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Nusa Dua Declaration

Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change

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We, Members of Parliament, gathered together at the 144th IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, recognize the urgent need to address the climate crisis. Climate change poses an existential threat to humankind and immediate action must be taken to minimize its worst impacts.

Our current economic structures, energy use practices and food systems are causing devastating consequences in all regions of the world, including hotter temperatures, an increase in extreme weather events, sea level rise and the loss of biodiversity. Flooding and cyclones have caused large-scale population displacement in South Asia. Recurrent droughts in East and Southern Africa have repeatedly destroyed crops and caused widespread food insecurity. Rising sea levels are reducing the land mass of small, low-lying nations across the Pacific.

The recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) show that the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, or even 2 degrees Celsius, will be unreachable unless there are immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions,¹ and that irreversible damage from climate change is already occurring.² The burning of fossil fuels, increased livestock farming and deforestation are all major causes of rising emissions. Implementation of the Paris Agreement,³ the landmark legally binding international climate change treaty, is critical for ensuring that countries make rapid and deep cuts in their emissions so that we reach a climate neutral world by 2050.

As parliamentarians, we must ensure that the climate commitments outlined in the Paris Agreement and other international agreements, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals, are met. As representatives of the people, we must ensure that the needs of our populations, particularly those on the front lines of climate change, are addressed. We acknowledge that there are costs to addressing climate change, but the costs of inaction are far greater.

The science is clear and instructive: to keep the 1.5 degrees target within reach, we must achieve net zero emissions by producing less carbon than the amount we take out of the atmosphere by the second half of this century. We must demonstrate strong political leadership in setting the framework required for net zero emissions.

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/>

² https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg2/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf

³ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

Inadequate climate finance remains a major obstacle to effective climate action, particularly for developing countries. Developed countries should urgently fulfil their promises to address this funding gap, namely the US\$ 100 billion pledge for climate finance by 2020 that is generally understood to have been missed. Ample, sustainable and predictable climate finance, particularly for adaptation, needs to be provided to developing countries in light of the findings outlined in the recently released IPCC Working Group 2 report.⁴ It is essential that funding for mitigation is matched by equal resources for adaptation. The scaling-up of adaptation investments should prioritize least developed countries, small island developing states, and other high-risk countries, including those that are landlocked, mountainous or low-lying. Developing countries often have very low greenhouse gas emissions yet pay a higher price for climate change. Developed countries have the imperative responsibility not only to reduce their own emissions but also to ensure that sufficient resources and technologies to combat climate change are made available to developing countries with low emissions.

We therefore pledge to use all powers at our disposal to ensure that there are effective laws and appropriate budgets to bolster climate action, including supporting the transition to clean energy and strengthening adaptation. We must also scrutinize our governments' response to the climate crisis and hold them accountable over their actions to implement international and national climate change agreements and policies.

As representatives of the people, we commit to meeting the needs of our constituents, particularly those most at risk, resulting from climate change impacts. We recognize the need to hold open, constructive dialogues with our constituents to discuss emerging climate issues. We must also engage the public, including youth and the civil society groups that represent them, in formal parliamentary processes including hearings and examination of new climate legislation.

Strengthening national-level action to meet global commitments

Parliaments have a responsibility to ensure that robust and ambitious national laws on climate change are put in place that are directly aligned with the Paris Agreement, including its Nationally Determined Contributions, the Sustainable Development Goals, and national climate and development policies and strategies. Progress on climate action and sustainable development is interdependent. We therefore pledge to adopt and implement laws that are mutually reinforcing in those respects.

Countries around the globe have expressed the importance of stronger climate action, yet the recent 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) reaffirmed that the current level of ambition is insufficient, and that not enough is being done on implementation in order to translate commitments into action. From now on, we must adopt national laws and policies designed to close the gap between ambition and implementation.

To increase ambition, we commit to enshrining a net zero emissions target in law and to implementing a legal framework on emissions. National legislative and policy frameworks on climate change must include clear, time-bound targets to facilitate oversight and accountability.

Accelerating a clean energy transition for a green COVID-19 recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching health, social and economic consequences. Despite these challenges, the pandemic recovery period presents an opportunity to introduce fundamental changes to our current unsustainable energy systems. Such changes are desperately needed if we want to contain rising temperatures before it is too late.

We must accelerate the clean energy transition to mitigate climate change. This requires a major reallocation of resources from highly polluting energy sources, such as fossil fuels, to renewable energy. The laws we introduce as parliamentarians must incentivize green investment and prioritize budget allocations for low-carbon activities, including as part of COVID-19 recovery packages. We must raise awareness of the economic benefits of a clean energy transition and its potential to create millions of new jobs. We should phase out fossil fuel subsidies and increase the cost of emission allowances. The current energy crisis, in which we are witnessing the soaring prices of fossil fuels, makes the case for transitioning to renewable energy even more urgent. As part of the process, we may wish to explore the use of nuclear energy as a clean source of energy.

⁴ https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg2/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf

We must match our efforts to scale up renewable energy investments with an equal commitment to increase universal access to affordable and clean energy, with particular attention being paid to access for the poorest groups in society. The energy transition should be just and inclusive and not have disproportionate impacts on developing countries, nor on marginalized or underrepresented groups. We must consider the potential economic implications of a clean energy transition for the most vulnerable and support the creation of alternative employment opportunities for people who have been employed in the fossil fuel industry. A green economy also needs to be a fair economy.

Towards inclusive climate action

Climate change does not affect everyone equally. Marginalized and underrepresented members of society, including women, youth, indigenous people, minorities and people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by climate change as a result of unequal access to socio-economic and political rights. The climate crisis is exacerbating existing inequalities. Climate change can reinforce harmful gender norms and power dynamics that adversely impact women and girls, thereby heightening their risk of food insecurity and gender-based violence.

We must respond to the needs of the most at-risk members of the population through positive climate action. We therefore pledge to approach the legal framework on climate action through a socially inclusive, pro-poor and gender-responsive lens so that it may be truly comprehensive, effective and sustainable. Research indicates that greater representation of women in national parliaments leads countries to adopt more stringent climate change policies.⁵ However, there is currently a lack of women in national and global policy spaces. We are committed to increasing women's political participation in the interests of both gender equality and inclusive climate action.

We should also adopt inclusive climate solutions that simultaneously reduce the exposure of marginalized and underrepresented groups to climate change, while also empowering them to become climate leaders themselves. In many parts of the world, youth are already leading the climate movement and we must strengthen intergenerational dialogue to ensure that the justifiable demands of youth for a healthy planet are met.

The climate crisis is affecting human rights. Climate change is forcing people to uproot their lives and move, particularly those living in resource-scarce conflict situations. As such, concerns over climate displacement and climate migration are growing. As of 2020, there were an estimated seven million internally displaced people due to disasters, including those caused by climate change, most notably in Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas.⁶ The rights of persons displaced due to climate change must be respected. In October 2021, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a landmark resolution that recognizes for the first time that having a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a human right.⁷ Additionally, young people and future generations have the same right to a healthy planet as generations before them, and yet this right is being grossly violated. To promote environmental and intergenerational justice, we pledge to take account of these issues, reflect them in our national laws and guarantee accountability when such rights are violated.

Promoting greener parliaments

To further encourage sustainability, we must work to reduce our own carbon footprints at an institutional level. We must lead by example and reduce the emissions of our own parliaments, including through changes to energy usage and procurement practices, by building sustainability, and the optimized use of digital tools and technology. By greening our operations and practices as institutions, we will further demonstrate our commitment to climate action. To further boost climate awareness, parliaments can implement climate training for parliamentarians and staff, and hold regular knowledge exchanges with experts on climate change.

⁵ <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/09/countries-with-more-female-politicians-pass-more-ambitious-climate-policies-study-suggests/>

⁶ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>

⁷ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/289/50/PDF/G2128950.pdf?OpenElement>

Enhancing regional and global cooperation for joint climate solutions

Climate change knows no boundaries and its impacts do not respect national borders. International cooperation is therefore crucial, particularly for addressing transboundary climate risks. In view of the importance of strong regional and global inter-parliamentary cooperation, we will continue to discuss shared challenges, foster innovation and build partnerships for jointly tackling the climate crisis.

National, regional and global peace and security are paramount for effectively addressing climate change. Conflict and war have profound negative environmental consequences and divert vital resources from climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Recent geopolitical developments have also heightened the risk of nuclear incidents, by design or miscalculation, with potential catastrophic impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity. Therefore, as noted in our own Resolution⁸ adopted in Geneva in 2014, we must make the abolition of nuclear weapons a priority.

We recognize the value of convening parliamentary meetings at the annual United Nations Climate Change Conferences to amplify the parliamentary voice in global climate change negotiations. These meetings provide a key opportunity to reflect on progress made in implementing the Paris Agreement and to identify ways to further scale up parliamentary action for the climate. In the lead up to the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) that will be hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt in November 2022, we reiterate the importance of delivering on the outcomes of COP26 and call upon parties to expedite implementation of their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement and to further revise and update their NDCs, as well as to work towards the setting of a post-2025 climate finance goal.

To further accelerate climate action, we will also strive to strengthen partnerships with key international organizations and forums working on climate change, including the Climate Vulnerable Forum, the Global Center on Adaptation, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Environment Programme.

We also recognize the importance of convening parliaments regionally and sub-regionally to exchange insights on context-specific challenges and good parliamentary practices on climate change. In line with the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy,⁹ which prioritizes climate action, we urge the IPU to continue bringing parliaments together to advance climate knowledge and build parliamentary capacity to legislate and oversee their governments' response to climate change. Parliaments should maximize their participation in the IPU's work by being accountable to one another and by striving to minimize their carbon footprint through increased use of virtual technology for parliamentary exchanges. We also encourage the IPU to develop a robust climate policy for its own activities.

Parliaments also need to build a stronger relationship with the private sector, including with transnational corporations. It is essential to assess the responsibility of the private sector for the negative environmental impacts resulting from corporations' global practices. We must also support further innovation by the private sector to find novel solutions to mitigate global warming and reduce emissions, including through new technologies.

As Members of Parliament, we strongly and solemnly agree that it is only through international cooperation on climate change that we can address increasing risks, build solidarity and find lasting concrete solutions and possibilities for a more sustainable world for future generations.

⁸ <http://archive.ipu.org/conf-e/130/Res-1.htm>

⁹ <https://www.ipu.org/file/13678/download>