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Paris Climate Agreement: an opportunity to look back on 10 years of results to build the future

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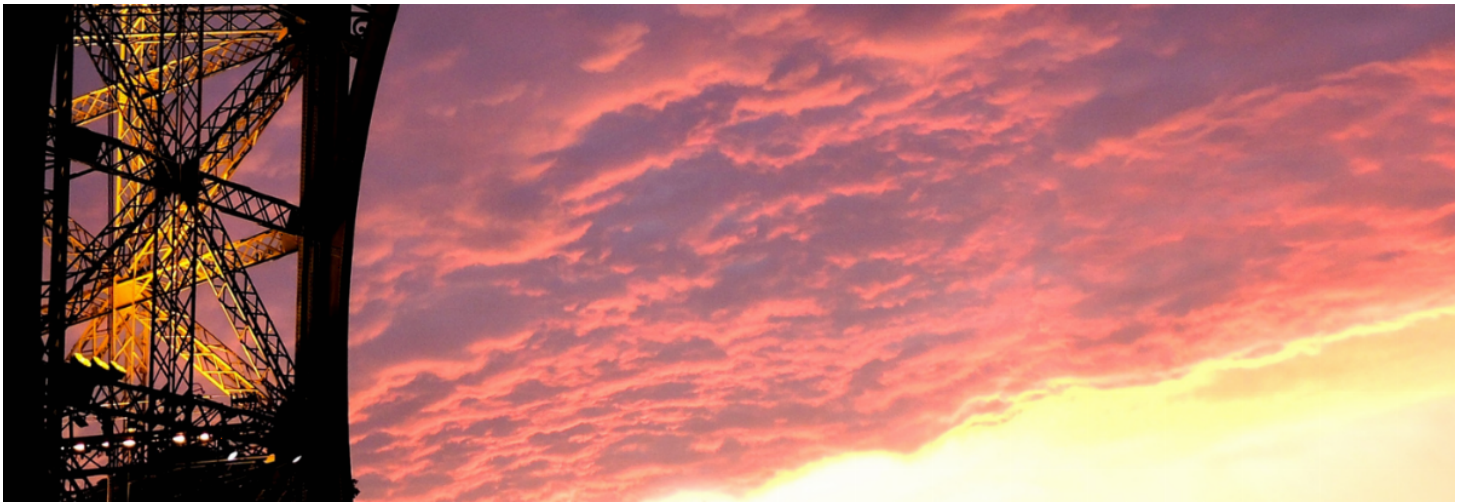
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This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement, a key milestone in the implementation of this international treaty, halfway through the "Decade of Action" (2020-2030) to limit temperature rise to below 2°C (and possibly 1.5°C), and with the 30th COP of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Brazil next November. Ten years after COP21 in Paris, against a backdrop of heightened international tensions, mistrust of multilateralism and backlash against climate policies, and as the harmful impacts of climate change continue to be felt around the world, it is necessary to take a step back and take stock of what the agreement has achieved—or failed to achieve—in order to inform the debate

on past, present and future climate action. Involved in the design of the Paris Agreement and as an observer of its implementation on the ground over the years, IDDRI is taking up this task on the basis of an analytical reading of the agreement's founding principles, with the aim of identifying its effects, strengths and weaknesses, the progress and limitations of what the signatory Parties have done with it, and the priority areas for action in the coming years.

Four guiding principles

The Paris Climate Agreement is based on four founding pillars designed to enable its objectives to be achieved. These pillars, or principles, and the analysis of evidence of their implementation, underpin the assessment carried out by IDDRI. A *Working Paper* detailing these assessment elements is being published today ([IDDRI, 2025](#)) to invite the community of experts and stakeholders to add to this assessment and discuss it in order to consolidate the objective evidence and key points of a diagnosis aimed at preparing the future.

In response to the Kyoto Protocol, which divided countries into categories based on their level of contribution to climate action, the **universal** nature of the Paris Agreement recognizes the global threat posed by climate change and the shared responsibility to tackle it. It aims to ensure that everyone works together to combat this threat (everyone with an interest in making their actions part of a global effort). In this context, however, responsibilities are not the same for everyone, and provisions therefore allow for flexibility to take into account 'differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances'.

In fine, based on the goal of a resilient, carbon-free world that limits global warming, the Paris Agreement embraces **a new vision of society and the economy** with which the expectations of various public and private stakeholders can be aligned. Beyond profound changes in production and consumption patterns, it sets out a more equitable and prosperous future for all, i.e. a truly sustainable development.

Designed with no expiry date, the Paris Agreement provides all stakeholders, whether public or private, with **a long-term direction** that enables them to align their actions and financing with a common, shared goal. The short term serves the long term, and stakeholders are encouraged to design their strategies accordingly, with a clearly defined horizon in mind.

The Paris Agreement also recognizes the systemic and cross-cutting nature of climate action. All sectors and policy areas, as well as a wide range of actors, whether public or private, international or local, are concerned. This is why **the general objectives of the agreement must be translated and implemented at the national and sectoral levels** and involve all stakeholders (governments, businesses, institutions, civil society, etc.). This requires not only long-term leadership, but also effective governance, sector-specific roadmaps and the alignment of actions in the political, financial and other areas.

An assessment based on the four pillars of the Paris Agreement: is the glass half full?

The Paris Agreement created the legal and political space necessary for coordinated global action, designed to guide, catalyze and create momentum, particularly within national processes and policies, but also directly between sectors, institutions and citizens. The impact is visible: the temperature rise trajectory by the end of the century has been reduced from +4°C to +2.1-2.8°C.

The decarbonization targets of the Paris Agreement have become a compass guiding governments, regions, businesses and citizens, all of whom have widely adopted carbon neutrality targets. Few sectors and policy areas are unaffected by the need to reduce emissions or adapt to the impacts of climate change. A green economy has also emerged, fuelled in particular by the growth of renewable energies and electric mobility ; the decline in the costs of these technologies has been driven by the convergence of expectations around the long-term horizon defined by the Paris Agreement, and has made possible the dissemination of its objectives in national policies and corporate strategies. The rise of the green economy is also reflected in the strengthening of bioeconomy and a reconfiguration of value chains around critical minerals, whose ultimate impact on sustainable development has yet to be assessed.

Collective progress has been made, but the results are still insufficient: the temperature trajectory remains extremely dangerous. Adaptation measures are inadequate, even in the face of limited global warming, the impacts of which are already being felt, with the increase in natural disasters, and the cooperation framework established by the treaty has not yet led to substantial progress. While the structural transformation of economies (production structures) and lifestyles (consumption structures) is underway, it remains incomplete, uneven and too slow with regard to ambitions. Resistance to change and inequalities in the distribution of the costs of the transition and the benefits of this new economy are hindering progress. Too often, the new economy is overlaying the traditional economy without replacing it. While the 1.5°C target is still achievable, it would require ambitious emissions reductions and profound structural changes over the next ten years.

Another area where progress has fallen short of expectations is the alignment of finance and the mobilization of funding and other means of implementation, particularly from developed to developing countries. As a result, ambiguity and mistrust have taken hold, limiting the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and its objectives. Beyond the crucial dimensions of equity and trust, the challenge of aligning financial flows and mobilizing private capital is considerable and requires action to be taken well beyond the climate community. Mechanisms for ensuring accountability for the expected actions are not easy to put in place and there is significant friction with other communities, particularly the development community.

Despite its imperfections and the geopolitical changes that have taken place since 2015, the Paris Agreement and the theory of change that underpins it, based primarily on science, have proven resilient so far and remain a viable multilateral framework for achieving climate goals. However, the momentum for action is fragile, with early signs of weakening universal commitment and insufficient follow-up on the implementation of decisions taken, in terms of mitigation, adaptation and financing. Similarly, while non-state actors (businesses and civil society in particular) are playing an increasing role, voluntary efforts often lack robustness, coherence and accountability mechanisms.

The international framework for climate action must evolve. It must be strengthened in terms of coordination between levels of governance, actors and policy areas, as well as in terms of short-term political responsibility (ambitious measures are often postponed) and the more central integration of sustainable development and justice into climate strategies. This requires a step up in political leadership and solidarity, both nationally and internationally, at a time when political tensions between countries and within societies are at their highest.

How to move forward?

The Paris Agreement provides a valid and operational framework for action, which has enabled collective momentum to build between States and with other stakeholders, even if its pace and strength remain insufficient. This framework for collective action has even proven resilient in the face of a series of unprecedented crises. However, improvements are needed, particularly in terms of governance, which is all the more crucial given that the very existence of common rules and forms of multilateral cooperation is currently being called into question. It is our collective responsibility to bring about change in four areas in particular—areas that IDDRI is working on and intends

to continue contributing to actively in the coming months. These are areas in which the political leadership of the COP30 Presidency will play a key role, supported by countries, economic actors and civil society for whom enhanced multilateral cooperation is essential:

1. **Supporting better implementation**, both through better coordination of climate efforts at the international level and by addressing barriers to implementation at the national level.
2. **Placing development and nature at the heart of climate action**, decisions, investments and performance assessments, including through more strategic international cooperation as a new form of ensuring equity and a just transition worldwide.
3. **Ensuring greater differentiation according to countries' capabilities**, as a necessary condition to reduce the risks of undermining the Paris Agreement's principle of universality and resilience, particularly in this period of geopolitical turbulence—this is an area where the G20 has a key role to play.
4. **Ensuring that the long-term orientation provides clear benchmarks for the short-term responsibility and accountability of actors** and the political commitment to mitigation and adaptation, both for Parties and non-state actors.

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