

High-level Informal Consultative Roundtable - Overview

Background & Context

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is at the centre of the global intergovernmental process to address climate change. Under the leadership of the Executive Secretary, the UNFCCC secretariat supports Parties to meet and increase their commitments under the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement. It convenes Parties and facilitates negotiations, provides organizational support, and oversees mechanisms for climate action.

The global response to climate change under the UNFCCC continues to advance. The policy and governance frameworks established through the intergovernmental process have expanded the support available to Parties, facilitating progress on mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation, including technology development and transfer, capacity-building, and climate finance.

Through UN convened climate multilateralism, projected global temperature rise has been reduced from up to 5°C to below 3°C on current pledges, if implemented.

Recent UNFCCC negotiating sessions have continued to deliver concrete and globally significant outcomes, even amid considerable challenges. These achievements stem from an exceptionally demanding process – one that requires unanimous, line-by-line consensus among nearly 200 national governments. At a time when there are mounting difficulties, the UNFCCC process has nonetheless succeeded in advancing major milestones. These include the establishment of the historic Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, a global commitment to transition away from fossil fuels in a just and equitable manner, bold targets to triple renewable energy capacity by 2030, operationalization of the global goal on adaptation, a new collective quantified goal on climate finance, and the operationalization of international carbon markets.

However, despite these major advances, urgent progress is needed to avert the most severe climate impacts. The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) underscored that current efforts remain insufficient to limit global temperature rise in line with the Paris Agreement. The report highlights the need for global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to have peaked before 2025, followed by a 43% reduction by 2030 and a 60% reduction by 2035, relative to 2019 levels. To limit global warming to 1.5°C, net-zero carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions must be achieved globally in the early 2050s.

There is clear need for further accelerated climate action and enhanced support to enable deep and sustained emission reductions, as well as strengthened resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change. As the UNFCCC Executive Secretary has made clear since his appointment in 2022, as global climate action enters a new era of accelerated implementation, it will be important to ensure that decision-making processes remain equitable, effective, efficient, and timely. There is a need to ensure that climate multilateralism through the COP

process can continue to deliver concrete outcomes, while also supporting the further acceleration and improved implementation needed.

Looking to the future, refining and optimizing the process over the medium to long term, and as conditions evolve will be critical to fostering trust, enhancing collaboration, and catalyzing increased ambition, in this new era in which an increasingly close interface between the intergovernmental process and real economy actions will be of paramount importance. In the current geopolitical context, it is more important than ever that the UNFCCC process continues to accelerate global cooperation and strengthen multilateralism in the effort to address climate change.

Purpose and expected outcomes

The High-level Informal Consultative Roundtable, at the invitation of the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, will consult over the course of the year on perspectives on progress to date, and ideas on enabling further acceleration as the world enters this new era of enhanced implementation. This is a longer-term view, visioning process, it does not focus on near-term adjustments to the UNFCCC process of the sort that are primarily a matter for Parties, though these may also be addressed through the long-term strategic outlook if they emerge as a priority in the future. The Executive Secretary will seek these perspectives with full cognizance of, and respect for, the Party-driven foundations of the intergovernmental process, and the secretariat's mandates from the governing bodies.

By November 2025, the expected output will be a summary of perspectives and suggested potential actions for the further consideration of the Executive Secretary. It may also include suggestions for any further consultation that may be needed (including with the UNFCCC's nine NGO constituencies) for further inputs and perspectives, and/or to assess the suitability of presenting any proposed actions to Parties for their consideration.

Participation

The Executive Secretary has invited a diverse group of high-level experts to participate in the Roundtable, with careful consideration given to relevant experience, as well as to gender, geographic, and intergenerational balance. These invitees possess substantive and procedural experience and knowledge of the intergovernmental climate change process. They embody diversity of thought and experience. Care was taken to avoid any conflicts of interest arising from invitees' current roles in relation to the negotiations.

The diverse participation in the Roundtable serves as a vital sounding board, bringing fresh perspectives, constructive critique, and innovative thinking to inform the consideration of new approaches. Participants are guided by the highest ethical and professional standards and serve in a strictly personal and independent capacity. They do not represent countries, organizations, or any other affiliation. All participants participate in a fully voluntary pro-bono capacity.