

Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)

Statement at SBSTA 64

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Since its inception, the Convention has identified systematic observation as a fundamental commitment of Parties. This commitment, which is an international and intergovernmental effort, is essential for assessing changes in the climate system and informing the work of the Convention.

Climate observations remain key to ensuring decisions under the Convention are grounded in the observed reality of the climate system and its continuing evolution.

For more than 30 years, the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) has supported Parties by identifying collective global requirements for monitoring Essential Climate Variables (ECVs), assessing the adequacy of climate observations through periodic Status Reports, and preparing Implementation Plans to help address critical gaps.

The relevance of climate observations continues to grow in both national and international policy frameworks, particularly in support of global reporting such as the WMO Global and Regional State of Climate reports, national reporting, the Global Stocktake, and the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement. GCOS is also contributing to the Global Goal on Adaptation, by helping identify how ECVs can support adaptation indicators.

At COP30 in Belém, GCOS highlighted growing risks to climate observations, including observed reductions in some in situ networks and concerns around single points of failure in the global observing system.

GCOS is currently preparing its next Status Report, to be published in early 2027. The report will identify emerging threats to the continuity of climate observations, as well as persistent gaps. GCOS will also simultaneously publish a high-priority action plan to address the urgent gaps identified and implications for society, including for adaptation.

Collaboration with the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) is also growing, with a focus on supporting climate-relevant aspects of implementing the WMO Global Basic Observing Network (GBON) in Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. SOFF and GCOS are also working together to mobilize partners to develop the proposed Global State of Systematic Observations report, envisaged for launch at COP32 in late 2027.

GCOS continues to seek support for sustained, reliable long-term observing networks and coordination mechanisms, including support for the GCOS programme itself.

As highlighted at COP30, the future of the GCOS programme is at serious risk due to declining voluntary contributions. Sustained support from Parties is critical to protect and strengthen the global climate observations that underpin research, early warning systems, resilience, and informed decision-making worldwide.