WWF Response to the Climate High-Level Champions' Call for Inputs

August 18, 2025

In response to the call for inputs Climate High-Level Champions, WWF is pleased to submit our recommendations for strengthening the Global Climate Action Agenda in the context of development of a vision and plan for the GCAA in the next 5 years.

Introduction

WWF supports the efforts of the incoming Brazilian Presidency and the Climate Champions and their team to strengthen and expand the work of the Global Climate Action Agenda, incorporating the concept of *mutirão* and organizing initiatives around the outcome of the first Global Stocktake.

In conjunction with strong negotiated outcomes from COP28, the Action Agenda can contribute to restoring global confidence in collaborative and multilateral responses to the climate crisis, , responding to the gaps in climate action and support, and to getting on track to meeting long term climate objectives, including limiting warming to 1.5 °C.

The difficult circumstances surrounding COP30 are well recognized by all parties—this shared understanding is advantageous, as it can galvanize efforts toward ensuring its success. Without exaggeration, the outcome of COP30 may determine the trajectory of the global climate process.

Accordingly, the COP30 Presidency has issued three communications outlining the roadmap toward a successful COP. These include the "mutirão" as a broad participatory framework; four thematic circles focusing on finance, people, ethics, and multilateral policy; an overarching emphasis on implementation; and the roles of the Climate Action Agenda, its High-Level Champion, and sectoral envoys. These initiatives seek to guide the COP30 process under the leadership of the Brazilian Presidency.

However, the purpose and core pillars supporting this process must be clearly articulated.

Given that Brazil's principal aim is to promote the implementation of agreements reached across the previous 29 COPs—and to avoid the introduction of new, potentially contentious agenda items—this purpose must be explicitly defined and serve as the central message to be conveyed:

"COP30: Closing the gap towards an effective domestic implementation of global decisions and commitments; a roadmap to 2030"

The Climate Action Agenda was established in 2014 during COP20 in Lima, Peru. Its initial objective was to "convene actors towards an agreement and its implementation", a goal it has fulfilled commendably. Moreover, the Action Agenda has played a crucial role in framing the climate debate within an economic context by fostering sectoral commitments, targets, and tangible actions by economic stakeholders.

Under the framework of the Marrakesh Partnership—featuring "High-Level Champions," Party-mandated work plans, and five-year action cycles—the Action Agenda has successfully positioned itself as a semi-formal interface between the UNFCCC Parties, the Secretariat, and non-state actors. This semi-formal nature has enabled it to build legitimacy and reputation, both of which are now essential to strengthen.

Below are some responses to the questions posed by the Climate Champions.

1. **What should success look like for the GCAA in the next five years, and how can it be measured effectively?**

The current challenge lies in ensuring that the Action Agenda adapts to meet today's needs: a politically turbulent context, the restoration of trust, efforts to curb greenwashing, greater political coherence, and the overarching COP30 goal of implementation. In short, the Action Agenda must become instrumental in advancing the objective of: "Closing the gap towards an effective domestic implementation of global decisions and commitments; a roadmap to 2030". To that end, the following strategic roles are proposed to strengthen the Action Agenda:

A. The Action Agenda and Champions as Promoters of the Climate Economy: Champions can guide actors involved in the pursuit of Net Zero commitments. The climate architecture remains largely voluntary, which has led to a proliferation of initiatives—sometimes overlapping or fragmented—creating confusion and skepticism. This has prompted the UN Secretary-General to establish a High-Level Expert Group to restore credibility. The Action Agenda should be central to these credibility-building efforts and serve as a promoter of a coherent climate economy.

B. The Action Agenda and Climate Finance: Progress on implementation is contingent upon financial alignment. Brazil has prioritized finance as a means to curb deforestation and forest degradation—demonstrated by its promotion of the Tropical Forest Forever Fund (TFFF), a mechanism intended to generate the right incentives for forest management and restoration in tropical regions.

However, the climate finance landscape remains fragmented, spanning public and private mechanisms. Completing pending reforms—such as those involving Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)—requires enhanced organizational coherence. The Action Agenda, owing to its semi-formal nature and link to the UNFCCC Parties, is well positioned to play this coordinating role.

C. The Action Agenda as a Platform for Political Coherence Across Agendas and Forums: The Climate Action Agenda has developed in an organic, actor-driven manner, producing multiple initiatives and events—such as regional climate weeks (e.g., New York, London, others)—often uncoordinated and with uneven legitimacy. While this spontaneity is a natural feature of the economic transition underway, it also creates confusion and risks duplication.

The Action Agenda and Champions can help articulate political coherence across these diverse platforms—not by replacing organizers, but by identifying critical issues requiring attention and systematizing decisions and commitments in a more efficient manner.

D. The Action Agenda as a Catalyst for Synergies Across Rio Conventions: The Climate Action Agenda has achieved a greater degree of maturity than those linked to the other Rio Conventions—on biodiversity and desertification. Nonetheless, there is growing momentum toward cross-convention synergies. For instance, CBD COP16 adopted a decision on "Biodiversity and Climate," and initiatives such as the "Rio Trio" aim to reinforce these links.

In this context, the Action Agenda and Champions can serve as bridge-builders, activating engagement across conventions and promoting synergetic actions at both global and national levels.

E. The Action Agenda and Implementation of the 2030 Breakthroughs: The 2030 Breakthroughs initiative represents one of the most structured efforts to define sectoral transformation plans for climate action. Yet, it remains under-recognized, especially among political leaders and within domestic contexts.

Building upon this initiative can accelerate progress on sector-specific targets required to achieve science-based transitions.

Success in the next five years should mean a GCAA that is **complementary, catalytic, collaborative, comprehensive,** and **credible** (Chan et al. 2021; 2022):

- *complementary* in working alongside governments to accelerate implementation of internationally agreed climate goals, while also aligning to other sustainability goals;

- *catalytic* in inspiring societal (non-state and subnational) actors to take action and facilitating interfaces with governments to raise ambition through long-term mobilization;

- *collaborative* in involving other UN conventions, scientists, civil society, and existing initiatives in the design, mobilization, recording, and evaluation of the agenda;

- *comprehensive* in mobilizing actions from a diversity of actors, including NGOs, and indigenous peoples and local communities, and marginalized groups, particularly in the global south—while enabling learning across governance levels and regions; and,

- *credible* in requiring regular reporting to track and evaluate actions, ensure individual and collective progress, and phase out underperforming initiatives.

2.   How can the GCAA facilitate direct and impactful engagement between Parties and NPS to support implementation efforts at both national and sectoral levels, in order to advance the full delivery of the GST, NDCs, and NAPs?

Nevertheless, scientific capacity and leadership from political, economic, and social actors have propelled a growing economic movement toward decarbonization—developing sectoral roadmaps and fostering innovation aligned with climate science.

This complex backdrop makes the success of COP30 imperative. A successful COP30 will demonstrate the resilience and maturity of the climate regime, reinforcing it against foreseeable threats. It is thus essential for all components of the COP30 process to share a clear understanding of its overarching purpose and their respective roles within it.

The Action Agenda should be a testing ground for initiatives, measures and frameworks that in some cases can be adopted as policy by individual governments and jurisdictions, or through multilateral and even global initiatives, including through decisions under the Paris Agreement.

WWF believes that connecting the Action Agenda to the ambition cycle through six axes related to GST outcomes is a good strategy. Those axes can be revised after each GST. We suggest semi-formal moments at COPs - Presidential Roundtables - that could include High Level Country representatives and sector representatives to deliver specific implementation guidance on each of the axes of the Action Agenda for NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDS.

3.   How can the CGAA promote an inclusive and equitable engagement, in particular from underrepresented groups and regions?

One of the major critiques of the COP process is its perceived remoteness from the general public. Even efforts to ensure inclusivity have failed to counter this perception, which has contributed to skepticism and denialism.

Brazil's introduction of the "mutirão" and the Global Ethical Stocktake offers an opportunity to reconnect the process with people—especially those suffering the impacts of climate extremes. This empathetic framing can help garner broader societal support, which is vital in the current political context.

Practical recommendations for future COP Presidencies to catalyze civil society engagement:

- Define focus topics and goals to shape the Action Agenda in alignment with the overarching COP30 strategy and negotiation objectives, such as NDC revisions, ensuring actionable plans that integrate contributions from non-party stakeholders;

- Enhance civil society's understanding of COP's scope and objectives to foster alignment with the presidency's ambitions through clear communication and public education via websites, media, and other channels;

- Strengthen coherence between the Negotiation and Action agendas to maximize impact, adhering closely to their respective mandates;

- Incorporate global and domestic perspectives ensuring expectations are aligned.

Recommendations related to establishing collaborative networks of non-state actors:

- Map civil society groups and demands considering geographic perspectives and the level of engagement within climate action and COP's environment, with a particular focus on vulnerable and traditionally excluded or under-represented populations;

- Leverage existing issue-based coalitions and thematic working groups for cross-constituency inputs, and join forces with these platforms to enable focused collaboration, and strengthen civil society's contribution to solution design;

- Establish civil society leaders as focal points to cascade COP30 objectives, align grassroots efforts, and strengthen engagement with COP leadership;

- Facilitate regular dialogue through structured sessions with key CSO leaders, ensuring continuous alignment of expectations, priorities, and achievable COP goals;

- Identify areas of strategic alignment by evaluating convergent and divergent priorities between COP30's agenda and civil society demands;

- Implement a comprehensive communication strategy to explain goals, roles, and engagement mechanisms, leveraging government resources like Social Participation and Diversity Advisory Offices to amplify civil society's voice.

4. What improvements can be made to ensure better transparency, reporting and follow up of the GCAA, including in existing tools such as the Global Climate Action Portal (a.k.a NAZCA) and the Yearbook of Global Climate Action?

To reflect the qualities of the GCAA mentioned in response to the first question, measures should include:

1. Indicators of *complementarity*, such as evidence that initiatives contribute to the implementation, and higher ambition, of nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans, and other national and international sustainability commitments.

2. Metrics of *catalytic effects*, including qualitative evidence of scaled solutions, integration into regulatory frameworks, and/or replication across sectors and regions.

3. Assessments of *collaboration*, for example the extent to which initiatives engage with other sustainability domains, scientific communities, and networks.

4. Data capturing *comprehensiveness*, such as geographical and actor-type participation metrics (e.g., inclusion of under-represented actors, indigenous peoples and local communities, and global south-based initiatives).

5. Measures ensuring *credibility*, including annual reporting on outputs and outcomes (mitigation, adaptation, and beyond), governance quality, integrity indicators (e.g., responsible use of carbon credits), and attention to synergies or trade-offs with nature and other sustainability aspects.

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