

Briefing note

Driving global climate action in the ‘decade of delivery’: Opportunities for COP27

June 2021

Highlights

1. The UN climate process is shifting to implementation, highlighting the value of collaboration between national governments and cities, businesses, investors, and civil society to advance the goals of the Paris Agreement.
2. Launched at the last African COP in 2016, the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action is the mandated process coordinated by the High-Level Climate Champions to accelerate climate action from the whole of society.
3. The COP27 Presidency faces the task of consolidating the considerable advancements in this action agenda made to date, while also helping bridge global processes and climate action on the ground, especially in Africa.

Context: ‘All of society’ implementation of climate action

As the world prepares to convene at COP26 this fall in the United Kingdom, the global effort to address climate change faces an inflection point. The urgent and ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding, science tells us that in order to prevent the most devastating impacts of climate change, current emissions [must be reduced in half by 2030](#) to stave off the worst levels of warming. At the same time, the growing impacts of climate change must be addressed, and funding must be scaled up to meet both of these challenges.

The imperative of this [‘decisive decade’](#) coincides with how COP26 marks the transition from the annual COPs focused primarily on negotiations among national governments, towards the wholesale implementation of countries’ climate targets under the Paris Agreement. This shift towards implementation involves engaging the myriad of other actors across society who play [key roles in translating national commitments into action](#), including cities, states, businesses, investors, civil society, and others. Concrete outcomes on the ground will determine whether or not we succeed during this decisive decade.

A key platform: The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

Recognizing the need to foster a space for collaborative climate action within the UNFCCC process, in 2016 – at the last African-hosted COP in Morocco – member countries created a dedicated platform to showcase and catalyze climate action by all actors. This multi-stakeholder platform, called the [Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action](#), has served as a key bridge between the multilateral negotiations and the groundswell of climate action taking place across the world and across key sectors.

Led by two ‘[High-Level Climate Champions](#)’ appointed by the incumbent and incoming host countries of each COP, the Marrakech Partnership works to catalyze action and ambition among subnational and non-state actors, facilitate capacity building and exchange between national governments and non-state actors, and report, track and communicate progress on climate actions globally.

Key activities of this platform include:

1. Flagship global campaigns: Launched in 2019, the ‘[Race to Zero](#)’ works to trigger more – and more robust – net zero targets among non-state actors. The recently launched ‘[Race to Resilience](#)’ aims to bring about a step-change in action on climate resilience by non-state actors, including mobilizing private sector finance for climate resilience and converging action on sustainable development, health, job creation, biodiversity, and climate resilience around respective co-benefits.
2. Collaboration around thematic areas: Given that resilience and decarbonization look different according to each sector, the Marrakech Partnership organizes its work around key thematic areas, such as water, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, urban transport, land restoration, and finance. The [Climate Action Pathways](#) provide detailed roadmaps for decarbonizing and building resilience in each thematic area.
3. Practical collaboration forums: In contrast to the negotiations, the climate action space within the UNFCCC allows actors to engage peers on transformations in their relevant sector, whether at sectorally-focused [Climate Action Days](#) at COPs, at [Regional Climate Weeks](#) (held annually in Africa, Middle-east and North Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean), or under the recently-launched [Sectoral Breakthroughs](#), which aim to mobilize the critical mass of actors required to exponentially transform each sector.
4. Reporting tools: To showcase existing climate actions and drive the narrative of irreversible momentum, the [Global Climate Action Portal](#) serves as a repository for climate actions globally, organized by country, actor, and sector. The portal, alongside products like the [Yearbook for Global Climate Action](#), serves as an important platform to

showcase climate actions currently being taken, as well as highlight the state of transformation per sector.

The COP27 Opportunity: Accelerating African Climate Action

A key question for the decisive decade is how we ensure global processes are adding value to concrete action on the ground. As the Marrakech Partnership has been granted an additional five-year mandate to 2025, the COP27 host country will be tasked with guiding the global climate action space into its next phase, linking African actors and priorities to global networks and partners.

Naming the next High-Level Climate Champion will offer a key opportunity to deliver on African priorities currently under-represented in global climate action. For example, adaptation and resilience action continue to have less resources and attention when compared to mitigation-related climate action.

Likewise, Africa-based actors are still underrepresented at the global level of climate action. This is a major area of improvement within the increasingly important space of the Marrakech Partnership, as a relative shift away from the multilateral process in favour of a greater focus on national climate action, following the move towards implementation, can potentially widen existing gaps between global North and South (seen in the emerging field of carbon border adjustment mechanisms, for example).

As an African COP, COP27 can help address these imbalances. Doing so can ensure that the growing momentum behind global climate action remains inclusive towards priorities of sustainable development and equitable adaptation among emerging economies and most vulnerable countries.

Resources

Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action:

- [Global Climate Action Platform](#)
- [Race to Resilience](#)
- [Race to Zero](#)
- [Sectoral Breakthroughs](#)
- [Climate Action Pathways](#)
- [Yearbook of Climate Action](#)

Other Resources:

- Hale, Thomas. '[The Role of Sub-state and Non-state Actors in International Climate Processes.](#)' Chatham House, Research Paper. 2018.
- NewClimate Institute, Data-Driven Lab, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, Germany Development Institute, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. '[Global climate action from cities, regions and businesses: Impact of individual actors and cooperative initiatives on global and national emissions.](#)' 2019 edition.
- Hale, Thomas, Sander Chan, Kennedy Mbeva, Manish Shrivastava, Jacopo Bencini, Victoria Chengo, Ganesh Gorti, Lukas Edbauer, Imogen Jacques, Arturo Salazar, Tim Cholibois, Debora Leao Andrade Gouveia, Jose Maria Valenzuela. '[Cooperative climate action: Global performance & delivery in the Global South.](#)' ClimateSouth Project. 2018.
- Hale, Thomas, Alexa Waud, Kaya Axelsson, Brittany King, Katherine Ross, Jingwen Tong, Adriana Unzueta Saavedra. '[Stepping up climate action at home: How local governments, the private sector, and civil society can work domestically to help deliver NDCs and raise ambition.](#)' Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions, Report. 2018.

Who we are: Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions is a series of dialogues that brings together organizations supporting climate action at all levels. Its objectives include:

1. Bringing the groundswell of climate actions from cities, regions, companies, and other groups to a higher level of scale and ambition;
2. Increasing efficient coordination among cooperative initiatives and sub- and non-state networks;
3. Improving analysis and understanding of “bottom up” climate actions;
4. Building a positive narrative of pragmatic, concrete action on climate change; and
5. Identifying opportunities for the groundswell of climate actions and the multilateral process to support and catalyze each other.

Since 2014, Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions has brought together city and regional networks, company networks, cooperative initiatives, governments, international organizations, and researchers to discuss and advance these objectives. By convening the community of actors that make up and support the groundswell of climate actions, we seek to realize the full potential of this extraordinary innovation in global governance.

www.climategroundswell.org