicultural approach and aims to foster dialogues with communities by establishing technical communication tables. The strategy will also utilize mass media to reach a wider audience and disseminate progress and challenges in implementing the NDC.
- **Sierra Leone** (2021) will build upon its National Climate Communications Strategy that seeks to, among others, improve awareness and understanding of the government's climate change adaptation initiatives and the NAP process through effective communication, education and training. The strategy was developed as part of the NAP Global Network's support to provide short- and mid-term guidance on how the government can utilize communications more strategically and effectively to support the NAP process.

2. Identifying public awareness as a **key pillar of climate policies, plans and strategies** that aims to strengthen their visibility and ownership by all actors and foster effective information and knowledge management and communication:

- **Cameroon** (2021) considers awareness-raising among the population, professionals, government officials and decision-makers on the effects of climate change and the measures to be taken as one of the projects that correspond to the strategic axes defined by the National Development Strategy 2020-2030, National Climate Change Adaptation Program and NDC.

- **Kazakhstan's** (2023) Action Plan for the Implementation of the Concept for the Transition to a "Green Economy" for 2021–2030 has a dedicated area of work related to education and awareness-raising of the population. The government will foster ecological culture by popularizing green policies and measures, raising awareness of the business community, and giving out industry awards for special achievements.
- **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** (2016) shares that public education and awareness of the potential negative effects of climate change are at the forefront of the National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013-2025. The Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience, the largest project in the country specifically designed to address climate risk and resilience, also has a main component focusing on public education.



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3. Carrying out **public awareness campaigns** through various formats and utilizing both traditional and social media while communicating in different languages where applicable. For instance, some nationwide efforts to raise awareness include:

- **Angola** (2021) recognizes the need to sensitize the population on the importance of jointly responding to the problem of climate change. In this context, the government plans to carry out awareness-raising and communication campaigns covering the issues of renewable energy and energy efficiency, maintenance of vehicles, use of public transportation, waste management and health impacts of climate change.
- **China** (2021) organizes the National Energy Conservation Publicity Week and Low-carbon Day to disseminate the concept of energy conservation and low-carbon development and showcase the actions and stories of the government and all sectors. These activities strengthen the public's understanding of low-carbon development from all walks of life and stimulate their participation in actions on climate change.
- **Thailand** (2022) held its first national climate conference after COP 26 to awaken efforts towards achieving the country's goal of reaching net-zero emissions. The conference was attended by all stakeholders to build strong engagement on climate actions and ensure a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address the climate crisis and meet the national targets.

4. Including **sector-specific** measures to increase awareness and engagement and build climate literacy and skills of key stakeholders, most commonly in the energy, health, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and waste sectors:

- **Burundi** (2021) aims to raise public awareness of the harmful effects of climate change on human health, and by 2025, at least 700 awareness sessions will be conducted in hospitals and health centres. The government also plans to improve knowledge of climate change and prevent related diseases and disaster risk reduction at the community level. By 2025, 5,000 people will have knowledge about climate change and the ability to protect themselves against the risks of climate change.
- **Ecuador** (2019) will formulate and implement a national water culture strategy, which includes ancestral practices and knowledge, as a mechanism that contributes to local awareness of the effects of climate change. The government will also implement communication, dissemination and capacity-building programmes to raise awareness of the effects of climate change among water sector stakeholders and water users.
- The **Republic of Moldova's** (2020) Energy Strategy until 2030 includes measures to promote energy efficiency by educating and training staff in the efficient use of energy and developing a series of educational programmes to raise public awareness, including competitions and demonstrations of the achievements in this area. The strategy will contribute to the viability of the entire energy sector against the risks of climate change.
- **Sri Lanka** (2021) highlights the need for a gradual shift from a waste-generating socio-cultural regime to a new paradigm in which waste disposal is minimized in favour of reuse and reduced consumption. The government will conduct awareness and capacity-building programmes for behavioural changes in waste generators, including the public, and waste management personnel.

05

Training

Lack of skills and capacities hinders the effective implementation of mitigation and adaptation action and, therefore, achieving the objectives and targets of NDCs. In the context of just transition, training and retraining the current and future workforce is also critical for ensuring their access to meaningful and decent work and maximizing the opportunities that the transition presents.

Training seeks to spread specific practical skills that can have an immediate practical application and involves diverse stakeholders. Governments, academic institutions, trade unions, employer organizations, associations, the public and private sectors and communities should all be actively involved and collaborate with each other to support the skilling, reskilling and upskilling of the population, including but not limited to professionals, technicians, farmers, fishers, health personnel, journalists as well as marginalized and vulnerable groups.

In total, 54 per cent of Parties elaborated on training measures in their NDCs, with three main categories of action:

1. Recognizing training as a key tool for achieving **just transition** and fostering **access to green jobs** by affected parts of the current workforce, and investing in creating new green jobs for the new and future workforce, including through enhancing youth employability:

- **Antigua and Barbuda** (2021) seeks to expand its training and skills development programmes in collaboration with training providers to enable the creation of new jobs in the labour force, enhance youth employability and ensure their access to meaningful and decent work.
- In particular, the government aims for 100% of the affected parts of the national workforce to be trained to use new mitigation technologies for a low greenhouse gas emissions transition and to provide an apprenticeship programme for 100% of all students at secondary and tertiary institutions.
- **Argentina** (2021) specifies labour and just transition as one of the elements of its 2030 vision, which will ensure that workers have better access to resources, such as training, allowing them to adapt their activities to climate change. Just transition is also one of the guiding principles of its NDC that prioritizes the relevance of decent work and sustainable jobs, the need for training and acquisition of skills for new jobs, as well as the contributions of the circular, social and informal economy as tools to achieve sustainable development.
- **Australia's** (2022) new policies include a Powering the Regions Fund that prioritizes building the workforce skills and capability required for the clean energy transition. The government will invest a further AUD 100 million to train 10,000 New Energy Apprentices in the jobs of the future and establish an AUD 10 million New Energy Skills Program to provide additional training pathways.
- **Nigeria** (2021) is committed to accompanying its NDC with just transition policies and engaging in social dialogue to maximize employment and economic growth while protecting potentially negatively impacted populations. The government will integrate skills development and retraining into the policies of line ministries to enhance job creation and provisions for a just transition.

2. Addressing the need to train **government officials and policy experts** at all levels in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating climate policies, projects, initiatives and action, as well as in fostering access to means of implementation, including technology and finance:

- **India** (2016 & 2022) has implemented a National Training Policy to move towards a competency-based system, through which each Ministry and Department earmarks about 2.5% of its salary budget for training. A part of this budget is used for training in climate change and sustainable development issues.
- **Mozambique** (2021) aims to mainstream climate change issues in the programmatic content development at the technical staff training institute. For instance, technicians at the central and provincial levels will be trained to operationalize the Mozambique National Strengthened Transparency Framework.
- **Panama's** (2020) commitment to sustainable infrastructure will be supported by the national adaptation planning process financed with preparatory resources from the Green Climate Fund, as well as through a joint programme of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Economy and Finance to train public servants on the incorporation of climate change in the structuring of projects.
- **Suriname** (2020), under the guiding principle of education and training that underlies all its climate policies, states that the government has a positive role to play in the training of government staff and environmental specialists through the development of educational programmes and curricula to stimulate the effective implementation of the policy.

3. Integrating training into **sector-specific** mitigation and adaptation measures to build the capacity of decision-makers, scientific, technical and managerial personnel, particularly in the energy, health, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and disaster risk management sectors:

- The **Comoros** (2021) has set up agriculture projects in which 45% of the beneficiaries are women. The beneficiaries have been made aware of issues related to climate change, have received training and have access to more efficient tools and techniques in agriculture. The government is also committed to improving the participation of women and other vulnerable groups in the planning and decision-making process and capacity-building, such as training.
- **Paraguay** (2021) proposes training as a measure to strengthen resilience in the tourism, health, energy, agriculture and water sectors. For instance, the government will promote training programmes on climate change and its impacts on health for members of regional and district hospitals as well as family health units and promote training of trainers, local promoters and health professionals to provide health services in Indigenous communities.
- **Togo** (2021) proposes measures to enhance sustainable management of traditional energies, such as firewood and charcoal, by training 1,500 charcoal burners on the Casamance-type kiln and training 100 cooperatives in wood-energy entrepreneurship and sustainable management of natural resources. For reforestation and protecting areas with fragile ecosystems, the government will also train 175 nursery workers and provide them with equipment to plant 145,000 trees.
- **Vanuatu** (2022) has committed to increasing the resilience of the agriculture sector by, among others, ensuring that by 2030, at least 30% of producers have undergone agrometeorology training and at least 5% of all training conducted by the government and non-governmental organizations cover food preservation and storage. The government will also conduct training on climate-proofed fruit and vegetable nursery infrastructure and train farmers on the advantages and benefits of using nursery-grown kava planting materials for climate resilience.

06

Public participation

Public participation can ensure ownership and leadership by encouraging people to be more attentive to decision-making and participate in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating climate policies and action. Inclusive and effective social dialogue and stakeholder engagement that leaves no one behind is essential for upholding a whole-of-society approach in achieving the objectives and targets of NDCs.

Governments should seek to integrate diverse perspectives and mobilize the public and private sectors, civil society and the general public. There is a strong need to develop and strengthen processes and mechanisms to foster dialogue, coordination and collaboration among sectors and stakeholders at different levels, which will ensure that the processes are informed and mutually supported by all stakeholders.

In total, 93 per cent of Parties elaborated on public participation measures in their NDCs, with five main categories of action:

1. **Developing NDCs** in an inclusive and participatory manner by organizing consultations through meetings, workshops and public hearings and involving stakeholders in various stages of the NDC process, from awareness-raising and data collection to prioritization and validation:

- **Guinea** (2021), to ensure broad consultations with national stakeholders in collecting data and setting the level of ambition, organized an online survey to "take the pulse" of Guinean society on climate change and action, seven consultation workshops in the regional capitals and a national validation workshop. The government also mobilized a Strategic Steering Committee for the revision of its NDC, which included gender and equity focal points of 10 ministries as well as civil society representatives.
- **Mexico** (2022) carried out a citizen consultation process regulated by law at the national level to update its NDC through workshops and forums with governments, academia, civil society organizations, the private sector, youth representatives and the general public. In addition, online consultation procedures allowed society as a whole to participate in the process of developing climate policies.
- The **United States of America** (2021), through its National Climate Adviser and the White House Office of Domestic Climate Policy, consulted a range of stakeholders, including groups representing environmental advocates and activists, unions, scientists, government leaders, such as governors, mayors and tribal leaders, businesses, schools and institutions of higher education, as well as researchers on pollution reduction.

2. Maintaining a general **participatory approach** in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating climate policies and action, including and beyond NDCs, to strengthen the interest and involvement of all members of society:

- **Mauritius** (2021), after preparing its NDC through a participatory process, states that the government will continue to engage with stakeholders, including businesses, civil society, youth, students, women, senior citizens and the research community, to co-create and co-deliver solutions, amplify awareness, and encourage a whole-of-nation effort to address climate change.

- The **Republic of Korea** (2021) will put in place the right governance, cooperation mechanism and foundation for awareness-raising to mainstream climate change adaptation in policymaking. The Citizens Evaluation Group, comprised of actors at all levels, including experts, localities, industry, civil society and youth, is already set up to engage in all processes of establishing, implementing and evaluating adaptation plans.
- **Solomon Islands** (2021) will support ministries, provincial governments and civil society organizations, including faith-based and private sector organizations, to review and revise their plans, programmes and strategies to include measures to assess vulnerability and identify and implement adaptation and disaster risk reduction action. In particular, inclusive participation of women and youth will be actively encouraged at all levels to build the capacity of vulnerable groups.

3. Establishing **institutional arrangements**, such as commissions, committees and forums that serve as open and accessible multi-stakeholder platforms for public participation and dialogue and aim to reach a whole-of-society consensus on climate ambition and action:

- **Brazil** (2023) highlighted the institutional dialogue between the government and civil society, which takes place through the Brazilian Forum on Climate Change, instituted by Decree 9.082 of 26 June 2017. The Forum aims to raise awareness, mobilize society and contribute to the discussion of actions needed to deal with global climate change in accordance with national policies and international agreements.
- **Somalia's** (2021) National Climate Change Committee has the mandate for coordinating and supervising the implementation of the climate change policy. The Committee is a multi-stakeholder, high-level policy coordination committee that comprises the Prime Minister, Director General of the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change, representatives of other ministries, the private sector and civil society organizations.
- **Türkiye** (2023) held its first Climate Council in February 2022 under the coordination of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, with almost 1,500 stakeholders from various sectors, including public, private, research institutions, non-governmental organizations and youth. 217 recommendations were adopted at the end of the Council to provide a vision for the country's 2053 net zero target, of which 76 were prioritized.

4. Promoting **community-led, community-based or locally-led** climate action, enabling local communities and organizations to take key roles in planning and implementing climate action, and enhance their capacities in climate change response:

- **Liberia** (2021) plans to develop mechanisms for sustainable community management of mangrove areas key to local livelihoods and sustenance. The government will also develop a marine spatial plan and comprehensive, integrated coastal zone management plan, strategy or policy and establish community-based action groups and cross-sectoral working groups to implement them by 2025.
- **Nepal** (2020) aims to comprise at least 60% of its forest area under community-based management by 2030. The management committees of these forests will have 50% women's representation and a proportional representation of Dalits and Indigenous Peoples in key posts. Institutional mechanisms and structures will be in place along with adequate provision of budget to ensure social and environmental safeguards, including free, prior and informed consent, forest tenure and access to finance and technology for local communities, women and Indigenous Peoples.
- **Papua New Guinea** (2020) stresses the importance of working with local communities, youth and women to implement sustainable agricultural and agroforestry practices. Potential approaches include promoting socially inclusive climate-friendly agriculture, promoting women's access to resources, information and climate-smart technologies, enhancing the role of women and youth in agricultural value chains, and promoting inclusive forest rehabilitation and timber management.

5. Designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating climate policies, plans, strategies and action with the engagement and participation of **vulnerable and marginalized groups**, such as children, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and persons with disabilities:

- **Canada** (2021) supports Indigenous approaches and ways of doing by acknowledging Indigenous Knowledge systems as having an equal part in policy development, programmes and decision-making. The government will invest in the agency of Indigenous Peoples, supporting Indigenous-led and delivered solutions, equipping Indigenous Peoples with equitable resources, and ensuring appropriate and timely access to funding to implement self-determined climate action.
- **North Macedonia** (2021) will design a systemic and long-term approach to youth engagement in consultations and decision-making regarding national and local climate policies and action. The government will also incorporate feedback loops into the existing system, allowing for two-way communication and monitoring of climate-related activities designed and implemented by youth and public administration. The Climate Promise project by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported the government in empowering key actors by establishing and strengthening stakeholder engagement platforms and mechanisms. Among others, two Youth Climate Hubs were established in the country, along with an online youth platform to be launched in September 2024, providing easier access to climate-related information and fostering youth participation in climate discussions.

Box 3. Relevant studies

The secretariat and other organizations have carried out various studies to analyze how specific groups of population or ACE topics have been featured in NDCs, which goes beyond involving these vulnerable and marginalized groups in the preparation of NDCs and may provide valuable insights on developing measures to empower them.

- UNICEF (2022) **Children-sensitive** climate policies for every child.
- UNFCCC (2024) Implementation of **gender-responsive** climate policies, plans, strategies and action as reported by Parties in regular reports and communications under the UNFCCC.
- International Labour Organization (2024) Mapping **Just Transition** in NDCs: An overview.
- UNFCCC (forthcoming) Updated mapping of existing policies, actions and communications under the Convention with respect to consideration and engagement of **Indigenous Peoples** and **local communities**.

- **Saint Kitts and Nevis** (2021) commits to developing children, youth, differently abled and elderly persons by encouraging their involvement in the decision-making process on climate change matters. The government recognizes the value of including these groups in future planning processes by providing opportunities for participation in feedback and consultations. Such efforts will increase access to adequate resilient infrastructure and planning, including sustainable energy.
- **Tunisia** (2021) aims to significantly increase women's access to information, decision-making power over practices and management in water resilience policies. In addition, the government will operationalize women's full participation in natural disaster resilience and climate-related risk reduction by taking into account the active and transformative participation of women in the development and implementation of disaster prevention and mitigation strategies.

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07

Public access to information

Public access to information ensures transparency and accountability of climate decision-making and action. It strengthens connections between knowledge production, knowledge sharing and decision-making processes and helps people to respond to and comply with climate policies and action with information and data that is reliable, robust and up to date.

To develop, implement, monitor and evaluate effective climate policies and action and actively engage people in these processes, governments should put in place rules and regulations that provide information and data in a timely, comprehensive, accurate and accessible manner. The private sector should also comply with rules and regulations to disclose information related to climate change that can inform and influence consumer behaviour.

In total, 36 per cent of Parties elaborated on public access to information measures in their NDCs, with three main categories of action:

1. Guaranteeing public access to information and data on climate change initiatives, policies and measures by making it a **principle or priority** in climate decision-making and action to increase public awareness and the engagement of different stakeholders:

- **Honduras** (2021) established the National Safeguards Framework for Climate Change Initiative to assess the potential benefits and risks of implementing programmes or projects in the climate change sector. Participation and access to information are identified as one of the nine social and environmental safeguards, and the government is developing a series of tools to support its implementation, such as a protocol for collecting and systematizing information on safeguards.
- **Kiribati** (2023), as part of the strategies to implement its Joint Implementation Plan, envisions that the population is well-informed, and all stakeholders have access to up-to-date and accurate, contemporary and traditional information on climate change and disaster risk management. The government also aims to develop an integrated and up-to-date national database that is available and accessible to all.
- **Malawi** (2021) plans to develop climate-resilient infrastructure and enhance the climate adaptation capacity of all stakeholders through better access to climate information and early warning systems as well as response mechanisms that can safeguard lives and livelihoods from shocks.

2. Utilizing technologies, such as **databases, websites and systems** to facilitate the provision of climate information, data and statistics to all while also considering user-friendliness, quality of Internet access, literacy level and language issues:

- **Armenia** (2021) will ensure the transparency of its mitigation and adaptation actions by using an open and accessible information system enhanced through strengthened cooperation between public service providers and civil society organizations.

- **Costa Rica** (2020) is committed to ensuring the transparency and openness of key information related to the impacts of climate change and progress in climate action. By 2030, the government will establish platforms to facilitate access to climate information and services for all types of public, using language and examples that are relevant and appropriate for the different realities and worldviews of the country.
- **Indonesia** (2022) established the National Registry System in 2016 as a web-based system for managing data and information on mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. Public access to this website allowed stakeholders to obtain data and information registered in the system. In addition, the government aims to strengthen the nationwide climate vulnerability index data information system, allowing the public to access information about climate change adaptation.
- **South Sudan** (2021), as one of the adaptation strategies for agriculture and fisheries, plans to adopt digital solutions to keep farmers informed about agricultural markets. Specifically, the government will conduct a feasibility study to develop and adopt digital solutions to enable farmers' access to information on agricultural hubs and climate-related information.

3. Providing consumers with information on the sustainability of products and services through **labelling**, such as on appliances and equipment, vehicles and buildings, to facilitate the shift to a more sustainable consumption behaviour:

- The **Bahamas** (2022) has put forward mandatory labelling standards for all appliances as one of the mitigation measures in the energy sector. The energy labelling will allow consumers to make more informed decisions when purchasing products and, with public awareness and education, will assist in the shift to greater energy efficiency.
- **Egypt** (2023) will promote sustainability in existing and new buildings and urban development, particularly by expanding energy efficiency labels and specifications for appliances, eliminating non-energy efficient equipment, and raising awareness among consumers on purchasing alternative energy efficient home appliances.
- **Lesotho** (2018) aims to promote energy efficiency in buildings through targeted programmes that reduce demand in industrial, business, government and residential buildings. In particular, the government will launch programmes such as energy efficiency standards, energy use regulations and labelling.
- **Montenegro** (2021) describes energy labelling and eco-design requirements as a mitigation measure. The government specified that its energy labelling and eco-design requirements reflect the approximation of the European Union's directives and regulations for energy-related products and that economic operators are required to provide customers with information about the energy consumption of the devices.

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08

International cooperation

International cooperation can play a major role in strengthening ACE efforts. Governments and organizations can support each other with resources, technical expertise, ideas and inspiration to develop and implement ACE initiatives and programmes. The implementation of ACE at the regional and international levels, such as international training workshops and conferences, can also strengthen the implementation of climate policies and measures by extension.

Although not many Parties specified action on international cooperation in relation to ACE in their NDCs, the need for stronger international and regional cooperation was highlighted in the gaps and support needs in undertaking activities within the scope of ACE.

In this area, two main categories of action were identified:

1. Referring to **regional conventions and agreements** relating to ACE, which, often with their own implementation and follow-up mechanisms, enable governments and other stakeholders to share commitments and experiences and foster collaboration in respective policy areas:

- In Europe, **Albania** (2021), **Iceland** (2021), **Norway** (2022) and the **United Kingdom** (2022) referred to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, usually known as the Aarhus Convention.
- **Antigua and Barbuda** (2021), **Argentina** (2021), **Costa Rica** (2020) and **Panama** (2020) mentioned the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Ezcazú Agreement.

2. Sharing experiences and building capacities through **education, training, awareness-raising and research initiatives** of international organizations, governments and other stakeholders, which can also provide technical support and various resources for ACE implementation:

- **Nauru's** (2021) partnership with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and the Pacific Community will enable the development of a science-informed educational curriculum that incorporates nationally relevant information about climate change, including the risks posed to the country, as well as strategies to address them.
- **Singapore** (2022) has invited close to 150,000 officials from developing countries to attend capacity-building programmes conducted under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, which included a dedicated Climate Action Package. The package will be succeeded by the Sustainability Action Package, which gives greater focus to the global sustainability agenda and supports capacity-building in areas such as strategies to build resilience for water resources and food security, managing and financing green projects, developing sustainable infrastructure and managing carbon markets.

09

Cross-cutting considerations

As already alluded to in the sections above, it is important for NDCs to be developed and implemented in a participatory, inclusive and gender-responsive manner. The ACE measures included in NDCs must take a whole-of-society approach and consider the special needs and circumstances of **marginalized and vulnerable groups**, such as children, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and persons with disabilities:

- **Belize** (2021) plans to develop and implement a climate finance strategy for 2021–2025 to finance NDCs. As one of the guiding principles in developing the strategy, the government stresses that all groups, such as gender, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities and youth, must be represented in the strategy in a balanced way.
- **Dominica** (2022) identified priority adaptation measures in collaboration with the Kalinago Group to reduce threats to the people, culture, livelihoods and existence of the Kalinago Territory, which include designing and implementing widespread education and awareness programmes and providing training on food preservation, water management and climate change risk management measures.
- **Turkmenistan's** (2023) new edition of the National Strategy on Climate Change reflects provisions on raising awareness of climate change issues among the younger generation and increasing adaptation and resilience to the impacts of climate change on children.
- **Zimbabwe** (2021) will promote the use and roll-out of gender-sensitive climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices. Given that agricultural value chains largely employ women, implementing relevant measures requires actions that consider gender barriers to accessing information and resources, such as lack of collateral and illiteracy, as well as actions that directly address such gender inequalities.

The original guide suggests that countries set up concrete targets for each of the six elements of ACE that reflect the specific national and regional contexts and are integrated into the core components of their NDCs. To assess the effectiveness of ACE implementation, Parties should consider setting up **baselines and targets** to track the progress of their commitments and act on the identified gaps and needs:

- The **Dominican Republic** (2020) has a dedicated component on ACE in its NDC with 23 priority goals. The goals include having developed and executed a strategic public awareness campaign through traditional and digital media explaining NDC and its components by 2022 and ensuring that all university students have the opportunity to take a module related to environmental science and climate change before graduating by 2030.
- The **Republic of Moldova** (2020) recognizes the challenge of insufficient policies and strategies on communication and awareness-raising of climate risks. The government aims to develop a five-year gender-sensitive communication strategy that will include a communication package on national policies for use during community consultations and awareness-raising programmes. The increased climate awareness will be measured against a baseline survey.

- **Nauru** (2021) is undertaking a rigorous, formal assessment of the education system to address systemic challenges. This process will also deliver a revised primary school curriculum developed by Nauruan teachers that is appropriate for Nauruan students. The assessment will integrate, as appropriate, recommendations from the regional education assessment currently being conducted by the Pacific Community.
- In the **United Kingdom** (2022), the consultation process for the Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland in 2021 recognized that a transformational change in skills is required to take advantage of Northern Ireland's scale while addressing the challenges in the skills sector. The government also plans a Skills Audit for 2022-2023 to identify the skills and training needs for energy decarbonization.

The ACE activities and measures are often not costed or mentioned as the support needed. Given the role that ACE plays in delivering mitigation and adaptation actions and in achieving the objectives of NDCs, Parties should **assign the costs and make substantial investments** for ACE to prepare decision-makers, the public and private sectors, individuals and society at large for implementing NDCs:

- **Mauritania** (2021) plans to integrate gender, youth and human rights dimensions in all projects and programmes developed within the framework of NDC by reserving a share of 10% of the budget of each project or programme. This estimate is based on the assessment by the expert working group, taking into account the Doha work programme on Article 6 of the Convention as well as Article 12 of the Paris Agreement.
- **Namibia** (2021) states that costing each action included in its NDC involved identifying the cost for sub-actions, including upfront capital costs, ongoing maintenance costs, capacity-building or training, and the human resources needed to implement the action.
- **Timor-Leste** (2022) states that investment in education services, facilities and national training programmes will be increased year on year by a set percentage agreed by 2023. This initiative will represent a renewed commitment to increasing investment in human capital and livelihood diversification alongside commitments made on healthcare.

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Conclusions

The description of ACE and its six elements in NDCs clearly shows that Parties view them as cross-cutting enablers for achieving the goals and purpose of the Paris Agreement. The role of ACE spans from enhancing overall coordination of climate policies to fostering sector-specific implementation of measures and action, permeating every stage of the NDC process.

To maximize effectiveness in NDC implementation, governments should urgently scale up investment in ACE. The ACE activities often do not require huge financial outlay, and the return on investment is proven to be exceptional, particularly for education and measures that can drive behavioural change.

Several barriers hinder ACE implementation, including insufficient understanding and political will, lack of interministerial and intersectoral coordination, limited technical and financial resources, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation. The NDC update process offers a crucial opportunity, given the importance of the 2025 NDCs in maintaining the 1.5 °C pathways.

Parties should proactively share their experiences and lessons learned from NDC development and implementation. They should also engage with other Parties, experts and organizations to explore ways to strengthen both their NDC and ACE implementation.