

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



THE STATE OF CLIMATE AMBITION

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UNDP's Climate Promise is the largest global offer on NDC support, covering over 120 countries and territories, representing 80 percent of all developing countries globally – including 40 least developed countries, 28 small island developing states, and 14 high emitters – to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions under the global Paris Agreement. Delivered in collaboration with a wide variety of partners, it is the world's largest offer of support for the enhancement of climate pledges. Learn more at climatepromise.undp.org and follow at [@UNDPClimate](https://twitter.com/UNDPClimate).

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INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific region covers a wide geographical area, with diverse landscapes, societies, cultures, religions and economies. Of the 41 countries in the region, 11 are high emitters, 11 are Least Developed Countries (LDCs), 17 are Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and nine are considered fragile states. The region is experiencing rapid changes in economic development, population growth and urbanization, social transformation, and technological development, which has been underpinned by the region's rich natural environment. More than half of the world's population lives in this region, and the share of people living in extreme poverty has fallen to below 5% in 2019¹. However, human activities associated with this expansion have placed significant stress on the environment, resulting in severe environmental degradation that now poses a serious threat to the region's growth prospects and sustainable development goals. The region accounts for 42.4 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, of which 11 high emitters are responsible for 40.8 percent².

Asia-Pacific nations cannot evade the human and physical impacts of globally driven climate

change. With its diverse geography, the region has witnessed a variety of both slow onset and extreme weather events, with climate change driving the duration and frequency of both. In the past two decades, Asia-Pacific has suffered more from extreme weather events than anywhere else in the world. Between 2000 and 2018, 82 percent of natural disasters in Asia were caused by extreme weather events³. Isolated Pacific Island nations, with limited economic diversification, are particularly vulnerable. In Asia, climate change is projected to increase extreme weather events, including floods, landslides, droughts, and more intense tropical cyclones⁴, while snow cover and glaciers will retreat in mountainous areas, increasing the risk of glacial lake outburst floods⁵. Meanwhile, the Pacific will face ocean acidification and marine heatwaves, as well as sea-level rise coupled with storm surges, leading to coastal inundation and increased saltwater intrusion⁶.

The analysis below provides a regional perspective that builds upon, and updates the information, from UNDP's NDC Global Outlook Report 2021: *The State of Global Ambition*, published in October 2021.

NDC SUBMISSION STATUS

FIGURE 1

NDC submission status in Asia and the Pacific region, as of 15 June 2022

All Asia-Pacific countries
(n = 41)

Submitted: **31**

To be submitted: **8**

Unclear: **2**

Climate Promise supported Asia-Pacific countries
(n = 27)

Submitted: **20**

To be submitted: **5**

Unclear: **2**

Through the Climate Promise, UNDP is supporting 27 countries to prepare second-generation NDCs⁷. Of these, 20 (74 percent) countries had submitted updated or new NDCs as of 15 June 2022. Five countries (Cook Islands, Iran, Kiribati, Niue and Timor-Leste) remain to submit, although Iran's decision on whether to ratify the Paris Agreement is still pending. Meanwhile the intentions of Palau remain unclear, as it is seeking support initially for baseline studies in key sectors. Given the political situation in Afghanistan, it is also unclear whether the new government will submit an updated NDC.

NDC AMBITION INTENTIONS

Of the 27 Asia-Pacific countries supported under the Climate Promise, the majority (78 percent) have raised mitigation ambition, or are likely to do so, while 89 percent plan to enhance the adaptation

component of their NDCs (Figure 2). This level of ambition is slightly higher than overall regional ambition intentions (76 percent and 83 percent respectively).

FIGURE 2

NDC mitigation and adaptation enhancement intentions in Asia-Pacific

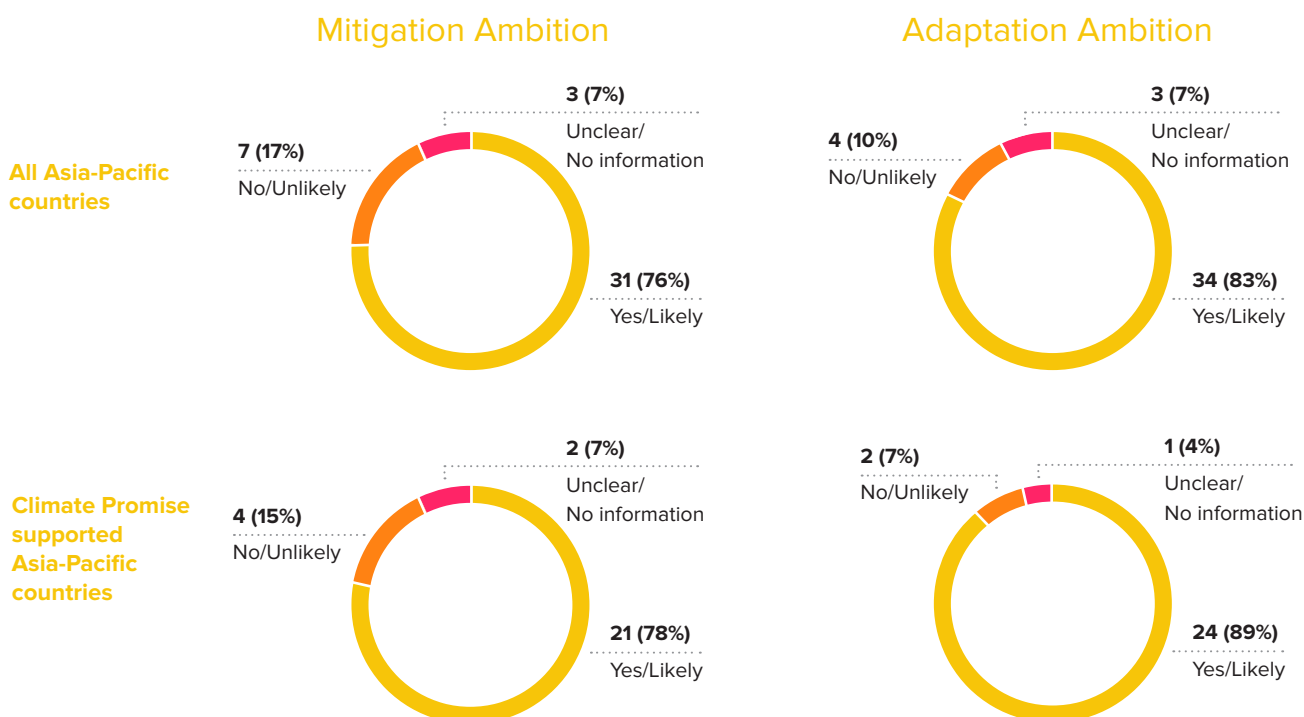


FIGURE 3**Selected mitigation and adaptation pathways of Climate Promise supported countries in Asia and the Pacific****Mitigation Pathways**

17 (85%)	Increase GHG emission reduction targets
17 (85%)	Add new mitigation sectors or increase scope within existing sectors
14 (70%)	Increase scope of unconditional mitigation targets
10 (50%)	Cover all GHGs or include new GHGs including SLCPs

Adaptation Pathways

19 (95%)	Include clear adaptation objectives in line with the Paris Agreement including in a form of Adaptation Communications
18 (90%)	Align with NAP or other adaptation planning processes or instruments
17 (85%)	Increase adaptation sectoral coverage or scope within existing sectors
5 (25%)	Include quantitative or qualitative targets and provisions for a monitoring and evaluation system

As seen in Figure 3, the two most common pathways for Climate Promise supported countries to raise **mitigation ambition** were increasing GHG emission reduction targets and/or adding new sectors or increasing the scope of existing NDC priority sectors – each selected by 85 percent of countries. Most countries (70 percent) also chose to increase the scope of their unconditional mitigation targets, while half decided to cover all GHGs or include new GHGs, including short-lived climate pollutants (SLCPs).

On **adaptation enhancement**, 95 percent of Asia-Pacific countries raised ambition by including clearer adaptation targets in their NDCs, while 90 percent aligned their NDC targets to their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) or other adaptation planning processes or instruments. Most countries (85 percent) also increased sectoral coverage and/or scope. Only 25 percent of countries included quantitative or qualitative targets, implying this could be an important area of improvement for future NDCs.



A man wearing a blue jacket, a dark beanie, and a black face mask is operating a red tractor in a field. The tractor is pulling a tillage implement, and the ground is covered with dry grass and soil. The background is a hilly landscape with green grass.

Bhutan

COMPREHENSIVE CLIMATE ROADMAPS

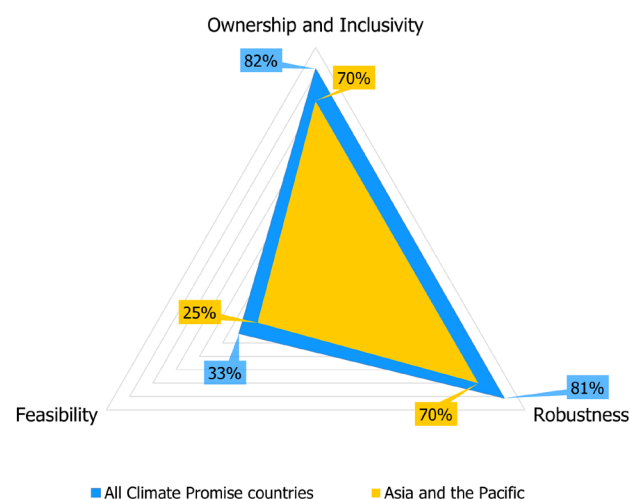
Bhutan's enhanced [NDC](#) makes a clear commitment to develop a NAP, which will be the key mechanism to detail and guide implementation of NDC adaptation priorities. Through the Climate Promise, UNDP supported political engagement with policy makers, parliamentarians, the private sector, academia, and civil society, while with GCF Adaptation Planning Readiness support, detailed risk and vulnerability assessments in key sectors, including public health and water resources, have been developed to help determine priority adaptation actions that will target the most vulnerable. The NAP will also advance qualitative and quantitative targets relating to adaptation and is expected to be finalized this year. The Climate Promise also supported comprehensive mitigation roadmaps for NDC implementation in the human settlements, industries, and energy sectors. In this regard, Bhutan provides an excellent case study of a country that is ensuring strong complementarity between its NDC and its forthcoming NAP, which will operationalize the adaptation component of the NDC.

The quality of an NDC is arguably as important as its ambition. Higher-quality NDCs are more likely to lead to successful implementation and signal the government's intention to be accountable for turning pledges into actions. Under the Climate Promise, UNDP developed a [Quality Assurance Checklist](#) that allows governments and/or other practitioners to systematically review opportunities to improve NDC quality against three dimensions: i) *Robustness*, ii) *Feasibility*, and iii) *Ownership and Inclusivity*. Using this checklist, UNDP undertook an in-depth analysis of second-generation NDCs submitted by Climate Promise supported countries, scoring NDCs based on a percentage of criteria that were met⁸.

In comparison to the global average, countries in Asia-Pacific scored lower on all three quality dimensions (Figure 4) – signifying that there are opportunities for improvement in future. The strongest regional dimensions were robustness and ownership and inclusivity, both met by 70 percent of countries' NDCs (compared to 81 percent and 82 percent globally). The region's weakest dimension was feasibility, with a score of 25 percent, compared to the global average of 33 percent – illustrating the technical and financial gaps for NDC implementation that remain for many countries.

FIGURE 4

Assessment of submitted Climate Promise supported NDCs against three dimensions of quality: Asia and the Pacific vs global average

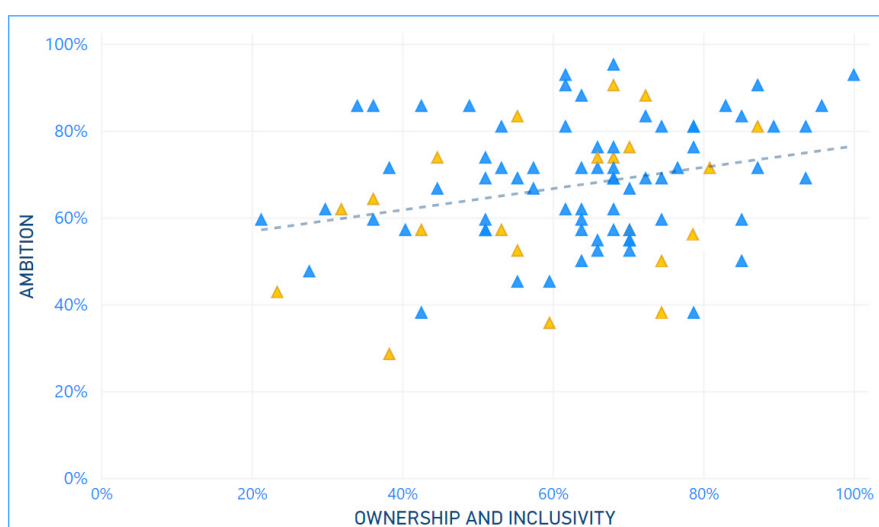


Source: UNDP analysis

In line with previous global findings, UNDP analysis shows a positive correlation between NDCs that were more inclusive and have higher rates of ambition (Figure 5). However, there remains a variance that may be due to differing national circumstances and contexts, but also to other factors that impact ambition (e.g., political will).

FIGURE 5

Mapping NDC ambition to inclusive approaches: Asia and the Pacific vs global average



Source: UNDP Analysis. Note: Yellow color triangles represent the 20 Asia-Pacific Climate Promise supported countries that completed the NDC Quality Assurance Review.

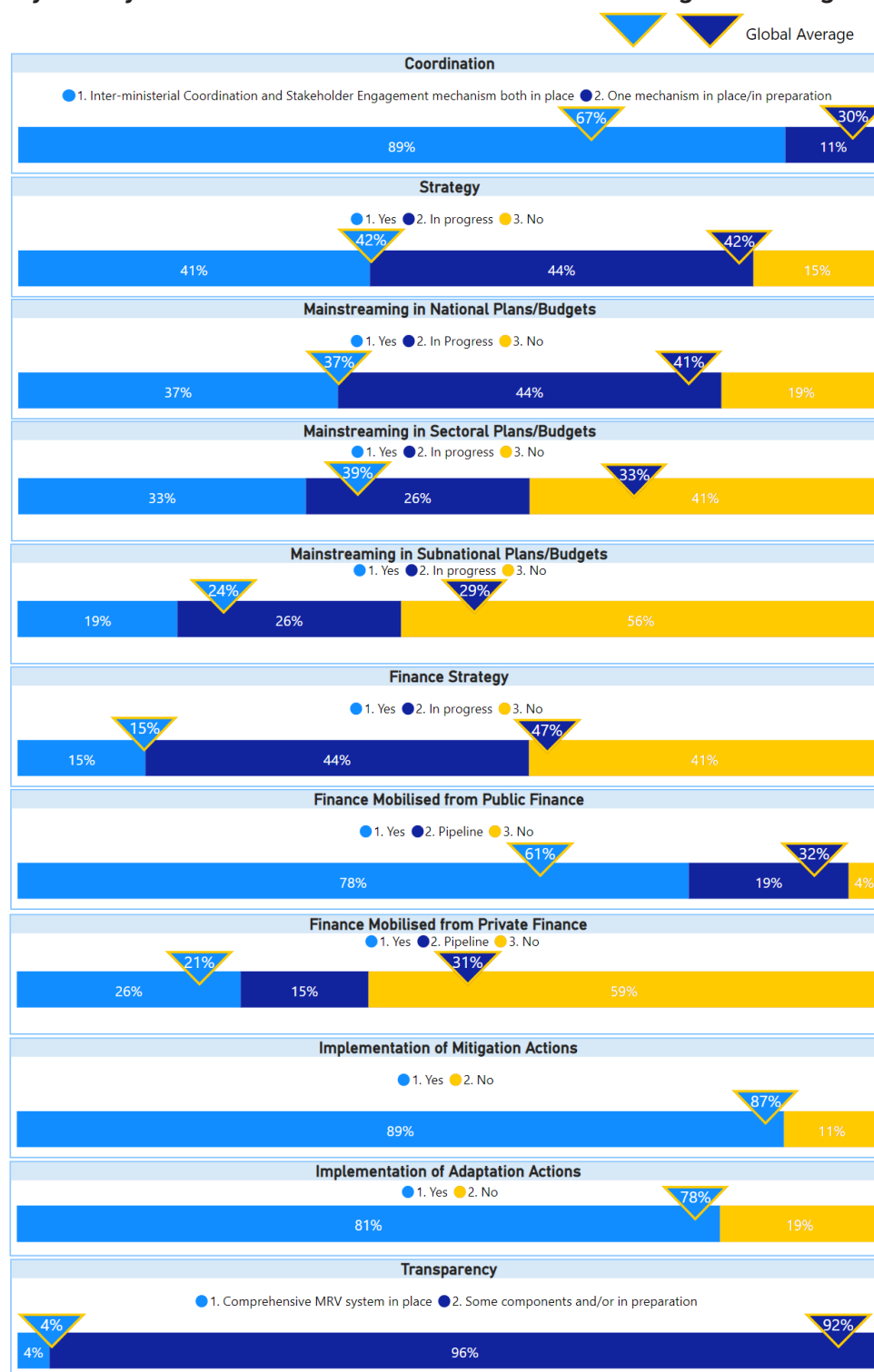
NDC IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

In 2019, UNDP defined and began monitoring seven “building blocks” for effective NDC implementation that are based on UNDP’s experience and lessons

learned from supporting countries throughout the NDC cycle. Figure 6 compares regional progress against the global average (triangles)⁹.

FIGURE 6

Progress on key NDC systems and architecture: Asia and the Pacific vs global average



Source: UNDP analysis. n = 23 for Asia-Pacific responses. Global averages are shown in the triangles.

In most cases, regional progress on putting in place the foundational “building blocks” of NDC implementation is ahead of, or on par with, the global aggregated results reported by 122 countries.

- Regional levels of **NDC institutional coordination and stakeholder engagement** are high, with 89 percent of countries having both coordination mechanisms in place (compared to 67 percent globally). In addition, 41 percent of Asia-Pacific countries already have **NDC implementation strategies** – just below average global rates.
- **Mainstreaming** of NDC targets in *national* plans and budgets is on par with the global average of 37 percent, but slightly lower than average global rates for *sectoral* levels (33 percent vs 39 percent) and *sub-national* levels (19 percent vs 24 percent).
- Over half the countries in the region have prepared a **finance strategy** (15 percent) or are in the process of developing one (44 percent), which is comparable to global trends at 15 percent and 47 percent, respectively. The region is stronger in **mobilizing finance** than the global average, with 78 percent of countries accessing public finance (vs 61 percent globally) and 26 percent accessing private finance (vs 21 percent globally).
- **NDC implementation** is also strong in Asia-Pacific, with 89 percent and 81 percent of countries implementing mitigation and adaptation actions respectively – just ahead of global implementation rates.
- All countries are in the process of establishing **transparency** systems, although only four percent currently have comprehensive systems in place.



Support needs identified by Climate Promise supported countries in Asia and the Pacific

The findings of the NDC implementation survey are in alignment with future support needs identified by Climate Promise supported countries in the region¹⁰. Support has been most commonly requested for the areas of mainstreaming NDC targets, accessing finance, implementing priority NDC actions, and transparency, with nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of countries stating that they need support in all of these areas. The **Maldives** seeks support to mainstream sectoral NDC priorities, specifically for renewable energy, agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, waste, and public health. Supporting climate finance for NDC implementation, including accelerating private sector investment, was noted as a gap in the **Philippines**, while **Malaysia** seeks to advance NDC implementation by undertaking an evidenced-based prioritization of climate actions. Equally, countries also require support to strengthen transparency efforts. For example, **Nepal** wants to better institutionalize its Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system with an effective governance mechanism that facilitates reporting of NDC progress.



Papua New Guinea

HOLISTIC ADAPTATION APPROACH

To support adaptation priority and target setting, Papua New Guinea undertook risk and vulnerability assessments in key sectors for the draft NAP that is currently under discussion within government. UNDP then supported the Climate Change and Development Authority, through the Climate Promise, to conduct six regional capacity building and stakeholder consultation workshops on adaptation planning, attracting over 180 participants. Regional inputs from the workshops contributed to the development of the NAP document, NAP sectoral guidelines, and decisions on the process and criteria for prioritizing adaptation options. Papua New Guinea's second NDC notes that the government has identified twelve overarching adaptation strategies, one of which is 'to establish and strengthen national and sub-national climate change and development strategies', which the government aims to achieve through the development of the NAP. The NDC also outlines nine priority adaptation areas that influence key development sectors and highlights the linkages between them.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CLIMATE PROMISE SUPPORT TO DATE

Finance and investment

Approximately 10 countries in the region are in progress of, or have completed, undertaking work/assessments to support the development of financing strategies or investment plans. In **Bangladesh**, cost estimates for implementing key mitigation measures in sectors included in the unconditional and conditional scenarios were developed and included in the NDC. These estimates have also been analyzed to inform sources of finance to implement the planned measures. In **Cambodia**, a cost analysis was carried out for the investments required for early warning systems and disaster risk reduction measures in the NDC following prioritization exercise to identify key activities. Each activity investment cost calculated included the cost of implementation, in accordance with internal ministry regulations on planning.

Transparency

Around seven countries are improving their national GHG inventory systems. In **Iran**, GHG inventory guidelines were developed for the sectors of energy, industrial processes, waste, and agriculture, forestry, and land use and communicated to the ministries and other stakeholders engaged in national inventory development. In addition, a beta version of the national emission inventory system was presented to the Department of Energy. Approximately ten further countries are working to update their MRV system.

In the **Philippines**, a NDC MRV Plan has been completed that outlines a phased implementation/reporting scheme from 2021 to 2029 and onwards, covering the strengthening of information and data exchange among stakeholders (Phase 1), improvement of current reporting processes, policies, and institutional arrangements (Phase 2), and targeted continuous improvements (Phase 3). Moreover, a capacity building plan has also been completed which will help to operationalize the NDC MRV Plan, identify gaps and proposed solutions in current MRV mechanisms, and propose appropriate strategic actions.

Policies, institutions and capacities

Around eight countries in the region are preparing, or have completed, NDC implementation roadmaps or strategies. Meanwhile, approximately 25 countries reported progress on technical assessments and analyses of baselines and scenarios, targeted reviews, and/or updates to scenarios for NDC priority sectors. In **Kiribati**, a stock take was carried out to see what has been achieved to date against NDC targets and to identify opportunities to develop more ambitious targets. The stock take specifically looked at progress on both conditional and unconditional targets under adaptation, aligning to the NAP. Findings have been included in Kiribati's draft NDC.





Bangladesh

ADAPTATION PRIORITY SETTING

Bangladesh is in the process of developing its NAP, which includes a public consultative process, that will provide strategic direction and prioritization to adaptation action in the country. The plan includes national policies and priorities in adaptation, recommendations for strategies at national level but importantly also focuses on regional and local level solutions. It proposes recommendations for institutions regarding implementation and coordination mechanisms and modalities. Bangladesh's enhanced NDC references the NAP development processes and indicates that it will submit an Adaptation Communication in 2022 once the process is completed. A Climate Change Knowledge Management Portal, which is a unique geoportal to analyze spatio-temporal data, will connect several climate risk data resources was launched in May 2022.

Net zero ambition: Throughout the region, numerous countries are stating net zero ambitions. High-emitting countries such as China, India, **Indonesia**, **Malaysia**, and **Thailand** have communicated their intentions to achieve net zero in the second half of this century. Along with major economies within the region signaling an end to overseas financing of coal-fired power, the planned transition of energy sources will play an integral role in how these countries navigate this socioeconomic balance in the next decades. Alongside the high emitters, nine further countries (**Bhutan**, **Cambodia**, **Lao PDR**, **Maldives**, **Nauru**, **Nepal**, **Papua New Guinea**, **Sri Lanka**, and **Viet Nam**) have also made pledges to reach net zero. To support these ambitions, Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka are developing national long-term strategies, while [Nepal](#) and [Thailand](#) have already submitted theirs to the UNFCCC. As other countries in the region move to make similar commitments, there will be an increasing need to support them to align their net-zero ambitions with the development of long-term strategies at national, sectoral, and subnational levels.

Loss and damage: Countries in the region are increasingly advocating on loss and damage issues, and this concern is also reflected in NDCs. About 60 percent of second-generation NDCs from Climate Promise supported countries in the region refer to loss and damage, albeit to varying degrees.

Sri Lanka included a [chapter](#) on loss and damage and identified NDC targets and actions for addressing loss and damage, while **Pakistan** included a [section](#) on loss and damage as part of means of implementation for its NDC. **Nauru** included loss and damage as one of eight areas that contribute to sustainable development. **Vanuatu's** [NDC](#) notes that loss and damage actions are part of the country's National Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy while **Nepal** [indicates](#) that it will develop a national strategy and action plan on loss and damage by 2025. **Cambodia**, **Myanmar**, **Viet Nam**, **Maldives**, **Lao PDR**, **the Philippines**, and **Tonga** all speak to loss and damages occurring from increasing disasters, and some countries have detailed cost estimates and systems for tracking this information.



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Inclusion: The region has seen a noticeable rise in the level of gender considerations in enhancement processes and in the revised NDCs themselves. Climate Promise support strengthened gender inclusion in NDC processes in 24 countries through inclusive governance, effective planning, and integrated policy actions. The dividends of this support are becoming clear as the integrating of gender dimensions into NDCs is now the norm rather than the exception. Of the 20 Climate Promise supported countries that have submitted enhanced NDCs, 95 percent integrate gender considerations as opposed to only 30 percent of initial NDCs from those same countries. The region's strength in gender and climate finance dimensions is highlighted in the new [Framework for Enhancing Gender and Poverty Integration in Climate Finance](#) which was developed based off experiences in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia** and **Thailand**. As countries move towards green recovery and NDC implementation, there is also a clear shift in the prioritization and linking of gender equality to climate action. Continuing to support this momentum will contribute to the region's ability to achieve its climate goals.

Agriculture, forests, and land use: Following COP26, support to agriculture, forests, and land use work is increasing under the second phase of the Climate Promise. This support will help

to demonstrate the “nature ratchet” in NDCs for COP27 by delivering on the [Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use](#). **Cambodia** and **Viet Nam** will both identify investment scope for forest mitigation targets through carbon markets, which will include assessing the legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks required for operationalization. Meanwhile, support will also be extended to improve systems to enable robust tracking of NDC progress, such as methodologies to estimate forest degradation in Cambodia and measure carbon stocks in mangrove forests in Viet Nam. Complementing this work, the UNDP/ Food and Agriculture Organization programme [Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture through NDCs and National Adaptation Plans \(SCALA\)](#) is underway in **Cambodia, Mongolia, Nepal,** and **Thailand**. SCALA will support identifying transformative climate actions required for land use and agriculture, integrating climate into national and sectoral planning, budgeting and monitoring processes for land use and agriculture; and increasing public-private sector engagement. Thailand will foster private sector engagement in agriculture and land use while Cambodia will promote and scale innovative agricultural technologies to strengthen farm productivity, water security, and strengthen institutions and regulations to halt deforestation and foster sustainable forest management.



ENDNOTES

- 1 OECD, 2022. [Society at a Glance: Asia/Pacific](#).
- 2 Based on 2018 Climate Watch (CAIT) data, including Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry sector.
- 3 Asian Development Bank, 2019. [Asian Development Outlook \(ADO\) 2019: Strengthening Disaster Resilience](#).
- 4 IPCC, 2021. Sixth Assessment Report Working Group 1. [Fact sheet — Asia](#).
- 5 IPCC, 2021. Sixth Assessment Report Working Group 2. [Fact sheet — Asia](#).
- 6 IPCC, 2021. Sixth Assessment Report Working Group 1. [Fact sheet — Small Islands](#).
- 7 Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep. of), Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.
- 8 Global results were first published in UNDP's [State of Climate Ambition Report](#) (2021) with data from 67 countries. This information has been updated to include data from 96 of the 99 submitted NDCs (as of 15 June 2022) from Climate Promise supported countries. Three countries submitted interim NDCs and were not included in this update. For more detailed information on the methodology used, please refer to the report.
- 9 A UNDP survey on NDC implementation readiness obtained 133 developing country responses in 2019 and 122 developing country responses in 2021. The 2021 data included responses from 23 of the 27 Asia-Pacific countries supported under the Climate Promise.
- 10 Data comes from 85 percent of Climate Promise supported countries who responded to a question in their 2021 Quarter 4 reports that asked what future support they needed.



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