

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

International Policy Briefer | December 2021



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

What is the UNFCCC? The UNFCCC is an international treaty aimed to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gases. The adoption of the Paris Agreement in December 2015 reflected a landmark agreement that combined voluntary actions and legal requirements (with the Kyoto Protocol being the preceding treaty). It brought all nations together working towards a common mission to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change. The Paris Agreement essentially charted a new course in the global climate effort that encourages all countries to contribute in the effort to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate. To reach the goals and assess progress, the Paris Agreement also established an ambition mechanism that reflects and relies on the efforts of each country through its “nationally determined contribution” (NDC), or climate action plans.

Recent progress: At the most recent UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP26), world leaders came to an agreement adopting the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) which operationalizes the Paris Agreement with the completion of the Paris Rulebook and reaffirms that all countries need to urgently increase their climate ambition in order to keep the goals of the Paris Agreement alive, based on the latest science from the [IPCC report](#). It also acknowledged the importance of local and indigenous communities as well as the importance of ecosystems for climate mitigation and adaptation. Additionally, it established an annual dialogue on ocean climate action building off the [first dialogue to consider how to strengthen adaptation and mitigation action for ocean and climate change](#) held in 2020.

Why is the UNFCCC relevant to the Coastal 500 Network?

The UNFCCC is the core international body that makes decisions on climate change that have a direct impact on local communities as they are often among the most vulnerable to a changing climate. The UNFCCC can serve as a vital forum where the international community can become more aware of the role of local leaders, like the Coastal 500, by elevating stories and examples you can share while at the same time linking local action with global decisions, and vice versa for a local to global approach. With climate change becoming an increasingly global hot topic, the UNFCCC attracts participation from the private sector and other municipal leaders supporting direct climate action through political and financial commitments and partnerships. As a member of the Coastal 500, the network will enable the local perspective to be brought to the international climate discussions. Connecting local expectations, action and ambition with the urgency and need of the global level is another example of how Coastal 500 can engage in the UNFCCC while advocating for the importance of locally led solutions for coastal communities and local governments. Further, the Coastal 500 can serve as a vehicle to better understand the global outcomes on climate change and understand how to access increased technical capacity for mitigation or adaptation activities, financing at the national or local level, and other climate-relevant tools or partners. Lastly, with the newly established annual dialogue on ocean climate action, the Coastal 500 is uniquely placed to offer a local perspective that directly influences the level of climate ambition.

Coming Up:

- Regional Climate Weeks 2022, TBD [[Link for updated dates](#)]
- 6 – 16 June 2022, Bonn, Germany. UNFCCC intersessional, and first annual dialogue on ocean climate action
- 7 – 18 November 2022, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. UNFCCC COP27