



**Climate High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action
Submission by the World Resources Institute
August 2025**

In a letter to Parties and non-Party stakeholders (NPS) dated 17 July 2025, the Climate High-Level Champions (HLC) invited Parties, observer organizations, and other NPS to offer reflections on the vision and a plan for the next five years of the Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA).

The World Resources Institute (WRI) is pleased to share its views in response to this invitation for submissions and is especially grateful for the efforts to enhance the work of the HLC and the GCAA, including the proposals put forward by the COP30 Presidency. These views are based on WRI's experiences in engaging with the UN Climate Change processes, including the Framework Convention, the Paris Agreement, Parties, the HLC, Climate Champions Team, and the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action. These views primarily target efforts that can be taken by the HLC and Marrakech Partnership, but also include some suggestions for Parties and COP Presidencies to support the work of the GCAA.

WRI understands the GCAA as an inclusive umbrella broadly referring to the full suite of climate action efforts taking place. The GCAA therein includes action and efforts from a wide range of actors—including national governments, regions and subnational governments or entities, cities and local jurisdictions, local communities, international organizations, the private sector and businesses, civil society, academic institutions, Indigenous Peoples, youth, women, and all other actors—acting individually or collaboratively (such as through intergovernmental or multi-stakeholder cooperative initiatives).

Summary of Views

The submission includes reflections specific to each of the four guiding questions outlined in the 17 July letter. The following summarize the ideas and key points presented throughout the submission.

Success of the GCAA over the next five years:

- Build connections between the GCAA and UN climate processes, including negotiations, dialogues, and work programs, with explicit links to the Global Stocktake (GST), the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and other core processes.
- Identify forward-looking indicators and/or KPI to support tracking of GCAA actions in line with outcomes from the GST and GGA.
- Establish and organize “Implementation Forums” during COPs and Climate Weeks.
- Reinforce the role of the GCAA in driving the “ambition loop” between Parties and non-Party stakeholders, by encouraging Parties to include NPS actions in their national implementation efforts
- Enhance the GCAA’s reflection of climate action across all geographies, covering mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and means of implementation.

Engagement between Parties and NPS:

- Clarify and map the roles of different types of actors (national governments, intergovernmental initiatives, subnational governments, private sector, civil society, Indigenous Peoples), especially because learnings and best practices may only be applicable within actor-types.

Inclusive and equitable engagement:

- Utilize the Climate Weeks and UN climate conferences to enhance the profile of the GCAA and expand outreach to stakeholders, including by organizing GCAA Clinics/Workshops.

Better transparency, reporting, and follow-up:

- Build from WRI research findings on how to assess whether cooperative initiatives are making reasonable progress over time towards their objectives.
- Enhance GCAP by allowing actors and initiatives to indicate whether their efforts contribute to thematic axes, their contributions toward forward-looking indicators/KPIs, and clarifying which types of actors are contributing to each effort.

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

1. Enhanced connection between the GCAA and UN climate processes, including negotiations, dialogues, and work programs

WRI understands the GCAA as an inclusive umbrella broadly referring to the full suite of climate action efforts taking place. The GCAA includes action and efforts from a wide range of actors, including national governments, regions and subnational governments or entities, cities and local jurisdictions, international organizations, the private sector and businesses, civil society, academic institutions, Indigenous Peoples, youth, women, and all other actors. The proposals from the COP30 Presidency have been valuable for advancing the conversation on the GCAA and for spurring reflection on how the GCAA can best support climate action.

Within the UN climate process, a recent common refrain underscores the need to shift from treaty negotiation to implementation. Previous WRI research highlighted how the UN climate regime has established an “implementation architecture” of constituted bodies, work programs, and other processes to support implementation (Dagnet et al. 2021). The GCAA can play an important role in supporting the shift to implementation by helping **connect negotiated outcomes and objectives to the climate action and implementation efforts from Parties and NPS.**

The COP30 Presidency’s six thematic axes and 30 key objectives outlined in the [Fourth Letter from the COP President Designate](#) begin to do this. While the thematic axes make explicit reference to the outcomes from the first Global Stocktake, it could also be helpful to ensure that the seven thematic areas from the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience (decision 2/CMA.5, para. 9) are also reflected. Outcomes from the GST and the seven thematic targets in the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience offer a valuable starting point for facilitating engagement in implementation efforts at various levels. Parties should consider endorsing the six thematic axes proposed by the COP30 Presidency and explore how they can also be useful in organizing work under constituted bodies, work programs, dialogues, and other UN climate processes. Doing so could create continuity in the GCAA year over year. In this way, the GCAA and the work of the HLC can help leverage the UN climate regime as a catalytic institution to support and drive implementation of climate action and support.

One value-add for the GCAA would be to help identify **forward-looking indicators and/or KPIs** that reflect whether progress in reducing emissions and building resilience is taking place at the pace and scale required. Clear indicators drawing from outcomes of the GST and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience could help create continuity in the organization of the GCAA year over year, allowing for focus on the identified indicators, and could help establish clear organizing targets for all actors contributing to the GCAA.

2. Establishment and organization of “Implementation Forums”

Within the UN climate regime, the GCAA importantly is one of the few spaces bringing together the wide range of actors working to implement climate action. As such, this offers an important opportunity for the GCAA to play a central role in centering conversations around “implementation” during the annual COPs and other UN climate spaces. Over the last several years, WRI has jointly organized, with the Climate Champions Team, Marrakech Partnership, and CDP, events during the COPs called “implementation dialogues,” featuring various intergovernmental initiatives and other state and non-state actors discussing their implementation successes, challenges, and serving as a platform for shared learning. For more on the particular events, please see the concept notes and event descriptions from [COP27](#), [COP28](#), and [COP29](#).

The GCAA should expand these events and support the organization of **Implementation Forums** during each

COP. This [suggestion](#) has also been made by former SBSTA chair Paul Watkinson (2018-2019), builds upon efforts from the 2025 Climate Weeks in Latin America and Africa, and builds upon suggestions received in last year's invitation for feedback to the High-Level Champions (see, for example, paragraphs 6 and 9 in the secretariat's [synthesis report](#)). The Implementation Forums should be joint efforts with the UN Climate Change secretariat and COP Presidencies, following the leadership of the HLC. The HLC can ensure that implementation forums during COPs:

- Provide a space for conversations within the UN climate process that speak directly to issues relating to implementing climate action;
- Bring together a wide variety of actors, including national governments, subnational governments, businesses, local communities, and more, to work together to address on-the-ground challenges in implementing climate action;
- Highlight and showcase the action underway, especially that reported on and captured in the Global Climate Action Portal;
- Engage Party delegates, observers, and media in conversations relating to implementation;
- Raise awareness of the “real-world” and systemic barriers facing collective and cooperative action; and
- Create spaces for shared learning and exchanges on common successes and challenges.

These Implementation Forums could serve as a useful rebranding of the current practice of hosting Action Agenda thematic days and as a way to bring together thematic efforts led by the Marrakech Partnership, HLC, and COP Presidencies. Explicitly framing these conversations around implementation would help demonstrate the GCAA's role in supporting the UN climate process' “shift to implementation.” The GCAA would undoubtedly be successful if it were able to support and guide the acceleration of implementation solutions and contribute to how the UN climate regime is able to showcase its “shift to implementation.”

3. Reinforcement of the GCAA as part of the ambition loop connecting negotiated outcomes and objectives to the climate action from Parties and NPS

The GCAA was established to boost a virtuous ambition loop between Parties and non-Party stakeholders, where action from both creates a positive feedback loop, reinforcing each other, and enabling more ambitious action. However, national climate policies and plans do not necessarily track how NPS action delivered in their territories are contributing to their implementation efforts. A successful GCAA at the national level would support countries in acknowledging, fostering and monitoring individual actions—such as emissions reductions from pledges to net zero made by companies and/or subnational governments—in a transparent manner given confidence that implementation progress is fully embedded into the ambition loop.

4. Enhanced reflection of all climate actions, across all geographies and across mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and means of implementation

The GCAA will demonstrate its success in better capturing and incorporating the full range of climate action. Many elements of the GCAA focus on mitigation actions and climate actions registered via the GCAP underrepresent actions in developing and least developed countries. Efforts should be made by the HLC and Marrakech Partnership to enhance the profile of the GCAA among all state and non-state actors, in all geographies, and for all forms of climate action. GCAA Clinic workshop during the Climate Weeks can be one way of enhancing the profile of the GCAA more broadly.

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?

Another element of success relates to the roles of Parties and NPS in the GCAA. In our view, the GCAA should include efforts from all actors, including governments and intergovernmental cooperative initiatives. The HLC and the MPGCA should clarify **the roles for different types of actors** in the GCAA and consider how best to organize and map work based on the participating actors. This could include identifying the specific roles and efforts of, respectively, national governments/Parties, intergovernmental and other cooperative initiatives, subnational governments, business/private sector, and civil society. Shared learnings and experiences may be most applicable among the same actor-type and so centering actor-type in GCAA frameworks and efforts could ensure that actors are able to identify the most relevant and applicable learnings, best practices, and ambition-

setting. For example, learnings and experiences from intergovernmental cooperative initiatives may be only be comparable to other similar initiatives given the central role of national governments in driving these efforts. Actors often compare their efforts and actions to those of their peers and so bringing clarity on the role of the various actors to the GCAA can help actors understand their unique role and contributions to climate action.

As suggested above, developing **consistent thematic axes/areas**, such as those proposed by the COP30 presidency, would be an important step in facilitating impactful engagement. Consistent thematic areas would also be necessary for identifying forward-looking indicators which can serve as a tool for organizing engagement.

Engagement will only be impactful if all actors understand their roles, have clear shared objectives, and share a willingness for productive engagements. In this vein, the GCAA cannot focus only on NPS efforts. Outcomes from the engagement between Parties and NPS could also inform negotiations under the COP or the CMA and presiding officers should be encouraged to consider how to reflect outcomes, recommendations, or solutions emerging from the GCAA in their consultations and the formal negotiations process.

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

WRI research surveyed country participation in more than 90 mitigation-focused cooperative initiatives and found vast disparities in the participation of national governments by region. This research concluded that participation from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and countries from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region are largely marginal, while participation from Asia, Africa, and Latin America is limited and varied by sector (Forner and Díaz 2024).

As stated in question 1, the success of the GCAA will depend on its ability to be inclusive of all climate action: across mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and means of implementation, across all geographies, and from all actors. Organizing GCAA Clinics or Workshops during Climate Weeks and UN climate conferences could enhance the profile of the GCAA for all actors. These GCAA Clinics could:

- Provide a space for Parties and NPS to better understand and foster climate actions related to the six axes and 30 objectives proposed by the Brazilian COP30 Presidency;
- Showcase and establish connections to actions that are already happening in host countries and local communities; and
- Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange related to technical capacity building and barriers and opportunities to scaling up implementation. Spotlight contributions from underrepresented regions through the Yearbook or a GCAA Report which could highlight Global South leadership, adaptation and loss and damage solutions, just transition, and other notable sectoral efforts.

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?

WRI has recently published a [new paper](#), which proposes an expectations framework to assess whether cooperative initiatives are meeting reasonable expectations across three stages: from initial pledges to emerging efforts and, ultimately, to established initiatives delivering impact (Cogswell and de Zoysa 2025). The framework identifies four vital elements: complementarity to the broader climate cooperation landscape, robust governance structures, implementation and delivery in line with objectives, and transparency through monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

This new framework is primarily aimed at initiatives where national governments serve as the initiative's primary orchestrators or signatories. Several elements of the framework are already captured on GCAP. The framework also highlights the importance of regular reporting by initiatives on their activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. GCAP is a suitable platform for cooperative initiatives to utilize for this reporting and should serve as the central tool for reporting among initiatives.

While Parties report on progress towards their NDCs through the Paris Agreement's enhanced transparency framework, GCAP can form an important element of the transparency ecosystem, with all actors invited to voluntarily submit information. Many Parties participate in cooperative initiatives, either in initiatives solely comprised of national governments or in initiatives with a wide range of actors. Parties should ensure that the

cooperative initiatives they participate in are reflected in GCAP. Each COP Presidency should also take responsibility for ensuring that any **cooperative initiative launched during their Presidency is registered on GCAP**. Additionally, the HLC, with COP Presidencies, could identify **clear terms of reference or minimum standards** for any new initiatives.

Improvements in transparency and reporting could build on some of the previous suggestions noted in this submission, especially relating to forward-looking indicators, consistent thematic axes/areas, the roles for various actors, and clear links between initiatives and GST thematic outcomes. GCAP could offer participating cooperative initiatives the opportunity to identify which **thematic axes/outcome** they aim to make progress towards, to identify **forward-looking indicators** they seek to impact, and to indicate whether **those responsible for contributing to the initiative** are national governments, NPS, or a mix of both. With these additional elements in GCAP, initiatives and other actors will help clarify their role in the climate action ecosystem and show how their efforts relate to the negotiated outcomes from the GST and the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience. Reporting toward established forward-looking indicators could also provide greater clarity on existing efforts and inform subsequent global stocktakes, supporting the assessment of collective progress. Reporting on an effort's relationship to thematic axes would address elements of our proposed new framework on clarity of an initiative's contribution to the climate action ecosystem, and reporting toward relevant established indicators can demonstrate an initiative's implementation and contributions toward common outcomes.

Further, allowing self-reporting through GCAP in any of the six UN languages would help capture greater diversity of climate actions. The Yearbook or other efforts to showcase actions reported on GCAP could spotlight contributions from underrepresented regions in order to highlight leadership from underrepresented geographies, underrepresented types of actors, on adaptation, on loss and damage, and on underrepresented sectoral action.

Participation in events during the Implementation Forum, discussed above, could help incentivize cooperative initiatives to report on GCAP, by requiring that only registered initiatives may participate. Therefore, if initiatives wish to highlight their activities and efforts during the COP, they must have an active record on GCAP Updates to GCAP, that allow actors to indicate how their efforts contribute to the goals of the GST, could also feed into a synthesis report, providing valuable input to subsequent GSTs and incentivizing initiatives and actors to have their efforts to have their efforts included as part of the GST's assessment of collective progress.

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