

CLIMATE ACTION – TIME TO WALK THE TALK

What is next after the Paris Agreement? Signed by 196 countries, this historic accord to stop global warming and create a low carbon and resilient world creates a whole new challenge: how do countries achieve these goals before our planet hits a point of no return? Finding the answer to this question is exactly why the NDC Partnership was born.

By Pablo Vieira

Different from the 1997 climate accord known as the Kyoto Protocol, the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change now has almost every country in the world on board. At the heart of this diplomatic success are the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which every nation in the agreement must create to outline its specific plans to fight climate change and prepare for the inevitable challenges it presents. The harsh realities of climate change are requiring nations to find creative and collaborative solutions, and, for the first time, they have agreed to develop strategies that build from their own national contexts, challenges and opportunities to achieve a common outcome: to keep global warming below two degrees Celsius.

But now these commitments must turn into action. That is why the NDC Partnership was launched at COP 22 in Marrakech, in November 2016, the first United Nations Climate Conference following approval of the Paris Agreement. The Partnership aims to enhance co-operation so that countries have access to the technical knowledge, capacity building and financial support they need to achieve large-scale climate and sustainable development goals as quickly and effectively as possible, and continue to scale up their ambitions to attain the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Co-chaired by the governments of Germany and Morocco, the Partnership brings together developing and developed nations with international institutions and non-state actors to promote transformative changes. After one year of work, we have among our members 62 countries spanning five regions of the world and nine institutions that include UN agencies and multilateral development banks. The breadth and depth of the Partnership underscores how seriously the world is taking this call to action – and acknowledges that no-one will solve the crisis of anthropogenic climate change alone.

No single country has all the answers. But in our work with country partners, we are beginning to see, and support, the emergence of successful and scalable approaches. Countries

like Colombia, Vietnam, Mali and Pakistan have established or are gearing up to establish climate targets for their ministries and local governments. Uganda is using the country's NDC to ensure that budget requests from all ministries undergo a screening for climate responsiveness and are in alignment with national plans. Kenya is using its revised Climate Change Action Plan to ensure that climate is integrated across its economy.

These are just a small sample of the steps we are seeing taken world-wide as momentum continues to build.

The Partnership supports a growing community of learning that aims to help countries share promising practices with one another and find support from the significant array of resources that continue to be rolled out. For example, three online Navigators launched by the Partnership help users access national and international climate data, funding sources, tools, guides and technical support. The Partnership is a facilitator, supporting multi-stakeholder engagement across governments, regions and the global South to improve co-ordination and enhance responsiveness and efficiency.

Like the NDCs themselves, our work is country-driven. In-country technical assistance is provided based on an individual government's requests and needs: once requested by a member nation, partners come together to produce a partnership plan under the leadership of the government to support NDC implementation in ways that ensure a coherent approach, aligning development and climate action, enhancing NDC integration into national planning and promoting long-term solutions for adapting to the effects of climate change.

Advancing both mitigation and adaptation strategies is critical for success. Efforts to fight further damage from anthropogenic climate



The steering committee of the NDC Partnership.

Photo: NDC Partnership

change are just as important as being able to respond to its inevitable effects. The agricultural sector is one area where these parallel objectives can be seen particularly well. While agriculture and water supply currently represent the top priority of adaptation measures identified by countries in their NDCs, agriculture mitigation measures are also present in the plans of 120 countries out of the 162 that have submitted NDCs to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Countries have come together for a shared purpose: to create new pathways for growth that are low-carbon, environmentally sustainable and resilient. Through the Paris Agreement, they can do this in a way that allows for national ownership in alignment with economic and development goals. In Paris, countries committed to this direction. Now, they must walk the talk, and we are here to support the process.

Pablo Vieira is Global Director of the NDC Partnership Support Unit based in Washington, USA. From 2013-2016 he was Deputy Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development in Colombia.

For more information: www.ndcpartnership.org