

PRESS RELEASE

UN Climate Change Conference (COP26): researchers from 26 countries and 3 sectors analyse on the ground progress

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PARIS, September 8, 2021 – In the run-up to the climate pre-COP on September 30 in Milan, researchers from 26 countries and 3 sectors are publishing an original analysis of world progress made towards deep decarbonization since the 2015 Paris Agreement, **looking at multiple dimensions of progress beyond immediate emission levels**. Coordinated by France's Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), this far-reaching research also extracts 10 **key common markers of decarbonization maturity, intended to provide decision-makers** with a clear benchmark for policy planning and international cooperation agenda setting, and ultimately help close the global climate ambition and action gaps.

The 29 science teams cooperating on this research present trends and progress on key enablers that can activate transitions and make structural transformations possible. They show how this granular and bottom-up approach can help identify previously hidden conditions for increasing ambition and sharing best practices.

"This report is meant to make country-specific insider information accessible internationally, in order to collectively design new solutions for increased climate ambition. One way to accelerate the transition is to apply lessons learned from how countries and sectors' decarbonization approaches have evolved since 2015, and to identify the social, technical, economic, political or governance obstacles that need to be overcome to go further." explains **Marta Torres Gunfaus**, from IDDRI, one of the coordinators of the report.

Professor Chukwumerije Okereke, author of the report's Nigeria chapter, adds *"It is vital that Africans are given a greater opportunity to tell their stories regarding the impact of climate change on their societies, their effort to tackle the challenge, and the support they need from the rest of the world to cope."*

Emily Hosek, from the SLOCAT Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport, and author of the Transport chapter, says: *“this report is an invaluable resource for anyone trying to understand what’s really happening beyond the numbers – from major areas of climate progress and remaining barriers to the systemic changes required today to reach net-zero emissions by mid-century in select countries and key sectors.”*

For example, **one of the key lessons that emerge from the report is how countries’ climate policies and institutions have been reshaped by the Paris Agreement ‘carbon neutrality countdown’ approach.** This new reference framework for climate policies has already created transformational policies and governance mutations in many countries and sectors worldwide. However, institutions, governance mechanisms, and concrete action plans still need to adapt further, if we are to align the ambition of short-term planning with the longer-term goal of carbon neutrality. Existing decarbonization strategies from public and business actors largely remain insufficiently detailed, ambitious and actionable. Because of this, they often fail to capture the full set of opportunities and constraints of carbon neutrality for specific actors, and they do not fully address the interplays with key socio-economic dimensions.

“Some criticize net-zero commitments as a way to delay immediate action, but this approach illustrates what achieving net zero really means. Not just in 2050, but today, by showing the different paths countries need to be on. This is critical for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and keeping 1.5°C in reach” says **Emmanuel Guérin**, Executive Director for the International Group at the European Climate Foundation

Another conclusion of the report is that, in addition to rising public awareness of climate change, **comprehensive and open societal debates have emerged in several countries on how to achieve rapid, broad, and far-reaching transformations** implied by carbon neutrality. These societal debates are crucial as they can help societies arbitrate between the different pathways to carbon neutrality, with their differential impacts on different social groups. International cooperation and capacity-building should also help generalize these debates across geographies in order to enable national conversations to develop in a structured, open, and useful manner.

Structure of the report

This report entitled *Climate ambition beyond emission numbers: taking stock of progress by looking inside countries and sectors* has been coordinated by IDDRI in collaboration with more than 70 experts across the world. It can be found at: <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/report/climate-ambition-beyond-emission-numbers-taking-stock-progress>

The core of the report is made of 26 country chapters and 3 sectoral chapters. The country chapters describe the recent evolutions of domestic discourses on climate ambition, national climate policy, national governance and concrete policies and actions. The sectoral chapters cover Transport, Industry and Agriculture, Forest and Other Land-Use respectively. These sectors are commonly considered as ‘hard-to-abate’, i.e. those where techno-economic solutions compatible with carbon neutrality are less clearly identified. These chapters analyse recent trends and reveal the main barriers to overcome in the short term to support rapid and far-reaching transformations.

A “summary for decision-makers” is also included. It presents 10 cross-cutting messages emerging from the country and sector analysis, as a guide to the selection of priorities for collective action in the post-COP26 period.