



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

143rd IPU Assembly

Madrid, Spain
26-30 November 2021



Knowledge exchange on climate crisis

Parliaments as agents of change in the climate emergency

Sunday, 28 November 2021, 11:30 – 13:00
Hall Madrid, 1st Floor, Palacio Municipal (IFEMA)

Concept note

Background

The world is not on track in its pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular in delivering on Goal 13 on Climate Action (SDG 13). The scientific findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), including its Working Group 1 contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report in August 2021,¹ show that Earth is at the doorstep of 1.5°C of warming, confirming the anthropogenic roots of climate change, with greenhouse gas emissions from human activity responsible for approximately 1.1°C of the heating.

This year, all signatories to the Paris Agreement were required to submit enhanced and updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to reflect revised plans that address the changed circumstances created by and the impacts of the pandemic. However, a recent study conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)² shows that new and updated climate commitments are not ambitious enough, leaving the world on track for a global temperature rise of at least 2.7°C in this century.

Science has spoken loud and clear and the clock is ticking: irreversible change is already underway, and action needs to be taken now to avert a climate catastrophe. This time delay may turn into an abyss, unless we raise our ambitions, make new plans, put in place and implement new policies in the next eight to nine years.

With the still on-going COVID-19 pandemic, a global health crisis that affects everyone and that has exposed the fragility of our societies and economies to global shocks, the global picture may no longer be that clear. Post-pandemic recovery and rebuilding strategies provide an essential opportunity to advance green solutions to both national challenges and common international objectives that must not be missed. National recovery plans need to be inclusive and in line with principles of a circular economy to achieve the climate goals of the Paris Agreement adopted by the international community and the targets of SDG 13. It is essential to ensure that recovery packages are aligned with NDCs and that nature is placed at the heart of innovative, sustainable approaches to economic recovery, climate mitigation, and adaptation strategies.

¹ IPCC, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge University Press, 2021): <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-i/>. In Press.

² UNEP, UNEP DTU Partnership, *Emissions Gap Report 2021: The Heat Is On – A world of climate promises not yet delivered* (Nairobi, 2021): <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2021>.

The silver lining is that we can face this planetary crisis with action and strong political leadership. The role of parliamentarians in this respect is crucial. Parliaments can act as agents of change and support the translation of the commitments made under the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda into national-level action. This is where parliaments count. With their distinctive legislative mandate, parliamentarians are instrumental in ensuring coherence among global commitments and national legislation. They can also ensure adequate funding is allocated in support of climate action and ensure oversight over governments' actions in addressing the climate emergency.

Objectives

The event aims to inform parliamentarians with the latest findings on the topic and provide guidance so that they can effectively contribute to the implementation of their countries' revised NDCs and act as agents of change to achieve the SDG 13 targets. It will also be an opportunity to familiarize participants with the outcomes of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) and the parliamentary meetings³ held in the context of the Conference. Furthermore, it will provide space for delegates to share experiences and best practices on national climate legislation and the creation of institutional arrangements to address climate change.

The knowledge exchange aims to:

- To inform delegates about the latest status of climate change science and negotiations and so enhance their ability to adequately factor in and translate international commitments into national plans.
- To assist delegates in their endeavours to contribute to the implementation of their country's NDCs by promoting the alignment of international and national development plans.
- To allow delegates to exchange views on climate action and learn on SDG 13 best practices.

Guiding questions

- How can parliaments and parliamentarians ensure that national recovery and development plans take into consideration the risks posed by climate change to the national economy and population and include provisions for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction?
- What national efforts are being undertaken by parliaments to promote the alignment of international and national development plans?
- What actions has your parliament taken to act as agents of change in the climate emergency response?

Modalities

The duration of the overall event will be 90 minutes.

The event will briefly introduce the latest scientific assessments on climate change, including its implications, potential future risks, and viable adaptation and mitigation options, as well as provide an update on the status on climate negotiations. It will be followed by a moderated panel discussion on the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in climate action, putting forward inspiring stories, and good practices that can be replicated and scaled-up to address existing gaps and constraints.

³ The IPU and the Italian Parliament co-organized a Pre-COP26 Parliamentary Meeting in Rome, Italy, as part of a series of pre-COP26 events hosted by Italy. This was followed by a Parliamentary Meeting at COP26 in Glasgow, co-organized with the British Group of the IPU. More information about the meetings is available at; Rome: <https://www.ipu.org/event/parliamentary-meeting-26th-united-nations-climate-change-conference-cop26>, Glasgow: <https://www.ipu.org/event/pre-cop26-parliamentary-meeting>.

Agenda

Introduction on the topic - followed by Q&A, 30 mn

Presenters:

- **UNEP** representative – *on latest climate findings and reports*
- **UNFCCC** representative – *on COP 26 Negotiations and NDCs*
- **IPU** representative – *on outcomes of Pre-COP 26 and COP 26 Parliamentary Meetings*

Q&A

Short [video](#) *What will the world look like if we miss emissions targets?*

- **IPU** representative – *on preliminary findings of desk review of parliamentary practices on SDG 13*

Panel discussion – followed by Q&A, 45 – 60 mn

Q&A and interventions from the floor

The IPU Secretariat kindly asks delegates interested in participating to register for the knowledge exchange at their earliest convenience. Delegates should send an email to the IPU Secretariat at: climate@ipu.org and postbox@ipu.org.