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COP30: Unlocking the climate action puzzle

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With the Paris Climate and Nature Week having just ended and COP 30 set to begin in a few days in Brazil ([IDDRI, 2025a](#)), questions regarding the implementation of the international climate framework and law are becoming increasingly pressing. The nationally determined contributions that countries were supposed to submit last February bear evidence of these challenges of political feasibility of the transition and structural barriers at the national level, as do the repeated calls to put financing issues on the agenda as a key factor in countries' ability to deliver on climate action. Are the deadlocks in the discussions and the difficulty in moving forward with the transition a sign that the momentum created by the Paris Agreement has been broken?

A momentum to be nurtured

The assessment carried out by IDDRI ([IDDRI, 2025b](#)) refutes this: the Paris Climate Agreement has indeed created the legal and political space necessary for coordinated global action, designed to provide guidance *via* a long-term direction, catalyze the efforts of entire sectors of the economy, and create momentum, particularly within national processes. The impact is visible, as in the significant progress in green technologies, massive electrification, changing attitudes and behaviours and, ultimately, a reduction in the projected rise in temperatures by the end of the

century from +4°C to +2.1-2.8°C. And the annual report of the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Initiative ([DDP-IDDRI, 2025](#)) on the transition underway in some 20 countries confirms this: the Paris Agreement has shaped national contexts with the almost universal establishment of dedicated legal, political and governance frameworks—be they interministerial coordination mechanisms or independent advisory and evaluation bodies—aimed at supporting climate action.

Against this backdrop, how can the frustrations linked to the delay in nationally determined contributions (NDCs), and their lack of ambition,¹ be interpreted? And what about these negotiations that seem to be stalling, these signs of a backtracking on climate commitments by the powers that were once leaders, even though the facts are clear: we are not on a path to reducing emissions that is compatible with science and the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Adverse geopolitics together with a vicious cycle of disengagement (just as the Paris Agreement had benefited from a virtuous cycle of engagement) could be pinpointed in that matter. But more fundamentally, what is at stake are the powerful interests competing for access to markets in economies that are increasingly oriented towards decarbonization, as well as competitiveness and security ([IDDRI, 2025c](#)). These weak signals also reveal the macroeconomic and socio-economic imbalances generated by the transition—green and digital: overcapacity, trade wars and the race for raw materials, the concentration of international investment that does not reach developing countries, and the social and societal impacts generated by structural changes in mobility, access to energy, modes of production and consumption, and employment.

A dynamic is underway, but it is disruptive and requires further consideration of its redistributive impacts, side effects, and the instabilities it creates. The implications of the “implementation” of international law within countries and internationally must be taken seriously, not as a secondary aspect of the transition, but as the manifestation of a systemic change that is underway and that must be supported while managing and sharing its costs and correcting its unexpected effects.

Solutions within and outside the UNFCCC

COPs are therefore still needed, and countries must talk to each other—negotiating new directions not being the only motivation for international cooperation. Better coordination of existing efforts is critical, including those undertaken outside the Climate Convention (UNFCCC) in the many international organizations that hold pieces of the climate puzzle at the sectoral level (such as the International Maritime Organisation or the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) or in terms of cross-cutting policies (such as the Bretton Woods institutions or the World Trade Organisation) ([IDDRI, 2025d](#)). This includes identifying barriers to implementation at the national or sectoral level and recognizing the need for mutual learning and specific partnerships to identify solutions and overcome obstacles ([IDDRI, 2025e](#)). These are all areas that can and must be addressed on the sidelines of the COPs.

There are many solutions within reach—the endeavour is not insurmountable given how far we have come. This must certainly be accompanied by a reorientation of existing UNFCCC processes, including the use of the various action and transparency plans submitted by countries to better identify barriers to transition and their solutions. The potential of the UNFCCC's Just Transition Work Programme² must also be better exploited to integrate socio-economic considerations into climate policies ([IDDRI, 2025f](#)). The creation of COP implementation forums at the regional level or between similar countries could generate a framework of trust for exchange and perhaps for critical peer review, thereby reinforcing collective learning and mutual emulation. However, this also requires recognition of the limitations of the UNFCCC process and the need to continue to promote the climate agenda outside the UNFCCC within other international organizations, and to institutionalize platforms for exchange between political communities such as the one established by Brazil under its G20 presidency and in view of COP30, which aims to

bring together finance ministers and those in charge of climate issues.

1

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cma2025_08.pdf

2

<https://unfccc.int/fr/node/637774>

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