

National action on climate change now covers 89% of GHG emissions, spurred by international climate agreements

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Context

The Paris Agreement of 2015 marks a shift in how the global response to climate change is governed. Supported by various types of climate actions taken nationally, the Paris Agreement provides an overarching global response to addressing climate change. In terms of regulation aimed at mitigation, these climate action types can be binding *legislations*, executive led non-binding *strategies*, specific *targets* aimed at reducing GHG emissions, promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency. These actions both inform as well as complement the Paris Agreement to produce a hybrid architecture that has inbuilt feedback mechanism – the global stocktake exercise – to measure the adequacy of these national actions for achieving the goals and objectives of the Paris Agreement.

In this context, our findings of the global update of national climate change mitigation legislation, strategy and targets in 194 countries for the period 2000 to 2017, provides an overview of where nations stand in terms of setting up formal institutions for addressing climate change (Iacobuta et al. 2018). As our feedback to the Talanoa process we provide findings of our study to inform the question ‘where are we?’

Where are we? – Key findings

Our study tracked the adoption of economy-wide legislation, strategies and targets for climate change mitigation from 2000 to 2017 in 194 countries, accounting for nearly all the countries that are Party to the UNFCCC. Below, we provide key findings on the spread of climate legislation, strategy, GHG emissions targets, renewable energy targets, and national energy efficiency targets.

Climate legislation and strategy coverage

- In 2017, 94 countries had national climate legislation or strategy in place. These 94 countries accounted for 48% of all the countries, 70% of global emissions (Figure 1) and 76% of global population.

- Developed countries (listed in Annex I of the UNFCCC) tend to have climate legislation in place. In contrast, developing countries (non-Annex I parties) are more inclined to put in place climate strategies.
- In developing countries, 78% of the population and 77% of GHG emissions were covered by legislation or strategy in 2017. The corresponding figures for developed countries stood at 70% and 55% in terms of population and emissions respectively.

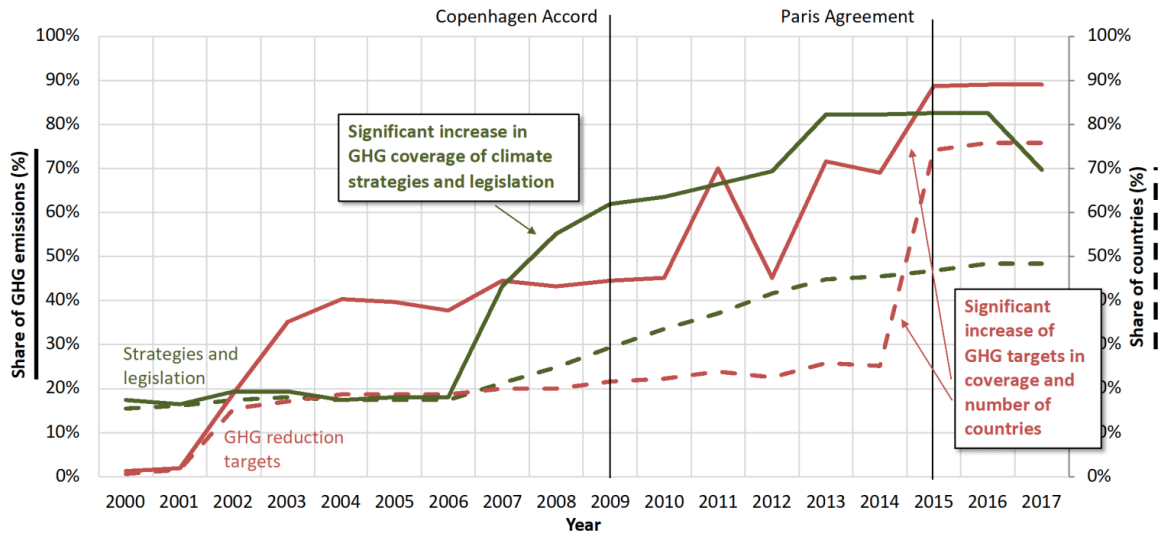


Figure 1: Development of climate legislation / strategies and GHG reduction targets

Greenhouse gas targets

- Economy-wide GHG reduction targets adopted by countries witnessed a large increase in the build-up to the 2015 Paris Agreement. 76% of countries (75% not counting USA) now have emissions targets in place, a steep increase from only 25% in 2014.
- Taken together, these GHG targets cover 89% of global GHG emissions (76% not counting USA) and 90% of the global population (86% not counting USA) in 2017.
- While 90% of developed countries' targets were enshrined in legislation and 10% in executive strategies by 2017, only 4% of the developing countries took the legislative approach while 65% took an executive approach.

Renewable energy and electricity targets

- Country coverage of renewable energy targets saw a steady increase throughout the last decade up to 2017, when 71% of countries had either legislative or executive renewable energy and/or electricity targets in place.
- 93 countries have renewable energy targets whereas 105 countries have electricity targets (Figure 2).
- These targets are more commonly framed as executive (44%) than as legislative action (27%). These targets are adopted in 90% of developed countries and 65% of developing countries by 2017.
- By 2017, 87% of the global population lived in a country that adopted renewable energy and/or electricity target, and these jurisdictions accounted for 79% of emissions, a steep rise from 2007 (See Figure 2).

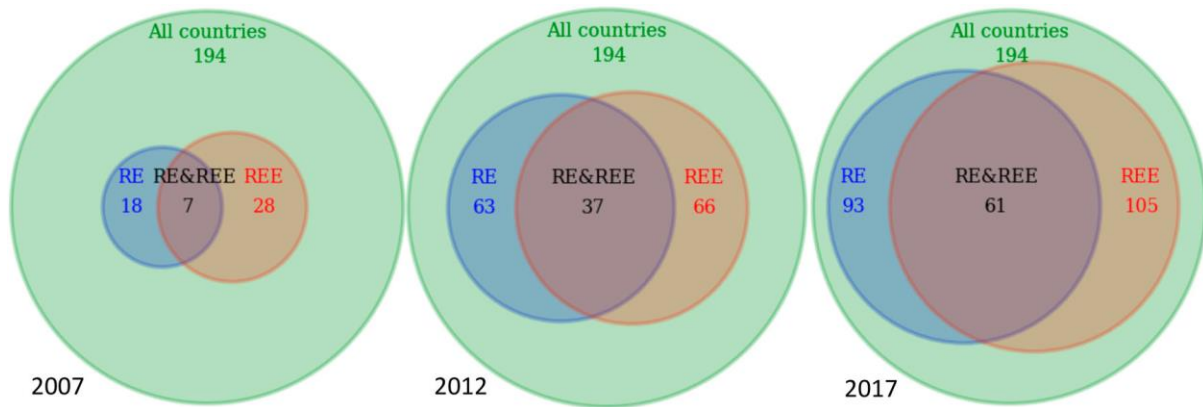


Figure 2: Number of countries with renewable energy targets (RE) and with renewable electricity targets (REE). The intersection between RE & REE circles shows the number of countries with both RE and REE targets.

Energy efficiency targets

- Despite data coverage limitations on energy efficiency targets (56% countries have no information), we found that 59 analysed countries adopted this type of targets, amounting to 69% of countries for which energy efficiency target data was available.
- Of the 30% of countries reporting energy efficiency targets in 2017, only 6% countries reported legislative targets.
- However, energy efficiency targets provided coverage of 47% of total population and 73% of total emissions, indicating that large emitters are more likely to adopt energy efficiency targets.

Taken together, a wide spread of national GHG, renewables and energy efficiency targets can be observed worldwide in 2017 (Figure 3), with a vast majority of countries having at least one of the three target types in place.

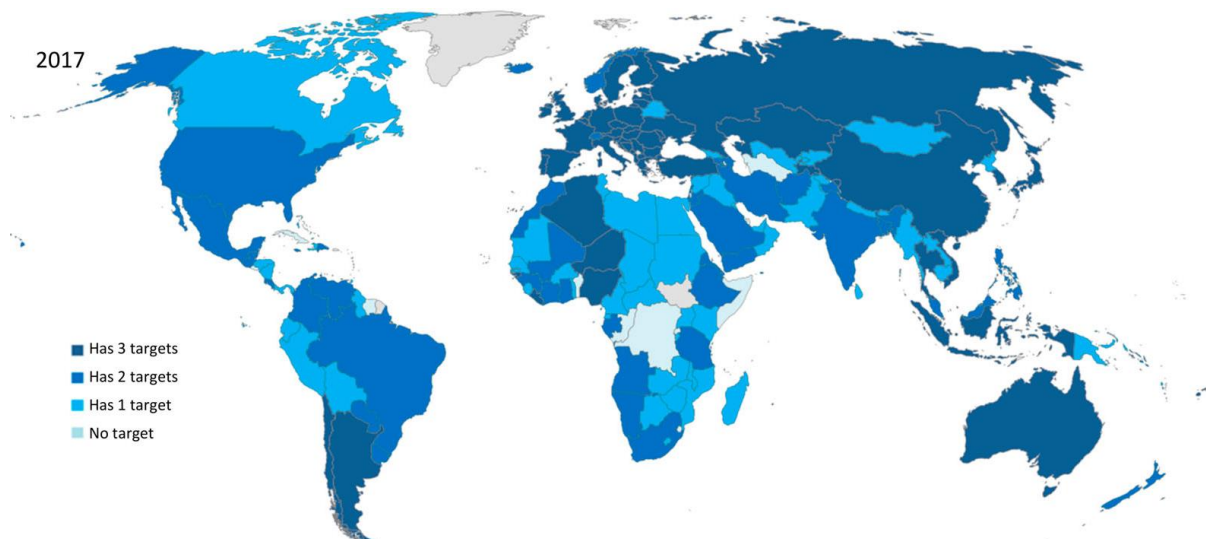


Figure 3: Number of target types (GHG, renewable and energy efficiency) in 2017. This figure is only indicative of the wide spread of targets worldwide

The analysis provides a comprehensive coverage of where we stand in terms of national climate change mitigation legislation, strategy and targets across 194 countries in 2017. The paper and the corresponding data present the trends in the increasing coverage of climate action between 2007 and 2017. It also brings to fore the importance of the international processes in stimulating or enabling national action. The iterative dynamic between international and national policy-making processes is crucial to ensure that the world remains on track to be within the 2⁰C or 1.5⁰C goal as prescribed by science.

References:

Iacobuta, Gabriela, Navroz K. Dubash, Prabhat Upadhyaya, Mekdelawit Deribe, and Niklas Höhne. 2018. "National Climate Change Mitigation Legislation, Strategy and Targets: A Global Update." *Climate Policy* 18 (9): 1114–32.
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