

Regional Climate Weeks 2021

Global Overview

10 November 2021

The Regional Climate Weeks 2021 were held throughout the year in advance of the UN Climate Change COP26 conference in November in Glasgow. The first UN Climate Change conference since the pandemic began in early 2020, COP26 is a crucial meeting for governments of the world. COP26 comes at a time when governments communicated new or updated Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement and need to make progress on a host of issues.

COP26 is a crucial next step for global climate change efforts and the opportunity for the world to get on track to realize the Paris Agreement goals. The most recent IPCC Report shows that rapid, sustained and large-scale greenhouse gas emission reductions are needed so that limiting global warming to 1.5C will remain within reach.

Issues under discussion at COP26 are mostly technical and complex. Regional collaboration, strong partnerships and understanding replicable and scalable action on the ground increase the potential of ambitious climate action and for success at COP26.

The Regional Climate Weeks 2021 were designed to build momentum towards COP26 by taking the pulse of climate action in each region, exploring climate challenges and showcasing ambitious solutions. As the year progressed, the Climate Weeks emerged as a platform for regional stakeholders to have their voice heard and contribute to COP26.

RCW 2021 OVERVIEW

The Regional Climate Weeks 2021 kicked off in early March with [Regional Roundtable discussions](#) to set priorities. Then, a series of [three Virtual Thematic Sessions](#) were held.

Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week 2021 (LACCW 2021) was held in May, hosted by the Government of Dominican Republic. Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2021 (APCW 2021) followed in July, with the Government of Japan hosting the virtual event. Africa Climate Week 2021 (ACW 2021) convened in September, hosted by the Government of Uganda. These events together engaged more than 12,000 diverse stakeholders around three themes:

- ✓ National actions and economy-wide approaches
- ✓ Integrated approaches for climate-resilient development
- ✓ Seizing transformation opportunities

RCW 2021 IN NUMBERS

A quick look at the global number of participants engaged and sessions held across all three Regional Climate Weeks shows extensive reach and engagement.

Regional Climate Weeks 2021

- 12,100+ registered from 197 countries
- 1,127 speakers
- 316 sessions, including:
 - 154 Side Events
 - 33 Affiliate Events
 - 47 Action Hub Videos

RCW 2021 PARTNERS

The Regional Climate Weeks 2021 was organized through collaboration by four global partners – UN Climate Change, UN Development Programme, UN Environment and the World Bank Group. Regional partners provided additional support in each region:

- LACCW 2021 regional partners included the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- APCW 2021 regional partners included the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)
- ACW 2021 regional partners included the Africa Union, the Africa Development Bank (AfDB), and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

RCW 2021 OUTPUTS

Key takeaways from the Regional Climate Weeks have been compiled into three Output Reports. These resources can inform decision-making and participation at COP26 and implementation in the months to follow. These Output Reports are published as resources available to Parties, non-Party stakeholders and civil society.

In these takeaways, regional collaboration emerged time and time again as a powerful enabling force for climate action and ambition. Partnerships were highlighted for their ability to build capacity for action and ambition across public and private sectors. Success stories were shared to prove what is possible. All stakeholders are encouraged to review these Output Reports and explore regional leadership on climate change.

- [LACCW 2021 Output Report](#)
- [APCW 2021 Output Report](#)
- [ACW 2021 Output Report](#)

RCW 2021 GLOBAL THEMES

Examining key takeaways from the Virtual Thematic Sessions of each of the Regional Climate Weeks 2021 reveals global themes. These themes represent areas where regional climate action can accelerate ambition at a global scale. As implementation of the Paris Agreement advances after COP26, they offer entry points for collaboration that take us closer to achieving agreed global goals.

Emerging themes are organized by the three tracks of the Regional Climate Weeks. The themes were identified by comparing notes taken by independent note-takers supporting Virtual Thematic Sessions at each event.

Track 1: National actions and economy-wide approaches

- **Increased cooperation** is mentioned in all sections of Track 1.
 - Societal, inter-ministerial, regional and international cooperation on all levels is considered crucial.
 - All parts of society should be included in the development processes of nation-wide and economic strategies.
- **Carbon pricing** is considered a key tool to deliver cost-efficient carbon emission reductions. The system has unexplored potential.
 - It is important to scale up the inter-sectoral, regional, and international cooperation to be able to use the full potential of the tool.
 - Legal issues will arise, so collaboration and information sharing will become more central.
- **Reporting and assessing progress** requires measurement, verification and reporting of climate data, which is often an issue due to lack of access to required resources. For this reason, countries can set up institutional arrangements to ensure collection of robust data will be possible in the future.
- **Reliable data** on climate change is crucial to develop sustainable Long-Term-Strategies. Robust data systems can provide not only information to develop mitigation and adaptation measures but can also inform green recovery efforts and detect financial flows.
- **Green finance** drives transition from carbon-intensive development to green economic recovery packages. There's an imperative to mainstream low-carbon and resilience into the COVID-19 economic and social recovery.
- **Break up silos** and encourage institutions to move away from a silo approach. Climate change must be viewed holistically, with a focus on intersectional issues across ministries and different levels – national, sub-national, municipal. A holistic approach is needed for whole-of-society involvement.

TRACK 2: Integrated approaches for climate-resilient development

- **Climate risk management** must be integrated into national planning instruments to ensure policy coherence.
 - Strong data and information is critical for formulating evidence-based policies and plans, attracting finance and tracking and reporting progress.

- **Holistic, integrated approaches** are needed; they must be implemented jointly to catalyze transformational changes.
- **Long-term strategies** should take a whole-of-society approach.
 - Work together to find synergies between adaptation and mitigation.
 - National policy plays an important role, as does factoring climate targets into budget and benchmarking to ensure progress remains on track.
- **Political will and clear ownership** across ministries and at all levels is critical for meaningful engagement and implementation.
- **Partnerships**, including with the private sector, **and meaningful participation** of indigenous peoples, youth, women and other marginalized and vulnerable groups are critical in climate-resilient design, planning and implementation.
- **Nature-based solutions** are a multi-functional tool to address mitigation and adaptation challenges in an integrated manner while supporting social-economic development, especially in the post-COVID era.
- **Livelihoods** are changing and it is imperative to identify gaps in professions and skills in response to new demands. This is our opportunity to expand social protection, promote decent employment and ensure a just transition towards a greener economy.

Track 3: Cities and their built environment are at the frontlines of the fight against climate change

- **Vertical and horizontal integration in city planning** includes private sector co-creation of solutions in food, energy, transport, waste and green business.
- **Economy-wide planning** can guarantee sustainability outcomes. Multilateral coordination and a multidisciplinary approach to transport and other sectors such as health, environment, and energy are essential.
- **Stakeholder involvement** is crucial to develop collaboration between key groups engaged in urban transition efforts. Gender, equity and inclusion should be part of all planning and decision-making.
- **Lack of access to climate finance** for cities is a key barrier to city transformation in line with global goals.
- **Mainstreaming behaviour change** like changing consumption patterns and development of a sustainable, circular economy is crucial. Sustainable lifestyle campaigns and youth involvement accelerate societal behavior change.
- **Creating the right investment environment** through public and private funding is important for urban climate finance as, public funding is currently the main source. Fuel and electricity policies are enabling factors for setting the right market structure and playing field for market operators.
- **Governance, regulation, and financing structures** need to create the right collaboration structures, incentives and support. This dialogue, regional and local movements, and the synergies that result all influence the joint design of low-emission, resilient, inclusive and sustainable development.

- **Energy transition** has the potential to create new momentum in the energy sector, but countries still invest in emission-intensive options. Investment in renewable energy and smart grids needs to increase.
 - New regulatory reforms and capacity building that promote energy efficiency and other innovations, new platforms and new technologies will accelerate sustainable energy transition.
 - Appropriate financing availability is currently a bottleneck for full deployment of renewable energy solutions. Affordability is key as technological innovations should be cost-effective.
- **Carbon-neutral mobility** systems require a long-term vision and should be embedded in sustainability concepts. To ensure long-term success, short, middle and long-term plans are needed.
 - The pandemic shows the world can embrace new technologies.
 - This opportune moment should be used to build on the current momentum towards more active forms of mobility.
 - The ultimate goal of changing the transport system in a city is not only to reduce GHG emissions but also to increase access inclusion, equity, and economic development.

At each Climate Week, the COP26 High-Level Champions convened Implementation Labs and deep-dive sessions for national governments and non-Party stakeholders to discuss priorities and needs for implementation. These open dialogues explored options for policies, technologies and solutions. Topics included the energy and industry transition, resilience of smallholder farmers and transport. The Climate Weeks also allowed the Champions to promote the Race to Resilience and Race to Zero campaigns among developing country stakeholders.

RCW 2021 AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESS

The Regional Climate Weeks 2021 were designed as a platform for governments and stakeholders to explore how to maximize the use of available resources and ensure a more sustainable recovery from the pandemic, while helping achieve Paris Agreement goals. They also emerged as a venue for stakeholders to enhance their engagement in the multilateral process, with COP26-specific sessions and thematic discussions that resonate with issues under discussion at COP26.

Initial design of the Climate Week tracks was directly linked to global discussions on adaptation and resilience, mitigation, means of implementation and climate transparency, which are crucial topics under the international climate agenda. This created a link between the global agenda and regional action that contributes to objectives and goals of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

The Virtual Thematic Sessions held in the three regions allowed discussions on critical themes to be addressed during COP 26, such as:

- Dialogues on National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS)
- Regional discussions on assessing and reporting progress of national adaptation plans (NAPs)
- Engagement at the Designated National Authorities Forum
- Regular annual events of the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), the operational arm of the UNFCCC Technology Mechanism
- Side events on Loss and Damage and related topics
- Regional Youth dialogues and other constituency engagement

Following COP26 decisions, the Climate Weeks can support implementation and increase ambition. The events open opportunities for regional dialogues and technical training sessions on issues such as accounting and tracking progress on NDCs, advancing NAPs and supporting development of LT-LEDS. The Regional Climate Weeks provide a resource to address the capacity building provision for least developed countries (LDCs), small islands developing states (SIDS) and other developing countries. Organizing the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) informal forums on the margins of the RCWs will enable the CGE to fulfil its mandate to assist developing country Parties, other constituted bodies and expert groups to engage in matters related to transparency.

The Regional Climate Weeks serve as a link between regional action and the global climate change agenda. This opens space and builds momentum towards broader engagement by Non-Party Stakeholders with the multilateral climate change process.

Engaging national, regional and local governments, businesses, civil society organizations, science and interested individuals strengthens involvement by these groups and promotes climate action on the ground. This is precisely what is needed for a whole-of-society approach that can spur transformation of development in line with our common climate and sustainability goals.

With strong links to the process and significant interest by public and private sector stakeholders, the Regional Climate Weeks have potential as a collaboration platform to achieve alignment on the climate change agenda across and among different implementing agencies and entities. This can give governments confidence as they look to strengthen commitments in the UN Climate Change process and put in place climate change policies that deliver tangible benefits.

The Regional Climate Weeks 2021 allowed regional voices to be heard ahead of this year's crucial COP26 meeting. As an inclusive space for each region to share best practices, promote collaboration and partnerships and explore innovative climate action, the Regional Climate Weeks offer a venue to breathe life into commitments made in the multilateral process and make a difference on climate change where it is needed most – on the ground in communities around the world.

RCW 2021 NEXT STEPS

The four global partners UN Climate Change, UN Development Programme, UN Environment and the World Bank Group plan to convene Regional Climate Weeks in 2022. Current plans call for in-person events with a hybrid component to encourage close collaboration and allow for virtual sessions that may provide access to those who cannot attend. More detailed information will be available closer to each event. Like the 2021 series, each Climate Week will offer a platform for collaborating, networking and sharing of experiences to advance climate action and ambition.

Collaboration seen at the Regional Climate Weeks 2021 is a powerful force for raising ambition and advancing action towards the Paris Agreement. We have clear global themes to build on. We have a platform for regional collaboration. Now is the moment to work together and deliver a low-emission, resilient and sustainable future.

The Regional Climate Weeks are only possible through support by host governments and collaboration with partner organizations. Recognition goes to all partners who worked together to make the Regional Climate Weeks 2021 a success.