



Using the Global Stocktake to increase national climate policy ambition and improve implementation

SUMMARY FOR POLICY MAKERS

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The independent Global Stocktake (iGST)

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SUMMARY FOR POLICY MAKERS

This report aims to support the independent Global Stocktake (iGST) - the cooperative efforts of a consortium of civil society actors to advance the Global Stocktake (GST), the formal process for periodically assessing collective progress in achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

The project's main objectives are to:

1. Investigate how greater climate ambition might play out in five countries selected on the basis of their widely varying circumstances and their importance to achievement of Paris Agreement goals.
2. Obtain insights on ongoing climate change actions at the national level in these countries.
3. Assess national climate action in the context of the GST in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
4. Gain insights into the interplay of national-level climate actions (climate ambition) and international climate politics under the UNFCCC as well as related challenges and opportunities.

Context

The purpose of the Paris Agreement is to strengthen the global response to climate change in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (UNFCCC 2015). This purpose builds on the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

One of the key components of the Paris Agreement is the Global Stocktake (GST), a systemic and comprehensive assessment of collective progress in achieving the agreement's goals. An ambition-raising mechanism, the GST will inform countries' formulation of national-level climate commitments known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The first GST began at the end of 2021 and will culminate in 2023. Starting in 2023, the GST will occur every five years in three stages: (1) collection of information, (2) technical assessment of submitted information, and (3) consideration of outputs.

The GST is an opportunity for countries to collectively construct global narratives regarding climate change response and to identify enabling conditions for climate-compatible development. Critically, it explicitly invites the participation of non-state actors. This report aims to support that participation by shedding light on the climate ambition of five countries—Ethiopia, Ghana, Norway, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa—selected on the basis of their widely varying circumstances and their importance to achievement of Paris Agreement goals as well as their membership in more than one regional UNFCCC negotiating group.

Relationship between climate ambition and the UNFCCC

Understanding how the UNFCCC, specifically, the GST, influences domestic climate action begins with understanding how certain domestic factors influence national-level climate ambition. Those factors are focus of ambition, government coordination, role of the private sector, and level of citizens' climate change awareness.

Focus of ambition

We found that mitigation is the focus of all five case study countries' climate ambition. Adaptation is also a focus in the developing countries included in the study. In some countries, climate action is closely linked with a just transition or sustainable development.

Government coordination

In most of the countries, the national government plays the central role in designing and implementing climate change measures. To increase ownership of these measures, most countries have an inter-ministerial advisory committee that oversees climate change policy. Subnational government also plays a large role in terms of informing NDC planning and implementation. At this level of governance, climate change discussions generally focus on immediate impacts.

Private sector role

In some case study countries, the private sector has a substantial role in realizing climate ambition. In these countries, various industry sectors have developed roadmaps for achieving zero emissions by 2050 while maintaining growth and jobs. In other countries, the private sector plays a small and passive role in climate action.

Climate change awareness

In the developing countries, education and training programs on climate change have been promoted by an array of international organizations. In most of the case study countries, universities play a central role in raising climate change awareness. The media play varying roles in raising awareness.

National climate ambition: Key barriers and facilitators

Maximizing ambition during the GST requires an understanding of (1) the sectors that can best support a country's ambition in the next 5 to 10 years, (2) the barriers to realizing that ambition, and (3) the facilitators of increased ambition. Table 1 summarizes this and other country-specific information.

Key sectors driving ambition vary from country to country. Agriculture and land use are key to climate ambition in the developing countries. Two countries have economy-wide mitigation strategies. For all the case study countries, lack of policy coherence and technology development are barriers to realizing climate ambition. All but one of the countries face additional barriers, including insufficient skills transfer, lack of access to climate finance and technologies, and lack of capacity development. A leading facilitator of climate ambition in the developing countries is international support tailored to domestic circumstances. Technology development would spur ambition in all the countries.

Table 1. Summary of study findings

COUNTRY	Focus of ambition	Role of private sector	Key sectors driving climate ambition	Barriers	Facilitators
Ethiopia	<p>Mitigation-focused, sectoral approach with long-term goal of carbon neutrality</p> <p>Uses NDC to achieve a set goal in 20-year CRGES (2011)</p>	Passive and on a small scale	Agriculture-led industrialization and adaptive industry systems development (e.g., through proper positioning of industrial parks and efficient supply of raw materials)	Requires technology and systems to report progress, impacts, lessons, and needs to GST system	<p>Institutions of higher learning</p> <p>Customized technologies (e.g., technologies linked to MRV systems)</p>
Ghana	Economy-wide mitigation with 19 policy actions in 10 priority areas for a total of 13 adaptation and 34 mitigation programs	Invested but not leveraged to climate-proof social and physical infrastructure	<p>Energy</p> <p>Forestry</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Agriculture</p> <p>Water (particularly infrastructure in urban areas)</p>	<p>Finance-access challenges</p> <p>Policy incoherence (including misalignment of NDC commitments and flagship policies)</p> <p>Poor institutional coordination</p>	Technological development and international partnerships to utilize opportunities for that development in priority NDC sectors

COUNTRY	Focus of ambition	Role of private sector	Key sectors driving climate ambition	Barriers	Facilitators
Norway	Economy-wide (including LULUCF) mitigation Climate cooperation with the European Union	Substantial: roadmaps for a low-emission transition developed by various industry sectors	Energy (electricity generation almost exclusively renewable) Transport	Policy incoherence complicated by exports (a key driver of emissions) Difficulty of transitioning to a low-emissions society while keeping the economy going	Regional cooperation with European Union Enhanced role for private sector Reduced emissions in the industry sector Social security measures
Saudi Arabia	Mitigation through the lens of sustainable development Renewable energy Transport	Substantial: climate change activities supported by incentive programs from government	All sectors	Finance-access challenges and small scale of finance available for climate measures Unclear definition of climate finance Industries' resistance to technology change Lack of access to technology	State-of-the-art technologies Long-term renewable energy strategy Fossil fuel car phase-out Economic diversification

COUNTRY	Focus of ambition	Role of private sector	Key sectors driving climate ambition	Barriers	Facilitators
South Africa	Economy-wide (including LULUCF) mitigation through the lens of equity	Significant	Energy IPPU AFOLU Waste Biodiversity Water Health Settlements Transport Mining Fisheries, forestry, and agriculture	Finance-access challenges Socio-economic factors	International finance Well-resourced just transition strategy Increased investment in energy efficiency and green transport measures R&D in application, localization, transfer, and adoption of technology within key climate-sensitive sectors

Opportunities for civil society to enhance the GST process and outputs

To be effective, the GST requires participation by non-state actors as well as state actors. The strengths of civil society in enhancing national climate-change response are well documented. They include expertise in advocacy work, international networks, capacity to leverage resources (technical and financial), and convening power. In all five case study countries, sufficient political will exists to embrace contributions by civil society to realization of national climate ambition. Some illustrative opportunities for civil society to enhance that ambition are described below.

Ethiopia

Opportunity 1: Operationalize the national MRV with effective data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Opportunity 2: Track linked environmental, social, and economic problems to inform solutions that enable holistic sustainable development pathways.

In the context of the iGST, the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) could help the Ethiopian government address barriers to and facilitators of the national MRV system. Since 2010, the GGGI has been working in Ethiopia to support the government's efforts to develop and implement its Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, which aims to make Ethiopia a climate-resilient middle-income economy with a zero net increase in carbon emissions by 2030.

Ghana

Opportunity 1: Enhance the use of regionally downscaled climate models to reduce the impacts of climate change in the cocoa and forestry industries. The iGST can look at how to enhance cost-effective collaborations with regional and international universities and research centers that aim to up-skill the staff at the Ghana Environmental Protection Agency, an agency of the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation.

Opportunity 2: Enhance public-private sector partnerships by developing programs that build on existing energy access and energy efficiency projects. The iGST can leverage its broad network of international experts and facilitate collaboration with the Ghana Environmental Protection Agency.

South Africa

Opportunity 1: Continue to support the Presidential Commission on Climate Change in realizing a just transition that extends beyond a just energy transition. Build on studies on socializing the concept of a just transition by working directly with at-risk communities on real-life demonstration activities.

Opportunity 2: Accelerate power (electricity) sector decarbonization by contributing to the analysis of options available to South Africa. Specifically, share with relevant national bodies lessons from other countries' power sector decarbonization efforts.

Insights on international climate change negotiations

In the context of UNFCCC negotiations, case study countries are similar in two respects: their view of the significance of the GST to the global response to climate change (high) and their desire for clarity on processes to ensure that the GST yields the objectives for which it was established.

Representatives of all case study countries expressed willingness to learn other countries' approaches to implementing high-impact climate programs. Representatives of the three developing countries in the study affirmed their willingness to undertake additional climate action if given international support. The fact that they wish, despite the slow progress of the international negotiations, to increase their climate ambition should galvanize civil society to support calls for targeted and measurable support from developed countries. In doing so, civil society must understand and respond to the unique characteristics of each developing country.