

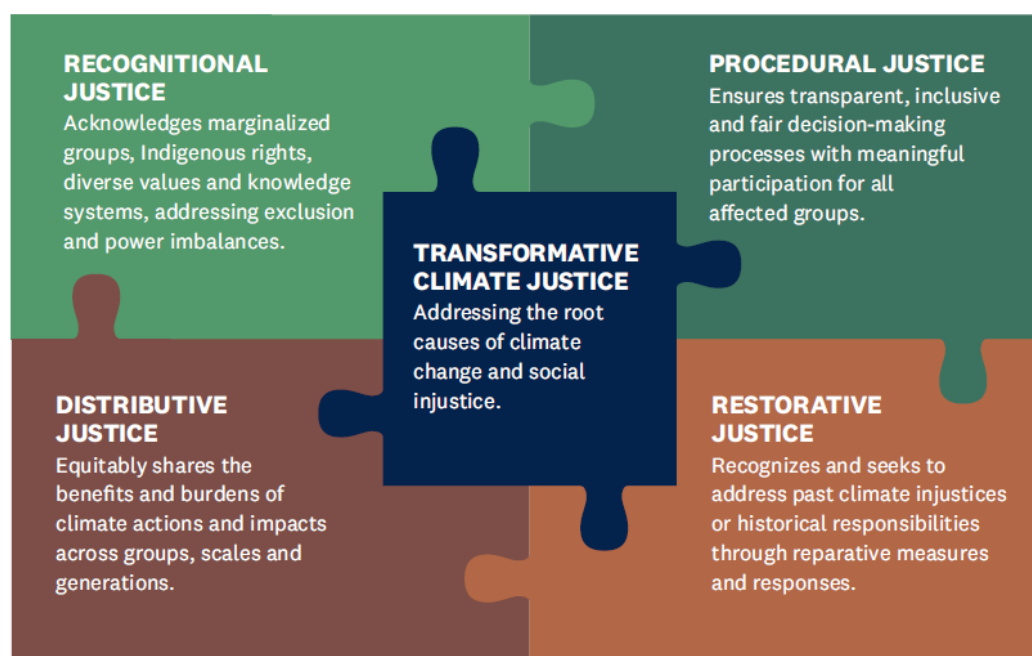
Input to the Belém Mission to 1.5

Submitted by: Syed Muhammad Jaffar Abbas - Research Associate at United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS)

To keep the 1.5°C target within reach, climate justice must transition from an abstract moral obligation into an embedded, institutional reality.

This submission presents a replicable methodology and actionable solutions to bridge the implementation gap in the next generation of climate pledges. Drawing on a comprehensive qualitative evaluation of 27 NDC 3.0 submissions through our Transformative Climate Justice Framework (Abbas et al. 2025), our findings indicate that while high-level rhetoric regarding equity is widespread, it routinely fails to translate into legally binding architectures, dedicated sovereign budgets, and verifiable monitoring systems. To prevent "justice-washing," this input offers a practical decision-support matrix that decision-makers can utilize in reverse as a generative design tool. By operationalizing the four dimensions of climate justice: Recognitional, Procedural, Distributive, and Restorative, this framework provides an automated mechanism to upgrade policy commitments from tokenistic mentions to deeply embedded, long-term national frameworks.

Figure 1. Transformative Climate Justice Framework, illustrating the foundational dimensions required to address root causes of climate and social injustice.



Sources: IPCC (2022); EEA (2024).

1. High-impact action areas and solutions (Addressing Question 1)

Our analysis identifies five priority thematic areas where moving from tokenistic language to embedded commitments drastically enhances the durability and execution of NDCs. As our evaluation of 27 NDC submissions demonstrates (Figure 2), justice commitments remain highly siloed and are particularly weak in technically focused areas such as sectoral mitigation, technology, and finance.

Figure 2. Heat map of climate justice integration across thematic clusters. This empirical baseline highlights where embedded commitments are currently lacking, directly informing the five high-impact solutions prioritized below

Country	Capacity-building and public participation	Just transition and social equity	Governance and institutional frameworks	Climate finance and investment	Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation	Energy transition and renewable energy	Sectoral mitigation measures	Monitoring and reporting	Technology and innovation
Andorra									
Belize									
Brazil									
Canada									
Cuba									
Ecuador									
Japan									
Kenya									
Maldives									
Marshall Islands									
Moldova									
Monaco									
Montenegro									
Nepal									
New Zealand									
Niue									
Norway									
Saint Lucia									
Singapore									
Somalia									
Switzerland									
UAE									
UK									
USA									
Uruguay									
Zambia									
Zimbabwe									

Key:

Quadrant orientation

Country name	Recognition Justice	Procedural Justice
	Distributive Justice	Restorative Justice

Level of commitment

Green: embedded	Yellow: partial	Red: tokenistic	Grey: no mention
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- Inclusive Governance (Procedural & Recognition Justice):**
 More than half of current NDCs mention vulnerable populations superficially, lacking concrete measures or procedural rights, which creates local socio-political friction and delays green infrastructure deployment. Parties must legally transition from non-binding stakeholder consultations to institutionalized co-design processes by formally recognizing localized, community-based governance systems directly within official national planning. This transforms community stakeholders into active co-designers, mitigating legal disputes and building the deep public trust required to accelerate 1.5°C project execution.
- Climate Finance and Investment (Distributive Justice):**
 Existing financial architectures often block capital from efficiently reaching frontline communities. National frameworks must integrate equity-driven financial innovations, specifically national ecological fiscal transfers that automatically redistribute tax revenues to local municipalities based on the verified scale of ecosystems they preserve. Public and multilateral banks must deploy first-loss capital to de-risk community-owned renewable energy and utilize non-debt-generating parametric insurance models, ensuring national targets remain resilient against macro-financial and meteorological shocks.
- Institutional Embedding (Transformative Justice):**

Ambitions regarding a "just transition" are frequently siloed within introductory narratives and remain disconnected from enforceable domestic laws or state budgets. Every NDC and NAP target must be explicitly linked to enacted domestic legislation and assigned to a clear governmental authority backed by sovereign funding. Formal statutory alignment of climate actions with national acts—such as codifying Indigenous land tenure—insulates targets from electoral cycles, establishing a long-term baseline that reassures private investors.

Technology & Capacity Building:

- Historically, capacity building has been treated as a top-down administrative compliance exercise, while technology transfer remains restricted to hardware procurement. Implementation requires refocusing on endogenous institutional empowerment by directly funding domestic green banking systems, local research bodies, and community-led technical networks. Transferring open-source know-how and collaboratively scaling traditional, localized technologies ensures that technical interventions are ecologically compatible, lowering long-term maintenance costs and reducing reliance on external supply chains.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Accountability:

A lack of qualitative tracking for equity commitments allows for "justice-washing," where inclusive language masks an absence of actual socioeconomic progress. Parties must establish qualitative baselines and specific tracking indicators for gender, social, and racial equity within national monitoring frameworks. Integrating civil society directly into official Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems gives local actors independent authority to empirically verify the distribution of green benefits, ensuring continuous resource optimization.

Utilizing our framework to draft fairer NDCs

In our analysis, the Climate Justice Analysis Framework was utilized as an evaluative tool to qualitatively code 27 NDC 3.0 submissions line-by-line. The matrix below evaluates policy statements across the four dimensions of justice to determine the level of commitment, identifying whether a statement is entirely absent, merely rhetorical (tokenistic), partially supported, or deeply embedded.

Figure 3. The Climate Justice Analysis Framework. Originally utilized to assess and code existing policy documents across four levels of commitment.

Justice dimension	No mention (absent)	Tokenistic justice (weak commitment)	Partial justice (moderate commitment)	Embedded justice (strong commitment)
Recognitional justice	No explicit mention of marginalized or vulnerable groups.	Mentions marginalized or vulnerable groups but without specifying any measures to address their needs.	Mentions marginalized or vulnerable groups and specifies concrete measures, but these are not backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks.	Recognition and measures for marginalized or vulnerable groups are backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks, with clear accountability and enforcement mechanisms.
Procedural justice	No mention of participatory governance, transparency or stakeholder involvement.	Mentions participation, transparency or stakeholder engagement but without specifying solid mechanisms for implementation.	Specifies participatory governance, transparency or stakeholder engagement mechanisms, but these are not backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks.	Participatory governance, transparency and stakeholder engagement mechanisms are backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks, with guaranteed implementation and accountability.
Distributive justice	No mention of equitable allocation of resources, finance or benefits.	Broadly references equity or allocation of resources or finance but without specifying any mechanisms to ensure delivery.	Specifies allocation mechanisms for resources, finance or benefits, but these are not backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks.	Equitable allocation of resources, finance or benefits is backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks, with monitoring and accountability mechanisms.
Restorative justice	No mention of addressing historical injustices, loss and damage, or reparative measures.	Acknowledges historical injustices, loss and damage, or reparative needs but without specifying concrete measures.	Specifies reparative measures or loss and damage actions, but these are not backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks.	Reparative measures and loss and damage actions are backed by formal institutional structures or legal frameworks, with dedicated funding, accountability and monitoring mechanisms.

While originally designed to retrospectively identify justice gaps, this analysis framework offers immense value to the Belém Mission when utilized proactively as a generative design rubric.

Rather than waiting to evaluate an NDC after it is published, policy drafters and sectoral experts can use this framework as a self-assessment checklist during the drafting and revision process to integrate human rights and equity directly into technical designs. By establishing the "Embedded justice (strong commitment)" column as the mandatory structural baseline, governments can reverse-engineer the framework to write better policies. If a proposed climate target only satisfies the "Tokenistic" criteria—such as broadly mentioning a vulnerable group without specifying needs—drafters can immediately upgrade the commitment by ensuring it is explicitly backed by formal institutional structures, clear accountability, and legal frameworks before final submission. This proactive application ensures that future NDCs and policy plans are structurally just by design, rather than as an afterthought.

2. Strengthening international cooperation (Addressing Question 2)

To elevate global climate ambition, international cooperation must pivot away from standard bureaucratic models toward structurally just frameworks.

- **Non-Debt-Generating Financial Cooperation:** Forcing climate-vulnerable countries to take on high-interest loans to solve global emissions violates distributive justice and exacerbates macroeconomic distress. The Belém Mission should advocate for financial cooperation standards that mandate first-loss public capital, grant-based adaptation funding, and bespoke debt-for-nature swaps. Country platforms and Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) must be explicitly designed to de-risk community-level adaptation without increasing the sovereign debt burdens of developing nations.
- **Open-Source Technology Sharing Pools:** The global diffusion of critical adaptation technologies remains bottlenecked by rigid intellectual property (IP) regimes. The Belém Mission should support the creation of multilateral technology-sharing pools that encourage IP flexibility for essential, low-emission technologies, running alongside capacity-building programs that prioritize local, endogenous technical ownership rather than just hardware acquisition.
- **Institutionalizing a Peer-to-Peer Learning Network:** Policymakers frequently lack practical templates for translating equity concepts into statutory realities. The Belém Mission should institutionalize a formal Peer-to-Peer Learning Network under the UNFCCC framework to exchange embedded legislative templates. For example, Brazil's NDC 3.0 serves as an exemplary template by explicitly establishing "Climate Justice" as a sovereign goal, linking it to its macroeconomic National Pact for Ecological Transformation, and codifying legally binding transversal plans for Indigenous populations.
- **A Common, Voluntary Monitoring Framework:** To ensure progressive ambition without inflating the administrative reporting burden on developing countries, the international community requires a shared, qualitative method to assess the depth of climate commitments. The Belém Mission should incorporate a voluntary assessment matrix—modeled on the Levels of Climate Justice Integration—into the pre-COP31 report, providing Parties with a standardized tool to self-assess the transition from tokenistic to embedded commitments over time.

Conclusion: Value of this Input as a Decision-Support Tool

The Transformative Climate Justice Framework provides a concrete, multi-dimensional decision-support tool for Parties preparing, implementing, and revising NDCs and NAPs. Rather than imposing new administrative reporting obligations, it introduces a rigorous design methodology that can be applied across all stages of the policy cycle. By utilizing this matrix in reverse, governments, innovators, and investors can systematically eliminate tokenistic language, identify structural justice gaps, and ensure that climate finance is directed toward projects that deliver verifiable, systemic equity outcomes.