CLIMATE ADVOCACY GUIDE

Towards more ambitious national committee climate policies

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A Communion of Churches

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Cover Photo: Glasgow, Scotland – November 2021: On the final day of COP26, a woman holds a sign reading "Another world is possible" as protesters rally outside the summit, demanding stronger action from governments and negotiators to address the climate emergency.

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Preface

The Paris Agreement provides a critical framework for global climate action, with three key instruments: Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Long-Term Strategies (LTSs).

These instruments allow countries to establish climate goals, prioritize adaptation, and outline steps for reducing emissions to achieve climate resilience. Despite their potential, global progress has been insufficient, with current NDCs putting us on track for a temperature rise of 2.7°C, well above the 1.5°C target.

COP30 in Brazil offers a critical opportunity to reverse current trends, limit global warming and strengthen climate resilience.

Achieving meaningful change will require collective action from all sectors, including civil society organizations, churches and faith-based organizations and communities, all of which have an important role to play in advocating for stronger and more effective climate policies.

LWF has a long-standing commitment to climate justice and stands in solidarity with its member churches and those who are already vulnerable - refugees, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, women, boys and girls, children, indigenous peoples and all individuals and communities affected by the adverse impacts of climate change.

LWF call for climate action rooted in justice, equity and dignity of all people. Advocating for climate justice goes beyond calling for greater ambition - it calls for policies that prioritize resilience, adaptation and the protection of human rights, and ensure that vulnerable communities have the resources, support and protection they need to face the challenges of climate change.

This LWF Climate Advocacy Guide is designed to help civil society organizations, especially faith-based organizations and churches, engage in climate advocacy at the local level. It offers practical steps to understand the key instruments of the Paris Agreement, assess the effectiveness of NDCs, NAPs and LTS, identify gaps and advocate for meaningful improvements.

By focusing on local action, faith-based organizations and churches can drive change in their communities, contribute to the development of national climate policies, and advocate for a more just and sustainable future.

Now is the time for action. This guide empowers faith-based organizations and civil society to shape national climate policy. With practical steps and a justice-centered vision, it helps move from critique to action, locally, nationally, and globally.

Elena Cedillo Vargas
Program Executive
for Climate Justice

Executive Summary

The climate emergency is no longer a distant threat. It is a daily reality for millions. Yet the global response remains fragmented. This guide is based on a conviction: that faith-based actors, grounded in hope and justice, have a critical role in shaping the policies that define our shared future.

The extent to which the climate emergency can be contained and the negative impacts on people and the living environment can be limited will depend crucially on how appropriately national climate policies are designed and implemented. The Paris Agreement provides states with three central instruments for this purpose:

- The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which set out climate protection and adaptation goals and their implementation for 10 years.
- The National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which define the long-term priorities and measures for becoming climate-resilient; and
- The long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LTS), which should include the transformation paths and measures for all sectors for to achieving net-zero emissions and climate-resilient by around the middle of the century.

Beyond the requirement to apply these instruments, it is largely up to the states to decide on ambition levels, strategies, priorities and measures under their responsibility.

So far, this approach has not yet led to the necessary results: the NDCs will lead us into a world 2.7°C[1] warmer, dramatically exceeding the 1.5°C threshold. To date, only a minority of states have completed their NAPs and LTSs. 2025 is a crucial year to stop and reverse this undesirable development: at COP30 in Brazil, it will be the time to take stock.

Success is possible if civil society organizations, including churches, faith-based organizations and faith communities around the world, become more involved in improving NDCs, NAPs and LTS, or participating in creating them in the first place. The faith community, has a very important role to play here, as it represents the vast majority of humanity. The LWF and its members can play a pioneering role in this.

In concrete terms, this would mean analyzing the NDCs, NAPs and LTS in as many countries as possible, constructively developing proposals for improvement, mobilizing broad support for these in churches and society, seeking dialogues with those responsible in governments, and advocating for improvements and participating in implementation. This means effecting change from the bottom up in many countries and thus contributing to change at the global level, which in turn would have positive effects at the local level: local to global to local.

1 https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/the-climate-crisis-worsens-the-warming-outlook-stagnates/

This Climate Advocacy Guide provides practical, easy-to-follow instructions in the following steps:

1. Understanding Key Instruments: The guide explains the three essential climate policy instruments—Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Long-Term Strategies (LTSs)—outlining their significance, current relevance, and key deadlines.
2. Assessing Quality Criteria: A straightforward checklist helps evaluate each instrument, ensuring it meets essential quality standards.
3. Conducting a Gap Analysis: A step-by-step guide walks users through analysing NDCs, NAPs, and LTSs, identifying gaps, and formulating recommendations for improvement, creating a policy brief, generating support for it, and then advocating to the government.
4. Accessing Additional Resources: The guide provides valuable sources of information and data to support evidence-based recommendations

The LWF Climate Advocacy Guide is a practical resource to engage in climate advocacy effectively. It helps advocates move beyond general appeals for climate justice and relatively abstract criticism of insufficient progress, guiding them toward concrete, targeted interventions that drive meaningful improvements in national climate policies.

Introduction

The climate emergency continues to escalate, posing the greatest challenge of the century. Yet, the international community has struggled to deliver a unified and effective response.

At the UN Climate Change Conference in Baku (November 2024), it took immense effort just to prevent the Paris Agreement from collapsing. Several issues stand in the way: fossil fuel-driven economies resisting change to protect their industries, wealthy nations failing to provide enough support to developing countries, and fast-growing economies refusing to take on more responsibility. Self-interest seems to prevail over the common good. The poorest and most climate-vulnerable developing countries are suffering the most as a result. But this trend is not inevitable if we act decisively against it.

There are also reasons to be hopeful. Renewable energy is now the cheapest form of energy generation almost everywhere in the world, which is why it continues to grow despite the best efforts of fossil fuel profiteers to slow its rise. Relying on it means using local resources in a sustainable way - even in places where there is no access to electricity. It is a way of overcoming energy poverty, reducing dependence on expensive energy imports, increasing energy security and creating jobs and income. Renewable energy and improved energy efficiency can be used to irrigate fields, power mills and workshops, and supply electricity to schools, churches, and hospitals.

As climate change progresses, it will become increasingly important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while building resilience to climate change through adaptation. In this context, nature and ecosystem-based solutions, as well as traditional and indigenous knowledge, offer invaluable tools for addressing climate change impacts. To make the most of these solutions, we need to respect, understand and integrate them more effectively.

However, climate adaptation can also reach its limits, often resulting in economic and non-economic losses and damages. To minimize these and to ensure that those affected are not left behind, collective action is needed at local, national and international levels.

Much can be done through local, national and international cooperation, even in the current challenging international environment. But to achieve this, we need to move beyond discussion to action - individually, as communities and as nations.

The Paris Agreement provides very good instruments for this, making it easier to move step by step but steadily towards greenhouse gas neutrality and climate resilience. So far, these instruments – Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and Long-Term Low-Emission Strategies (LTSs) – are not well enough known to the general public, faith communities, and policymakers.

Their potential is therefore far from being fully exploited. This guide aims to help change this by presenting the instruments and their importance and showing how they can be better designed and used.

Why is this the responsibility of faith communities, churches, and faith-based organizations?

The answer is simple: as people of faith, we are deeply committed to caring for creation, standing in solidarity with the most vulnerable, and to climate justice. This commitment goes beyond words—it calls us to take meaningful action.

To do this effectively, we must first engage in the design and implementation of local and national climate policies. We need to build the confidence to propose concrete solutions. This guide aims to provide the practical skills and knowledge needed to take action and make a real difference.

Specifically, the guide devotes a chapter to each of the three instruments – NDC, NAP and LTS – in which the requirements of the Paris Agreement (structure, content, deadlines) are briefly explained. This is followed by simple checklists showing what quality requirements should be met and how policy documents should be analyzed and complemented by country examples of good practice.

Finally, practical tips are given on how faith-based organizations can contribute to better climate policies through advocacy and own implementation steps. Helpful reference documents and data sources are provided for further information.

All Parties are required to submit new NDCs in 2025, covering the years 2025 to 2035. Developing countries are encouraged to start preparing NAPs by 2025 at the latest and to start implementing them by 2030. Long-term low-emission strategies, which show how and by when countries intend to achieve greenhouse gas neutrality, should also be drawn up, although no fixed deadline has been set for this. This shows how important it is to get involved in these processes now!

Understand, analyze and advocate for ambitious NDCs

In a nutshell: What is a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)?

The NDC is the national contribution of each state Party to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement[2] and is therefore the most important instrument for its implementation:

"All Parties are to undertake and communicate ambitious efforts as defined in Articles 4, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13 with the view to achieving the purpose of this Agreement as set out in Article 2. The efforts of all Parties will represent a progression over time, while recognizing the need to support developing country Parties for the effective implementation of this Agreement".[3]

All Parties are required to submit their NDC to the UNFCCC secretariat. The level of ambition, is nationally determined, i.e. set by the Parties themselves, but should be informed by the results of the so-called global stocktake that assesses every five years the collective progress made towards achieving the global common goals, i.e. keeping the global average temperature increase well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C, promoting climate resilience, and to making financial flows consistent with low greenhouse gas emission and climate-resilient development.

Parties are required to submit a new NDC every five years with progressively more ambitious targets. About the thematic coverage of the NDC, it is mandatory ("shall" provision) to include climate mitigation, i.e. emission reduction and/or the restoration of carbon sinks (e.g. forests). Transparency in greenhouse gas accounting and reporting is also mandatory.

In addition, developed countries have to explain how they intend to provide financial support to developing countries for the preparation and implementation of their NDCs. Capturing adaptation, loss and damage, technology transfer and capacity development are discretionary obligations ("should" provision).

The significance of the new NDCs, which all countries must submit by 2025

With the current NDCs, we are heading for global warming of 2.6°C.[4] This would mean that the Paris climate targets would be missed by a wide margin and the climate crisis would be dramatically exacerbated. Despite some progress and declining emissions in the developed countries, global emissions are still rising and the NDC Synthesis Report 2024 projects a

2 https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement

3 Quoted from Article 3 of the Paris Agreement, https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/paris_nov_2015/application/pdf/paris_agreement_english_.pdf (last accessed: November 27, 2024)

4 Calculation of the Climate Action Tracker, https://climateactiontracker.org/global/cat-thermometer/ (last accessed: November 27, 2024)

Gally Anoui, Lake Province, October 2024. A region affected by extreme weather events. Pictured here is the maize cultivated by the farmers' group. Photo: LWF Chad

reduction of only a 2.6% by 2030 compared to 2019.[5] This is far from enough, to have any chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, emissions would have to fall by almost 50% by 2030.

In addition, many of the current NDCs fail to address important issues such as adaptation, loss and damage, or just transition.

The new generation of NDCs must address these gaps, and global efforts should now be directed toward this goal.

Parties can strengthen their NDCs at any time. Additionally, the next stocktake will take place in 2028, which can also be used to raise the level of ambition of the NDCs.

Quality criteria and checklist for the NDC

The quality of the next generation of NDCs will determine whether global warming can be limited to between 1.5°C and 2°C and thus keeping the Paris Agreement alive.

Therefore, every country must contribute with the highest possible ambition in terms of climate mitigation, adaptation, addressing loss and damage, and shifting financial flows towards socio-economic pathways that lead to net-zero emissions, resilient sustainable development. This includes as an essential condition, that NDCs are guided by equity and fairness, ensuring a just, inclusive, and participatory decision-making that leaves no one behind. Rich and fossil fuel producing countries have a special responsibility to take the lead, act in solidarity, and scale up financial, technical, and capacity-building support, especially for the most vulnerable.

You find the NDC of your country here.

NDCs should fulfill the following criteria:

- Higher targets for 2030 compared to the previous NDC, further increase in the 2035 targets, and a clarification of how these targets are aligned with a 1,5°C emission trajectory and the country's long-term strategy leading to net zero emissions.
- Economy-wide emission reduction targets for 2035, i.e. covering of all greenhouse gases and all economic sectors (energy, industry, transport, housing, agriculture, forestry etc.).
- Concrete peak date for greenhouse gas emissions if emissions continue to rise.
- Absolute reduction targets, not just improvements compared to business as usual, except for Least Developed Countries - LDCs and Small Island Developing States-SIDS.
- Phasing out fossil fuel subsidies that do not address energy poverty or just transition, and redirecting these funds to social welfare and a just transition.
- Explicit commitment to end fossil fuel expansion and transition away from fossil fuels.
- Renewable energy capacity target by 2030/2035, preferably tripling by 2030.

5 UNFCCC NDC Synthesis Report 2024, https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/2024-ndc-synthesis-report (last accessed: November 27, 2024)

- Target for increasing energy efficiency by 2030/2035, preferably doubling by 2030.
- Halting and reversing deforestation by 2030.
- Specific climate adaptation goals for all at-risk regions, sectors and population groups.
- Reference to the NAP or development of such a plan by 2028 at the latest.
- Specific objectives to address economic and non-economic loss and damage.
- Clear reference to the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan and specific implementation targets.
- All targets are specific, measurable, reportable and verifiable.
- The NDC is budgeted and backed by financial commitments.
- The NDC is aligned with development planning at national and regional levels.
- The NDCs of developed countries and other financially capable countries include strong commitments to significantly increase financial support to developing countries. The NDC should use nature-based solutions - NBS and ecosystem protection/restoration as much as possible and take into account traditional and indigenous knowledge.
- The NDC should address the SDGs and food systems, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Good practice examples of NDCs

No country has yet submitted an NDC that is exemplary in every respect. However, the following countries are examples that you can use as a guide when evaluating your country's NDC, they are taken from the Climate Action Tracker (CAT). You can find more information and perhaps an evaluation of your country on their website.

Morocco (overall NDC rating: “Almost sufficient”)

The summary of the CAT findings on Morocco’s NDC published in 2021 as follows:

- NDC update in 2021 strengthened both its conditional (with international financial support) and unconditional (without international support) mitigation targets from 118 to 84 MtCO2e and from 145 to 107 MtCO2e respectively, as compared to the first NDC.
- Renewable energy target of 52% of the electricity mix by 2030, stop of new coal-fired power plants, energy consumption reduction and decarbonization commitments for various sectors
- Strengthening of climate resilience with sector- specific adaptation targets by 2030 based on risk assessment results included in NDC; loss and damage and GAP reference still missing, but commitment to an underlying human rights-based and gender equality approach included.

Chile (overall NDC Rating: "Almost sufficient")

The summary of the CAT findings on Chile's NDC published in 2020 as follows:

- By 2030, emissions could be reduced by 6-13% to 100-108 MtCO2e, compared to peak in 2021
- emissions peaked already in 2021, ahead of the 2025 NDC commitment; further emission reduction in the energy, industrial, waste and agricultural sector unlikely by 2030, despite sectoral emission reduction strategies
- Coal phase-out by 2040 on track, remaining 8 coal-fired power plants may retire earlier; deadline should be shifted to 2030; just energy transition plan in place; carbon levies still too low
- Lacking implementation of ambitious reforestation/sustainable forestry commitments
- Specific adaptation targets included in NDC; loss and damage as well as gender (GAP) missing.

Norway (overall NDC Rating: "Insufficient", rating for the domestic part: almost sufficient")

The summary of the CAT findings on Norway's NDC published in 2022 as follows:

- The updated NDC increased the economy-wide emission reduction target (all gases) from 50 to 55% below 1990 levels and enhanced the provision of climate finance to developing countries, which, however, is still insufficient; furthermore, fossil fuel extraction is still increasing
- NDC targets are legally binding, as well as human, gender and indigenous rights.
- Power sector almost completely decarbonized and the country is leading on electric vehicles
- Forest cover increasing, with a wood stock growth of 12% in recent years
- Unspecific reference to just transition and both, adaptation and loss and damage not included in the NDC.

How you can advocate for an ambitious NDC

With a good basic understanding of NDCs and what they should look like, the next step is to advocate for it. This guide provides a step-by-step approach to effectively advocating for stronger NDCs.

1. Download the latest NDC of your country here or ask your government to send you the draft of the new NDC.

2. Also check the latest National Communication or Biennial Update Report that your country has submitted to the UNFCCC. You can search for it here. Take notes on it.
3. Now take our checklist and check which criteria have been met and which have not.
4. Now you have an initial overview and can start thinking about what your priorities would be for improving the NDC.
5. Gather further important information: Is there an NDC analysis of the CAT or other good NDC analyses, especially from your country? What are the most important instruments of national climate and energy policy? Is there a just transition framework or a gender action plan? Take a look at these or take further inspiration from the below-listed sources of information and summarize the results.
6. Use the research results to review and possibly adjust your priorities. Use the information to develop specific proposals for improving the NDC. At this stage, you can also consult experts and look for allies.
7. Now write the NDC policy brief with your demands. Keep it short but justify each of your demands. Be as specific as possible. Include no more than 5 to 10 demands.
8. Find support from your networks. One option is to write a letter of intent to the minister responsible for the new NDC. Ask for a meeting and explain your position
9. You can expand this advocacy through a petition, press work, public hearings, and more.

Sources of information, data and potential partners

- Climate Action Tracker: Tool with visual maps and graphics to assess how countries' NDCs are being revised and how ambitious they are
- NDCs We Want Checklist by WWF: Tracking tool with broader sectoral scope
- Next generation NDCs by World Resource Institute WRI: Key points to consider
- 2024 NDC Synthesis Report by UNFCCC: Synthesis of the latest available NDCs
- Scaling Up Climate Ambition in Land Use and Agriculture by UNDP and FAO: how to translate NDCs and NAPs into actionable solutions in land use and agriculture
- FELD Action Tracker: A closer look at NDCs with a focus on food and land use
- Pathway for Increasing Nature-Based Solutions in NDCs by UNDP
- Food Forward NDC by Global Alliance for the Future of Food, WWF, NDC Partnership,etc.
- NDC Partnership Knowledge Portal

Understand, Analyze and pushing for progress and implementation of NAPs

In a nutshell: What is a National Adaptation Plan (NAP)?

The NAP is a national instrument for achieving climate resilience, i.e. reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change by enhancing adaptive capacity and facilitating the integration of climate change adaptation into relevant policies, programs and activities. Article 7 of the Paris Agreement on the Global Goal on Adaptation sets out state obligations:[6]

"Parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate" (Paris Agreement, Article 7.5)

"Each Party shall, as appropriate, engage in adaptation planning processes and the implementation of actions, including the development or enhancement of relevant plans, policies and/or contributions, which may include:

a. The implementation of adaptation actions, undertakings and/or efforts

b. The process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans

c. The assessment of climate change impacts and vulnerability, with a view to formulating nationally determined prioritized actions, taking into account vulnerable people, places and ecosystems

d. Monitoring and evaluating and learning from adaptation plans, policies, programs (…)

e. Building the resilience of socioeconomic and ecological systems, including through economic diversification and sustainable management of natural resources" (Article 7.9)

"Each Party should (…) submit and update periodically an adaptation communication, which may include its priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions" (Article 7.10)

The significance of the NAP, the need for action by governments, and deadlines

The 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emphasizes that the adaptation measures taken so far are far from sufficient, i.e. they are too incremental and not transformative (i.e. holistic and deeply sectoral) to protect against the growing risks of climate

6 Paris Agreement, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf (last accessed: November 29, 2024)

change.[7] NAPs are an essential planning tool for this, to strategically advance adaptation in the long term, i.e. with a longer time horizon than the 10 years of the NDCs.

At COP29 in Dubai in 2023, it was therefore decided that by 2030 all countries should have thorough climate risk assessments, country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent national adaptation plans, progress on their implementation and monitoring systems[8]. However, by November 2024[9], only 60 countries had submitted their NAPs to the UNFCCC.

Quality criteria and checklist for the NAP

As we are living in a climate emergency and NAPs take years to prepare in a high quality, and an inclusive and participatory process. It is therefore high time to act now!

The following checklist has been prepared. It is based on the Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan process[10] developed by the Least Developed Countries Expert Group on behalf of the UNFCCC, but goes beyond it in some respects.

Find the NAP of your country, if already published, here. Deadline for submission of NAPs is 2030, but many countries will deliver earlier.

7 IPCC. Climate Change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-ii/ (last accessed: November 29, 2024)

8 UNFCCC, Decision 2/CMA.5 Global goal on adaptation, https://unfccc.int/documents/637073 (last accessed: November 29, 2024)

9 UNFCCC, NAP Central – Submitted NAPs from developing countries. https://napcentral.org/submitted-naps (last accessed: November 29, 2024)

10 National Adaptation Plans – Technical guidelines, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/NAP_technical_guidelines_EN.pdf (last accessed: November 29, 2024)

April 2025 near Kenya's Tana River, families displaced by climate disasters like droughts and floods live in fragile shelters, reflecting their vulnerability and resilience in the face of worsening climate change. Photo: LWF/Jiří Pasz

NAPs should fulfill the following criteria:

The NAP process should start with an up-to-date climate risk analysis that identifies climate hazards, vulnerabilities, and risks, including future risks under different climate scenarios.

- The NAP process should follow a standardized sequence with a national stock-take (baseline analysis, actor mapping, risk assessment), followed by a planning phase (including stakeholder consultation), implementation, and monitoring phase.
- NAP targets should be specific, measurable, reportable, and verifiable.
- NAP targets should include human security, health, food, water, housing, and livelihoods.
- NAPs should identify key risks and promote transformative adaptation and climate resilient development pathways as called for by the IPCC.
- The NAP should use nature-based solutions and ecosystem protection/restoration as much as possible and consider traditional and indigenous knowledge.
- The NAP should take a human rights-based approach, i.e. vulnerable groups should be identified, involved, and prioritized so that their rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled.
- The NAP should serve as an interface between adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including at the level of institutional responsibilities in a joint effort to build resilience.
- NAP should address economic and non-economic loss and damage.
- NAP should address the SDGs and food systems and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Clear reference to the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan and specific implementation targets.
- NAP is aligned with the NDC and development planning at national and regional level.
- NAP is budgeted and backed by financial commitments.
- Enabling factors such as institutional arrangements, capacity development, and information sharing should be provided by the national government.
- The government should access international financial support for the NAP process, such as provided by the Green Climate Fund.
- Governments should partner with the NAP Global Network for exchange and learning.
- Developed countries should provide continuous and enhanced financial support for development and implementation of NAPs in developing countries (Article 7.1, Paris Agreement).

Good practice examples of NAPs

A consortium of universities and other institutions conducted a global review of NAPs and published the results in 2024. The aim was to identify examples of good practice from which other countries could learn. Three countries have been selected as examples. They have performed particularly well in at least one category.

The full review report is available here.

Liberia (good practice regarding the evidence of the NAP)

Liberia's NAP for the years 2020 - 2030 was submitted to the UNFCCC in 2022. It was developed with financial support from the Green Climate Fund and technical support from UNDP. It serves as a framework for climate adaptation with priority on the agricultural, forestry, energy, fisheries, waste sector, and a particular focus on coastal regions, which are most at risk. Stakeholder consultations took place, and the final results were validated in a final workshop. The implementation phase will focus on capacity development, the identification and implementation of specific adaptation solutions for the sectoral, sub-national and national levels, as well as a coherent funding approach, innovative approaches to involve the private sector, and setting up an effective monitoring system. Particular attention was paid in the NAP process to a science-based climate risk analysis and the consideration of different climate scenarios.

Peru (good practice regarding the NAP goals)

Peru's NAP was submitted in 2021 with the aim of updating the National climate change strategy. Based on a risk analysis, Peru's NAP first identifies the sectors with the greatest need for adaptation: water, agriculture, forests, fisheries and health. In the second step, regionalized risk scenarios are created for different climate conditions, outlining their specific impacts. Based on these scenarios, a vision for climate resilience between 2030 and 2050 is defined, guided by principles of gender equity, intergenerational justice, and cultural diversity. From this vision, strategic action areas, specific goals, and concrete adaptation measures are identified, with a strong emphasis on preventing climate-related loss and damage. This detailed and comprehensive approach serves as a model for effective climate adaptation planning.

South Africa (good practice regarding participation in the NAP process)

The NAP of South Africa was also submitted in 2021, aims to strengthen social and economic resilience to the effects of climate change under the conditions of poverty. It should guide and mainstream adaptation action in the short and the long term, at all levels from the national to the sub-national, involving multiple stakeholders. Agriculture and forestry, coastal zones, terrestrial ecosystems, settlements, water resources, and health are the prioritized sectors, and principles, objectives, interventions, and outcomes are defined, but less specifically as in Peru's NAP. The stock-take of existing instruments is very good and a variety of measures are being adopted to close the gaps that have been identified and to significantly improve the planning basis. In this context, the participation of relevant stakeholders, including those from civil society, is given a high degree of relevance, which is exemplary.

How to advocate for inclusive and vulnerability-focused NAPs

With a good basic understanding of NAPs and what they should look like, the next step is to advocate for it. The following steps will guide you through the process of advocating for inclusive and vulnerability-focused NAPs:

1. Download the NAP of your country here or ask your government to share the relevant documents with you in case the NAP is still in development.
2. Also check the latest national Adaptation communication that your country has submitted to the UNFCCC. It should be updated periodically, reflecting adaptation priorities, implementation and support needs, plans, and actions. Take notes on it.
3. Next, use the checklist above to assess which criteria have been met and which have not.
4. With an initial overview in place, the next step is to identify priorities for improving the NAP. Gather further important information: Is there a NAP assessment in GGGI's global review or can good practices of other countries be used to inform the NAP process in your country? Take a look at these. The Notre Dame Adaptation Index and the Inform Climate Change Index are also excellent data sources to assess the specific climate risks and vulnerabilities of your country. Then look at the NAP to check if the right facts are used and if adaptation priorities reflect the country's needs properly. Also, take further inspiration from the listed sources of information below and summarize the results.
5. Use the research results to review and possibly adjust adaptation priorities. Use the information to develop specific proposals for improving the NAP. At this stage, consult experts and look for allies.
6. Now write the NAP policy brief with your demands. Keep it short but justify each of your demands. Be as specific as possible. Include no more than 5 to 10 demands.

7. Find support from your networks. One option is to write a letter of intent to the minister responsible for the NAP. Ask for a meeting and explain your position
8. You can expand this advocacy through a petition, press work, public hearings, and more.

Sources of information, data, and potential partners

- NAP Central, the official NAP platform of UNFCCC
- National adaptation communications registry of the UNFCCC
- Nairobi Work Program, the UNFCCC knowledge-to-action hub on adaptation
- NAP Global Network, the global NAP exchange and learning platform
- GGGI's global review on Good practices in NAPs
- World Bank's Climate Change Knowledge Portal with country-specific data on historical, current and future climate, vulnerabilities and impact
- GFDRR's Think Hazard instrument to analyze climate risks and impacts at a provincial level
- Climate Central's Coastal risk screening tool to assess impacts of sea level rise

In december 2020, Honduras was hit by the devastating Tropical Storm Eta and Hurricane Iota, two of the most extreme weather events to hit Central America in decades. Photo: Sean Hawkey.

Understand, Analyze and advocate for ambitious LTS

In a nutshell: What is a Long-term Low Emission Strategy (LTS)?

All countries should strive to formulate and communicate long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies in accordance with Article 4, paragraph 19 of the Paris Agreement, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.[11]

LTSs are the most important planning instrument to show how a country can achieve net-zero emissions in the long term, i.e. by mid-century. It provides planning security and highlights the investment and reform needs of the transformation. It thus complements the short-term NDCs with the long-term dimension of the transformation.

The significance of the LTS, the need for action by governments, and deadlines

Decarbonizing infrastructure, transitioning to 100% renewable energy, transforming economies and changing behaviors in daily life are complex, costly and challenging processes. Ensuring that these transitions are climate-just and widely supported adds further complexity.

The LTS enables a country to connect short-term development planning, including its NDC, with long-term objectives while providing a strategic framework for policy development.

The Paris Agreement stipulated that LTSs should be submitted by 2020. However, many countries have still not met this requirement to date. As of November 2024, only 75 countries had submitted their LTSs.

In addition, many of the submitted NDCs do not yet aim for net-zero emissions by 2050. Under these circumstances, it will not possible to limit global warming to even 2°C, let alone 1.5°C.

Despite their relevance, LTSs are hardly the focus of civil society criticism. This blind spot needs to be addressed urgently – especially in the G20, which together are responsible for more than 80 percent of emissions, but also in other countries with large or rapidly increasing emissions. An important goal would be for as many countries as possible to present LTSs by COP30 in Brazil.

Quality criteria and checklist for the LTS

Find your country's LTS, if already published, here.

11 UNFCCC Long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/long-term-strategies (last accessed: November 29, 2024

LTS should fulfill the following criteria:

- LTS should start with a robust baseline analysis, using adequate data and methods.
- LTS pathways should be transformational and feasible in terms of their impact on emissions, should include milestones and mitigation and adaptation goals, and must show how they address concerns about societal impacts and just transition.
- LTS should focus on the physical and economic transformations required, using different scenarios and considering climate risks and losses that can be through climate neutrality
- Intense stakeholder consultations should be an integral part of the LTS process.
- LTS should refer to the SDGs, gender, indigenous and human rights.
- LTS should discuss enabling factors such as institutional arrangements and capacity development and should include the financial dimension of the transformation.

Good practice examples of LTSs

Chile (rating of Chile's net zero target: "acceptable")

Chile's LTS was submitted in 2021, aiming at achieving net zero emissions, i.e. greenhouse gas neutrality, by 2050. This goal is legally binding, as part of the climate framework law. The LTS covers all relevant sectors and all greenhouse gases. It provides a detailed methodological framework and underpins each sector-related strategy with detailed emission pathways. One weak point, however, is the major role attributed to forests as carbon sinks in achieving the net-zero target. At present, it is highly questionable whether forests can fulfill this role.

How you can advocate for ambitious LTS

1. Download the LTS of your country here or ask your government.
2. Consult the LTS synthesis report and the resources listed below, collect further information and inspirations from there and take notes on it.
3. Then take the checklist above and check which criteria have been met and which have not.
4. Now you have an initial overview and can start thinking about what your priorities would be for improving the existing LTS or for initiating the LTS process in your country.
5. Gather further important information: For instance, check again the CAT assessment results for your country, especially about the long-term trends, policies and actions.
6. Use these research results to review and possibly adjust your priorities. Use the information to develop specific proposals for improving the LTS. At this stage, you can also consult experts and look for allies.

7. Now write the LTS policy brief with your demands. Keep it short but justify each of your demands. Be as specific as possible. Include no more than 5 to 10 demands.
8. Find support from your networks. One option is to write a letter of intent to the minister responsible for the LTS process. Ask for a meeting and explain your position
9. You can expand this advocacy through a petition, press work, public hearings, and more.

Sources of information, data and potential partners

- Long-term strategies portal of the UNFCCC
- Climate Watch LTS explorer
- Guide for reviewing countries' LTS, by World Resource Institute
- 2050 Pathways Platform for exchange and cooperation on LTS

Conclusions

The climate emergency is putting millions of lives at risk, especially those in vulnerable communities that already face systemic inequalities. These communities bear the brunt of climate-related disasters, yet have the least resources to adapt or recover.

Global warming continues at a rapid pace, quickly approaching the 1.5°C. Never before in human history we have been exposed to such high temperatures, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe and the question is how much more warming our environment, agriculture, cities, infrastructure, and, above all, our health can take.

With the growing influence of climate change deniers and fake news, the conditions for tackling the climate crisis are not getting any easier.

The challenges are growing — Should we therefore be discouraged and become passive? Lose hope? No, of course not!

Now, more than ever, we must face up to our responsibilities. And we are not alone, millions of people around the world recognise the urgency of climate justice. But to succeed, we must evolve the way we advocate for climate action and justice:

We must amplify our voices, hold leaders accountable, and push for policies that prioritize people and the planet over profit. We need to be more specific in our appeals. It is no longer enough to make relatively general appeals for climate justice. We can be much more specific if we reflect on our experiences.

We must commit ourselves to finding and actively developing concrete solutions. Simply criticizing the actions of others is not enough. We must show how things can be done better. By demonstrating this with concrete examples and empirical evidence, our arguments will be much stronger and more compelling.

While we advocate at the COP, we should also focus on advocacy at the national and even sub-national level: this is where climate targets, policies, laws, programmes and budgets are decided and usually implemented locally.

At the national and local level, we can have a positive impact, especially if we also activate faith-based organizations and churches and their leaders.

NDCs, NAPs and LTSs are the key instruments that determine the quality of national climate policies – and their sum determines the global level of ambition. Let's inspire and engage faith-based organizations, churches and their leaders to this cause. Together we are many and we can make a difference. This guide aims to make a small contribution to this by providing a technical tool to help understand and assess national climate policies aspirations, and instruments, and influence them positively through advocacy.

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