



30 July 2020

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions submission to Champions' call for inputs on how to improve the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

We are pleased to submit this response to the High-level Champions' Letter of 27 March 2020 on behalf of Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions (www.climategroundswell.org), a series of convenings that aims to improve the role of sub- and non-state climate action within the UNFCCC process.

This joint submission is complementary to any individual submissions sent in by the organizations that participate in Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions meetings.

This submission draws on discussions convened by Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions over the past years, and in particular on an "online atelier" held May 2020. A [summary report](#) from this event is available on the Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions website.

Below we respond to each of the Champions' four questions.

In addition, we emphasize the value of continuing this conversation in the run-up to COP26. Pursuant to decision 1/CP.25's request to the Champions to explore opportunities to improve the Marrakech Partnership, we see value in building on this round of consultations with further practical steps linking the immediate, urgent work of the Partnership to not just further discussion of how to improve it, but also active experimentation. Next steps might include regular regional dialogues on climate action, piloting some of the best ideas that emerge from this consultation, and discussing the longer-term vision for, e.g., core activities like the Race to Zero campaign or the Pathways even as we build them up. Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions remains committed to helping convene the climate action community--both Parties and non-Parties--to advance this essential work.



Q1. How would you define success of the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership in terms of enhancing ambition in the next 5 years and beyond?

Success should be defined primarily in terms of *action*: concrete commitments, plans, implementing measures, and especially outcomes that promote the goals of the Paris Agreement.

As the UNFCCC process shifts to implementation, and as the COVID-19 crisis highlights the urgency of building healthy, resilient economies, multilateralism will be judged not solely by negotiated outcomes but more critically by how quickly it can deliver immediate action, in line with science, to deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The UNFCCC is not an implementing agency, but in this new phase of the climate regime it can facilitate implementation by using its convening power to promote learning and cooperation around action. Global Climate Action (GCA) arrangements in the UNFCCC do not themselves “deliver” implementation—that is done by actors (e.g. governments, local authorities, multilateral organizations, non governmental organizations, academia, civil society). However, GCA provides a critical connective tissue that helps all of us do more, faster. In this way, the GCA has the transformational potential to become a key platform within the UNFCCC process for driving implementation. The period 2020-2025 represents a critical window to deliver on this promise.

Specifically, the GCA should target the following objectives and outcomes 2020-2025, organized around four core functions. Delivering on these would represent success for the GCA, and a great boost to efforts under the UNFCCC to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

A. Catalyzing action

1. **Delivery:** Actors’ and initiatives’ short-term goals and interim targets (e.g. in the 2020-2025 period) are achieved and reported in key areas. Concrete results (lower emissions, more resilience, etc) are achieved and reported for longer-term goals.
2. Exponential growth in both the number and range of non-Party actors involved in climate action (across the entire ecosystem, not necessarily in GCA meetings), including in “surprising areas”, and ambition rises across this group. For example, “Race to Zero” campaign delivers on ambition to 10x net zero pledges.
3. Substantive engagement of Parties across the world, including and especially from line ministries vital to the various transformational pathways (e.g. transport, energy, finance, commerce, etc.), in GCA activities.

B. Facilitating capacity building and information exchange between Parties and non-Parties

1. Sectoral pathways become common roadmaps for implementation, attracting substantive engagement from key actors.



2. New or updated NDCs (pre-COP26 and for COP 31) fully incorporate and build on achievements and opportunities generated by GCA domestically and internationally.

C. Enhancing reporting and communication

1. GCA outcomes are well tracked and reported; progress is assessed and actors feel accountable for delivering on their pledges.
2. Decisive contribution to 2023 Global Stocktake.
3. GCA outcomes should be central to the 'narrative' of the COP, receiving significant public and media attention.
4. GCA gives the world hope regarding the future of the climate and our ability to work together to tackle shared challenges.

D. Strengthening organizational dimensions

1. While each successive Champion brings additional value, GCA strategy remains stable and cumulative.
2. GCA work is sufficiently resourced and stable to allow effective planning.
3. GCA governance inclusive and "co-owned" by all stakeholders.

Q2. How can the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership add the most value and complement existing efforts to drive ambition and transformation in the next 5 years and beyond?

The GCA in the UNFCCC is only part--albeit a critical part--of the wider landscape of climate action. It should therefore focus on those areas where it is best positioned to add most value.

Catalyzing action

- Mobilizing action is the core task of the Champions. The Champions role, with proper support and strategy, can and should do much more in 2020-2025 than was done 2015-2020.
- The Chile-UK Champions team has seen a step-change in resources, and put forward ambition plans like the Climate Ambition Alliance, 1.5C Pathways, and Race to Zero campaign. This provides a critical test of the potential of the Champions role, though also raises questions around how it can be sustained going forward (see below).
- The **Race to Zero** represents a promising way to build a “whole” that is larger than the sum of the parts, demonstrating a potential model for how the Champions can add value to the existing landscape. Such “umbrella” campaigns allow the Champions to support and steer existing efforts without seeking to control or create redundancies.
- **1.5C Pathways:** The value of 1.5 Pathways is to unite a diverse array of key actors -- Parties and non-Parties--around a common vision for how a key sector can reach net zero. In this way, pathways are guiding documents, not technocratic manuals. They serve to align actors’ expectations and create a bridge/platform to connect the ecosystem of actors around a specific thematic area. Given this function, the value of Pathways is just as much in the process around their creation, and how widely the vision they present is shared, as in the content of the document. To succeed, they must engage the key actors relevant to a given sector. There remains an open question about how to ensure processes around the pathways engage with the key sectoral actors while also remaining inclusive.

Q3. How can the High-Level Champions enhance collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders to further catalyze global climate action?

- a. **How can Parties benefit from the action resulting from the Global Climate Action movement and how can this action best be reflected in the work of the High-Level Champions?**
- b. **How can the COP and the UNFCCC process be more effective in the collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders to further catalyze global climate action?**
- c. **How could the High-Level Champions through their work in accelerating action and ambition of non-Party stakeholders most effectively contribute to the global stocktake of the Paris Agreement?**

Capacity building and information exchange between Parties and non-Parties should be seen as a core function of GCA. The logic behind this function is that action generates learning, which, properly diffused, can empower and inspire more action. If all actors are able to share and learn from others' experiences, they will be able to take more action more quickly and effectively, to locate needed resources, etc. While learning and information exchange occur through many processes, GCA has a unique value-add given 1) the many different actors and sectors involved; 2) the link between Parties and non-Parties; 3) the legitimacy of the UNFCCC. Through these processes, NDCs are able to take full advantage of the opportunities identified by GCA.

This process of mutual learning to empower action can be delivered through various channels:

- The **thematic areas** within GCA can help create communities of practice to advance capacity building and information exchange. However, there is also a risk that dividing GCA into themes creates new "silos" that impede productive connections and information exchange. It therefore remains an open question about how to make thematic areas most effective.
- The **1.5C Pathways** also can serve as vehicles for capacity building and information exchange (see above).
- **Regional Climate Weeks** allow all actors to meet to discuss experiences and generate practical collaborations on core topics most relevant to the region. To date, many have seen strong participation of national government officials from line ministries. These meetings offer a very promising venue for development, and should therefore be enhanced.
- **"Climate Action Implementation Labs"** could provide a new format for strengthening action through exchange and capacity building. These would be demand-driven meetings between a Party and non-Party actors. Parties could request targeted support from the GCA community on particular topics of interest to them, drawing on existing needs statements. The GCA would then reach across the global climate action community to provide countries with a curated series of engagements from most

relevant non-Party actors and initiatives. Party participants would be drawn from implementation agencies, line ministries, etc. Such labs could also be linked to existing lines of support (e.g. via the NDC Partnership).

- **Ministerial dialogues at COPs** could bring sectoral ministers (e.g. finance ministers, transport ministers, etc.) together around specific climate action matters. These events would not be a negotiating forum. Instead, they would be small scale and results-oriented around very specific climate action priorities.
- **Promulgate methods and best practices for how Parties can mobilize and draw on non-Parties** in-country and beyond to facilitate implementation. Many Parties have developed innovative and effective ways to engage with their domestic non-Party actors in the development and implementation of NDCs. GCA can help Parties share these experiences with each other.

Reporting and communication is also a critical tool for empowering collaboration. Measuring the **scale, potential, and achievements** of action communicates a clear message of inevitable transformation. While the GCA is now tracking scale and potential of climate action relatively well, primarily through the Global Climate Action Portal (NAZCA), more is needed on tracking progress. The Camda community is working on this issue, and expects strong benchmarking of progress on GCAP doing forward.

One important venue for efforts to track progress is the **Global Stocktake in 2023**. GCA could help support a strong Stocktake by performing the following functions:

- Facilitate non-Party participation in GST dialogues
- Convene Talanoa Dialogue style meetings in lead-up to GST
- Every five years, publish a “Global Climate Action Stock Take Report” (a kind of ‘super yearbook’) as part of GST. The focus of this document would be on where and how climate action creates greater opportunities for further action, and therefore enhances ambition.

Q4. On the basis of experience so far, how can the Marrakech Partnership be improved for enhancing ambition, including through new and existing tools?

Going forward, we should not see GCA as a “business as usual” and siloed process specific to non-state actors. Rather, it is the space for accelerating action from all actors, including Parties, through inclusive and impactful cooperation. Furthermore, the “action” focus of GCA also provides a natural bridge within the UNFCCC to goals like good health and wellbeing, decent work and economic growth, biodiversity, partnerships for the goals and other SDGs, now of even greater importance as the world seeks to build resilience out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delivering on this vision will require fine-tuning the organization of the GCA, and providing more stable and predictable resources.

- Reviving the ‘Friends of the Champions’ group can help create stability and continuity. This group should include a link to the UNSG’s team to ensure high-level coordination.
- Establishing national focal points for the GCA could help build connections in countries that have not yet been deeply engaged in the process
- **Most importantly, the Champions role requires long-term, stable, regular budget support.** Over the past five years, significant variation has undermined the effectiveness of this role. Going forward, a permanent Champions support team in the secretariat should support the Champions to set GCA agenda and workplan, complemented by contributions from Presidencies and the broader climate action community
- Secretariat staff can be complemented by rolling secondments from the GCA community, with dedicated resources to support secondments from GCA actors in the Global South
- In sum, GCA can be best resourced as a collaboration built on 3 pillars:
 - The core UNFCCC budget supporting the Secretariat GCA team;
 - Regular secondments / in-kind contributions from the climate action community;
 - Additional contributions from Presidencies based on their priorities;
- The first two pillars will help provide continuity from year to year, while the third pillar will allow individual Presidencies to contribute additional resources during their tenure.
- Strategic communications is a key area where more staffing support is needed. GCA should also coordinate with communications professionals across the climate action community.
- Funding to support non-Party actors from developing countries to participate in GCA activities is crucial for broadening the GCA community to make it more effective.

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