UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

NDC Insights Series

Issue No. 5

July 2025

About Issue No. 5

This NDC Insight issue explores how countries are aligning their climate targets and measures committed in new NDCs with their broader growth and development agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also examines the critical nexus between climate and health, and the importance of including circular economy in NDCs to further advance sustainable development agendas.

About UNDP

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet. Learn more at undp.org or follow at @UNDP.

About UNDP's Climate Promise

UNDP's Climate Promise is the UN system's largest portfolio of support on climate action, working with more than 140 countries and territories and directly benefiting 37 million people. This portfolio implements over US$2.3 billion in grant financing and draws on UNDP's expertise in adaptation, mitigation, carbon markets, climate and forests, and climate strategies and policy. Visit our website at climatepromise.undp.org and follow us at @UNDPClimate.

Cover Photo: Dechen Wangmo - UNDP Bhutan

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Latest trends and insights

Despite continued record-breaking temperatures and climate impacts, there is increasing recognition of the economic and development opportunities of climate action. This is paired with a landmark legal opinion from the highest international court to uphold the Paris Agreement goals. How do new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) reflect core development priorities? How are they aligning with specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

As of 31 July 2025, a total of 27 Parties have submitted their new NDCs.

July saw two new submissions from Monaco and Niue. Over 150 countries are expected to submit by COP30. UNDP is supporting 100 countries in preparing their NDCs to be ambitious, inclusive and investible, as a contribution to the joint UN system effort and the NDC Partnership.

On the road to COP30, there is increased evidence on demonstrating the economic and development case for ambitious climate action.

The UN Secretary-General made a powerful call for ambitious NDCs driven by the economic benefits of clean energy, while the joint statement from the European Union and China reinforced international cooperation, committing to advancing just transition and sustainable development.

Analysis of new NDCs reveals strong links across SDGs, with many articulating the positive health outcomes of climate action and the importance of integrated solutions such as circular economy.

While the most frequently reflected priorities in NDCs address SDGs on energy (SDG 7), sustainable cities (SDG 11) and nature (SDG 15), there is an increasing recognition of broader socio-economic and governance dimensions of climate action. As a core development issue, health is featured prominently among many NDCs underscoring the potential for climate action to advance health outcomes. Solutions addressing multiple SDGs are also given due attention. Over two-thirds of new NDCs submitted to date reference policies and measures related to circular economy - a proven approach for delivering climate and development outcomes simultaneously.

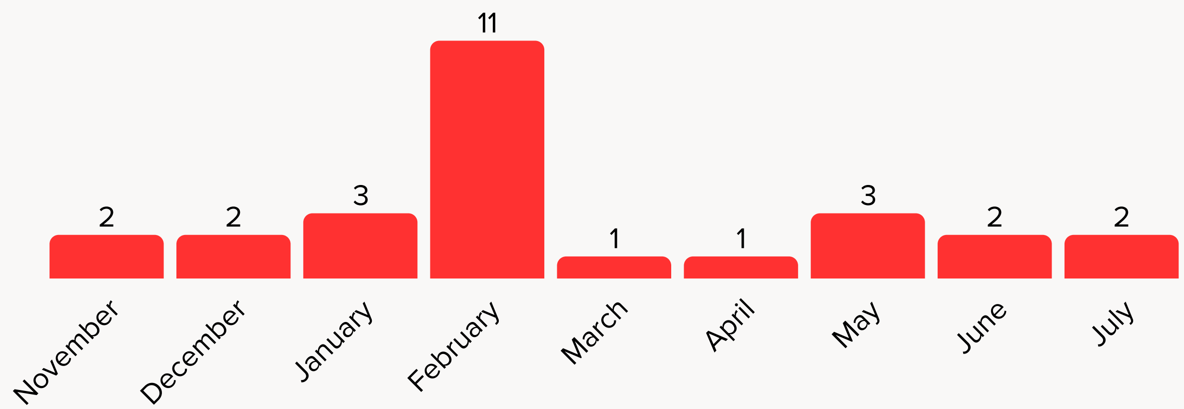
Country spotlight: Somalia

Somalia demonstrates remarkable leadership with an ambitious new NDC, despite being a fragile state. The new NDC emphasizes its steadfast commitment to achieving carbon neutrality, enhancing adaptation and resilience, and aligning its action with the SDGs.

NDC submission status

As of 31 July 2025, a total of **27 parties[1] (five G20, seven SIDS and three LDCs)**, covering around 21 percent of total global GHG emissions,[2] have submitted their new NDCs for the 2025 cycle. July saw two new NDCs submitted from Monaco and Niue. While only 27 countries have submitted their NDC to date, over 150 countries are expected to submit by COP30. Collectively, these submissions will answer the critical question of whether or not these NDCs cumulatively put the world on a 1.5°C pathway.

Figure 1: Number of NDC submissions, by month (November 2024 to July 2025)



Amidst the current global challenges, our planet continues to shatter global temperature records. June was confirmed as the third-warmest June on record and the global average temperature over the last twelve-month period was 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels. This alarming milestone was followed by devastating floods across Asia and the US, and extreme heatwaves gripping Europe, East Asia, North Africa and the Middle East during July. The latest projection indicates that there is a 70 percent chance that the five-year average warming for 2025-2029 will be 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Despite these escalating realities, July also witnessed significant advancements in global political momentum for climate action, fostering both urgency and optimism. On 22 July, the UN Secretary-General's climate speech titled "Moment of Opportunity" highlighted unequivocal economic benefits inherent in the shifts towards a clean energy future. These economic benefits and opportunities are detailed in the United Nations' latest synthesis report titled "Supercharging the New Energy Era", released on the same day. The Secretary-General emphasized that renewables are now economically superior to fossil fuels, driving GDP growth and job creation and that the new generation of NDCs due this year provide a critical opportunity for countries to make the shift. He urged countries to adopt ambitious, economy-wide NDCs that are aligned with the 1.5°C limit and to present them at a special event during the 80th UN General Assembly in September.

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July further reinforced the interconnectedness of climate action with the broader sustainable development agenda. Deliberations emphasized integrated responses, with climate and biodiversity action highlighted as priority areas. Several Reports were launched at the HLPF by the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergy, co-convened by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and UN Climate Change (UNFCCC). These reports stressed the need to break down silos and tackle climate change and sustainable development crises together, advocating for nature-based solutions and improved climate and disaster insurance, and linking climate and health action in cities.

Perhaps the most significant development was the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) Advisory Opinion. This landmark opinion underscored that 1.5°C is the primary temperature goal under the Paris Agreement and clarified the obligations of all countries to pursue the highest possible ambition in their NDCs to collectively achieve this goal.

At the same time, the EU and China joint commitment to enhance bilateral cooperation demonstrated leadership in driving a global just transition in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. The two major economies reiterated their commitments to upholding multilateralism and the Paris Agreement, jointly advancing clean technologies, and submitting their new economy-wide NDCs ahead of COP30. They also pledge to support Brazil in delivering ambitious, equitable, balanced and inclusive outcomes at COP30.

Looking ahead, the convergence of intensifying climate change impacts with growing economic, political and legal imperatives sets a crucial stage for COP30. The upcoming COP30 in Belém, Brazil, must serve as a pivotal moment for global leaders to translate these urgencies and opportunities into concrete, ambitious action. The call for more robust and progressive NDCs and the opportunities clearly articulated by the UN Secretary-General and reinforced by the ICJ's Advisory Opinion, presents a chance for nations to demonstrate true leadership and commit to advancing economies and societies of the future to align with the 1.5°C target.

Photo Credit: UNDP / Dream Catcher

Insights from Climate Promise 2025:

The UN-wide system support to countries under the Climate Promise is progressing steadily, with UN Country Teams mobilized across 117 countries. As a contribution to this UN system effort and the NDC Partnership, **UNDP is now providing direct support to 100 countries spanning across all five regions of the world.**

This NDC Insight issue explores how countries are aligning their climate targets and measures committed in new NDCs with their broader growth and development agendas. It also examines the critical nexus between climate and health, and the importance of integrated solutions including circular economy in NDCs to further advance sustainable development agendas.

Many countries under the Climate Promise are assessing and identifying the economic and social co-benefits of climate action, including contributions to deliver the SDGs. For example, **Mongolia** is developing a just energy transition framework whose concrete measures will be incorporated into the new NDC and will align with SDG 7 (energy), SDG 13 (climate), SDG 5 (gender) and SDG 12 (sustainable production and consumption). In **Serbia** and **Uzbekistan**, an analysis was undertaken to understand the socio-economic impacts of NDC measures related to job creation, gender equality and social inclusion, with a focus on vulnerable groups. In-depth analysis on NDC and SDG alignment, using the SDG x NDC Push framework, are being undertaken in **Cambodia** and **Liberia**. Several more countries are planning to follow suit (more details are provided in the latter part of this Issue).


Photo Credit: UNDP Uzbekistan

Emerging trend: NDC and SDG linkages

In a world increasingly shaped by climate impacts, political instability and growing inequality, a powerful truth is emerging: climate action is not just about averting environmental disaster – it is about unlocking the door to economic transformation, innovation and human development. A new study from OECD and UNDP shows that accelerating climate action can boost global GDP by 0.2 percent by 2040 and up to 13 percent by 2100, with co-benefits in poverty reduction, health, and energy security.

Enhanced NDCs are not just an environmental imperative—they are a strategic investment in economic resilience and long-term prosperity. NDCs can help usher in a better and more sustainable world. For example, integrating renewable energy investments with holistic policies in agriculture, water, health, education, governance and infrastructure, can deliver a triple-win impact: advancing energy access, human development and climate action. Perhaps most significantly, NDCs serve as a key lever for equity and social progress. By deliberately integrating climate goals with development priorities, nations can achieve multiple SDG wins including cleaner air, better health and more equitable access to resources and green jobs that lift people out of poverty. Recent analysis shows that combining renewable energy expansion with SDG policies could lift nearly 200 million people out of extreme poverty, save 142 million people from malnutrition, and enable 550 million more people to gain access to clean water and sanitation.[3] This underscores how holistic, integrated policy strategies are not just visionary but are essential.

However, the alignment between climate commitments and sustainable development has historically been a challenge. The 2024 UNFCCC NDC synthesis report,[4] which analysed NDC submissions from the 2020 cycle, revealed that only 24 percent of NDCs clarified the alignment between their mitigation measures and efforts towards achieving the SDGs. This took shape in highlighting the multiple co-benefits of their measures for sustainable development and the cost-effectiveness of their measures under fiscal constraints. A higher percentage of Parties, 41 percent, described how adaptation actions relate to sustainable development, while 25 percent of Parties specified how adaptation in specific priority areas contributes to achieving each SDG.

Similarly, UNDP's 2023 Integrated SDG Insights reports show that across 100 countries just 12 percent identified planetary goals as an SDG acceleration entry point. While the interconnectedness of climate and development is increasingly recognized, integration in national plans, especially NDCs, has been more limited. Insights from UNDP's support to NDC development and implementation and analysis of past NDCs show potential for greater alignment, but widespread integration across all NDCs still requires ongoing analytical support, policy coherence and financial innovation. The 2025 NDC cycle, utilizing new tools and insights, show an increasing effort of countries to explicitly strengthen the alignment between their climate commitments and broader sustainable development aspirations.

NDC x SDG Insights: Leveraging the 2025 NDC cycle to address bottlenecks and strengthen alignment

As the urgency to address climate change intensifies, countries are also under growing pressure to meet ambitious development goals, from eradicating poverty to building resilient infrastructure. Yet, too often, NDCs and development plans miss critical opportunities for synergy and impact. This fragmentation limits the effectiveness of both agendas, slows progress and strains already limited resources. Recognizing the need for an integrated, data-driven approach, UNDP's NDC x SDG Insights initiative was developed to help governments navigate this complexity and unlock the full potential of their climate and development strategies.

The NDC x SDG Insights initiative offers a practical framework, leveraging data, systems thinking and artificial intelligence to pinpoint alignments and gaps between national development and climate priorities and to identify the key accelerators that can help bridge these two interconnected agendas. It begins by painting a clear picture of the country's development and climate landscape, bringing together key data on economic performance, environmental pressures and social well-being to highlight where support and action are most needed. Next, custom-built machine learning tools map the country's climate actions against its national development priorities, offering a high-level snapshot of key alignments and gaps. From there, the analysis identifies synergy areas, highlighting policy linkages with the biggest potential for multiplier effects. Finally, the process examines the country's economic realities, assessing fiscal health, identifying stress points and exploring potential stimulus options to help fund integrated, forward-looking solutions.

Throughout 2024, UNDP successfully supported five countries, across all regions, to apply this framework. Examples of integrated insights from each country include:

- **El Salvador**: Investments in agriculture, ecosystem restoration, waste management and climate-resilient infrastructure can accelerate the country's sustainable city goals and drive the National Comprehensive Development Strategy 2023 for inclusive growth.

- **Uzbekistan:** Increased NDC ambition can reduce energy costs and boost public and community economic participation setting a path to become an upper middle-income country by 2030.
- **Cambodia**: Increased ambition in agriculture, waste management and energy efficiency can contribute to reduced emissions, job creation and improve resource efficiency.
- **Liberia**: The third generation NDC can be a powerful vehicle for delivering the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development, supporting environmental governance and energy programmes.
- **Tunisia**: Reforms in the cement sector and investment in coastal infrastructure resilience can contribute to more sustainable infrastructure, while improvements in water management, the use of non-conventional water resources and strong institutional capacity can result in improved water quality and safety.

These insights highlight the transformative potential of integrated planning, not just for climate action, but for inclusive growth and long-term resilience. UNDP is scaling up support to 15 more countries this year, demonstrating its commitment to aligning climate action with national development and finding integrated solutions for poverty, inequality and resilience.

Photo Credit: UNDP Cambodia

To what extent have new NDCs demonstrated alignment with the SDGs?

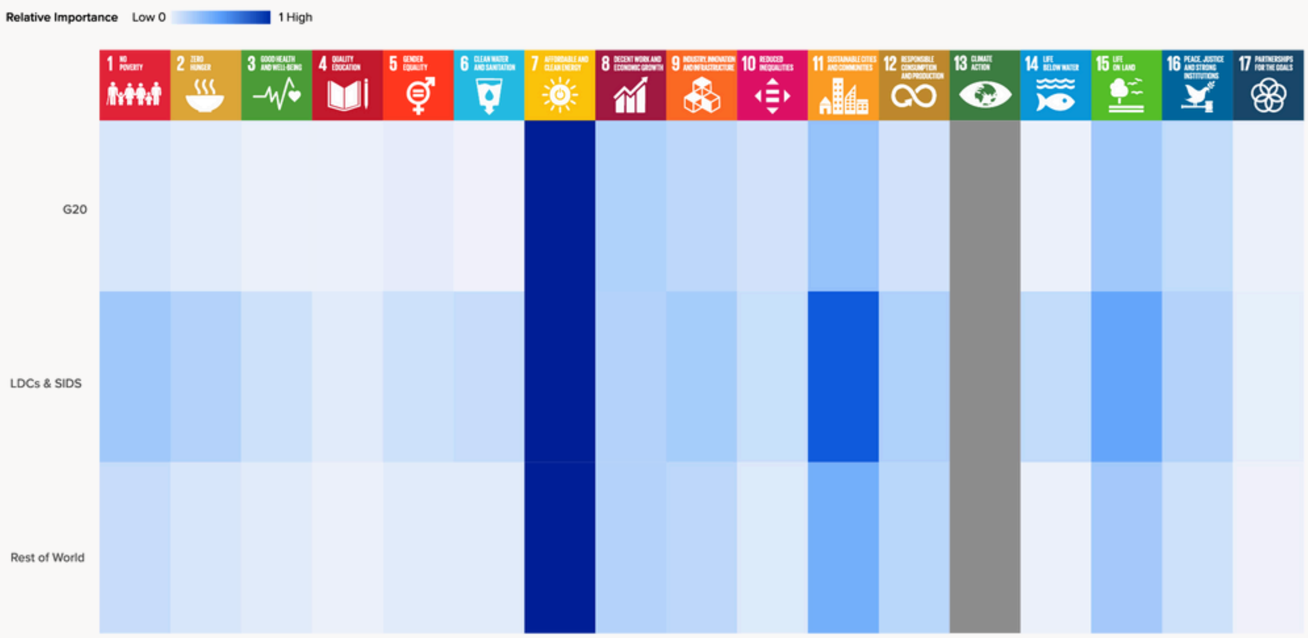
As nations update their climate commitments, certain SDGs have consistently emerged as central to achieving climate policies and measures. To help illustrate the inherent alignment between Agenda 2030 and climate action, UNDP has been analysing new NDC submissions from the 2025 submission cycle using the SDG Push Diagnostic tool.[5] This custom-built analytical tool enables users to explore countries' priorities in relevant national documents through the SDG lens. Figure 2 illustrates the relative representation of each SDG in the 27 new NDCs submitted to the UNFCCC as of 31 July 2025.

Figure 2: Overview of how SDG priorities are collectively reflected in the new NDCs

Note: SDG 13 (climate action) has been omitted from the analysis due to its obvious conceptual overlap with the climate agenda.

Results from the analysis show that new NDCs increasingly integrate priorities across multiple SDGs. SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 15 (life on land) are the most frequently reflected priorities. These likely represent key areas of focus for mitigation in the energy sector and adaptation in urban and environmental sectors, as well as priorities that countries place on acknowledging the mitigation co-benefits from biodiversity protection and conservation. For example, **Belize** set adaptation targets to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities by developing an early warning system for storm surges by 2025, explicitly linking it to SDGs 11 and 15. **Niue** has set out its mitigation strategies, also clearly linking them to the SDGs. For instance, by restoring and converting degraded land, it aims to increase carbon storage capacity by 2030—an effort that also contributes to sustainable agriculture and forest management, supporting SDGs 2 and 15.

Figure 3: Overview of how SDG priorities are reflected in new NDCs, grouped by Parties



Note: SDG 13 (climate action) has been excluded from the analysis due to its obvious conceptual overlap with the climate agenda.

Figure 3 provides a more nuanced illustration of how SDG priorities are reflected in the new NDCs of different country groups: G20 countries, LDCs and SIDs, and the rest of the world. Consistent with the global overview, links with SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 15 (life on land) were prominent across all groups. Furthermore, SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) also show strong linkages, indicating a growing recognition of the socio-economic and governance dimensions necessary for effective climate action and vice versa.

The G20 group appears to reflect a particularly strong focus on SDG 7 as the energy sector is predominantly a key sector in their mitigation efforts, with new NDCs often detailing targets for renewable energy, energy efficiency and clean energy transition pathways. It is noted that LDCs and SIDS show a more pronounced focus on SDG 11 compared to other groups. This strong emphasis is directly aligned with high vulnerability to climate impacts in these country contexts, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events and coastal erosion amidst increasing migration to urban areas. NDCs from LDCs and SIDS frequently articulate plans for resilient infrastructure development, climate-proof urban planning, early warning systems and community-based adaptation initiatives.

It is also notable that LDCs and SIDS, and the rest of the world, appear to be aligning their climate priorities across multiple SDGs that are addressing pressing basic needs such as SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 3 (good health and well-being). These priorities reflect the alignment of adaptation measures and actions, often elaborated in the new NDCs of these groups. This highlights how adaptation measures and actions are intricately woven with their fundamental development agendas. Such a holistic approach demonstrates how tackling climate change can also simultaneously address the critical needs of populations in order to achieve sustainable human development.


Photo Credit: UNDP Niue

Spotlight: Climate-health nexus in NDCs

Human health and the environment are highly interconnected. Climate change impacts human health through more frequent severe weather, extreme heat, wildfires, intensified disease outbreaks and pandemics, food insecurity and mental distress. For instance, extreme weather events such as storms, floods and droughts caused over two million deaths between 1970 and 2021, with over 90 percent occurring in low- and middle-income countries.[6] The impacts of climate change exacerbate cycles of inequality, deepening health and social inequities within and between countries.

Over the last few years there has been a growing emphasis on integrating health priorities and actions into NDCs. A review of second-generation NDCs shows that 74 percent[7] included specific health adaptation priorities, compared to 54 percent[8] of first generation NDCs. However, gaps still remain. A 2023 analysis by the World Health Organization (WHO)[9] revealed that only 11 percent of NDCs included health sector related emissions reduction commitments and just 16 percent included specific measures or policies for air pollution reduction or short-lived climate pollutants. Gaps also remain in health-specific targets with dedicated means of implementation and monitoring frameworks.

As countries are preparing their new NDCs for the 2025 submission cycle, there is an increasing effort to better integrate health-specific targets and measures across mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage components. This can help mobilize much needed action and resources to protect population health and well-being from the impacts of climate change. The momentum is already growing, with health being featured more prominently among third generation NDCs submitted thus far, including for low- and middle-income countries. For example, **Brazil**'s third NDC identifies synergies between health and climate outcomes and acknowledges the importance of health benefits from climate action in key sectors, including renewable energy, urban planning and agriculture. **Moldova**, **Nepal**, **the Republic of the Marshall Islands**, **Somalia** and **Zimbabwe**'s NDCs commit to building climate resilient health systems and improving air quality.

Recognizing the importance of this nexus, UNDP and partners such as the WHO, the Clean Air Fund (CAF), and the Global Climate and Health Alliance, have worked with countries to integrate health into their NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and other strategies, advocating and coordinating for better alignment and greater ambition. Critical milestones elevating the political momentum of this nexus are the COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, signed by over 150 countries committing to integrate health considerations into climate action, and the WHO Global Action Plan on Climate and Health, adopted in May 2025 to provide a strategic framework for countries to strengthen the integration of health into national climate plans and strategies, including NDCs. Equal attention is also given to ensuring plans are well-financed and implemented.

Under the Climate Promise, UNDP has played a critical role in helping to embed health into national climate policies, highlighting the importance of adaptation for health and the health co-benefits of emissions reduction, including through improvements in air quality. Through an integrated, equity-driven approach, UNDP works with countries and partners to build climate-resilient, sustainable and high-quality health systems, reduce emissions and waste from the health sector, and address the rise of climate sensitive health risks and the impacts of air pollution, while ensuring that vulnerable populations are not left behind. UNDP's work at the climate and health nexus contributes to a global movement toward integrated, inclusive and sustainable development — demonstrating that climate action can and must be a pathway to better health for all.


Photo Credit: Anesu Freddy / UNDP Zimbabwe

A closer look: Nepal's holistic approach to climate-health nexus

Nepal offers a compelling example of how UNDP's support under the Climate Promise can catalyse meaningful action at the climate-health nexus, including on air pollution. The country faces a range of climate-related health risks, from floods to air pollution. UNDP has been working with the Government of Nepal to embed health co-benefits into climate mitigation strategies. This includes promoting clean cooking solutions to reduce indoor air pollution, including black carbon, and training federal ministries to integrate health and equity into climate policies. Through the Integrated Environment and Climate Resilience Planning (ICRP) platform, UNDP has supported the alignment of climate, biodiversity and health strategies, contributing to Nepal's goal of becoming a risk-resilient society by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. The NDC also promotes gender equality and social inclusion, ensuring that women, youth and marginalized groups are actively involved in climate-health planning.

Nepal's NDC 3.0 explicitly recognizes air pollution as both a climate and health priority, outlines multisectoral strategies to reduce emissions, and emphasizes the need for health impact assessments, improved disease surveillance and climate-resilient health infrastructure. By embedding air quality goals across sectors, Nepal is maximizing co-benefits for public health and climate mitigation, setting a precedent for other LDCs.


Photo Credit: UNDP Nepal

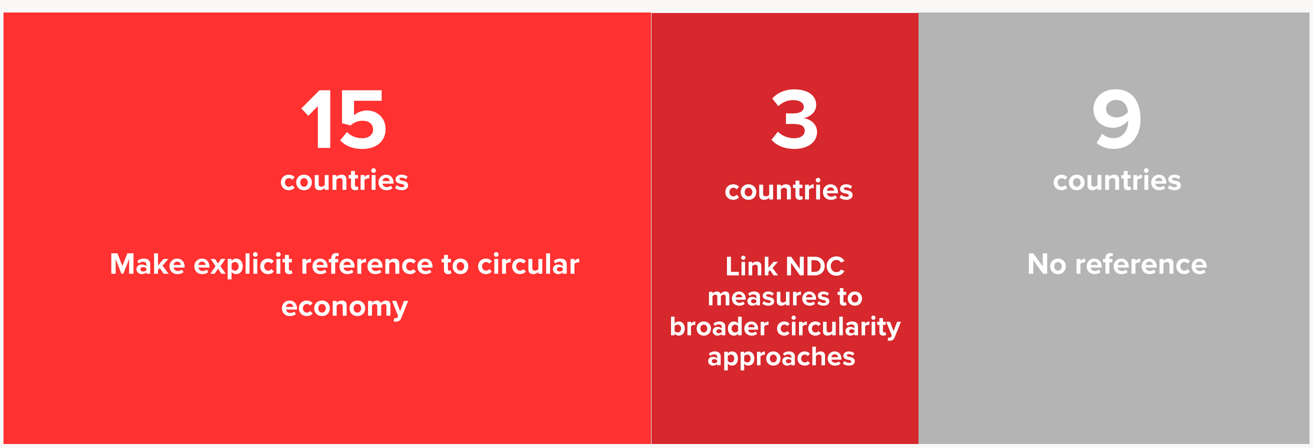
Spotlight: Building circularity into NDCs for sustainable development

It is broadly recognized that unsustainable consumption and production and the ever-growing race for transition-critical resources are contributing to our planetary crisis and growing levels of poverty, inequality and instability. Over the last 50 years, global extraction has increased more than three times and continues to grow on average over 2.3 percent per year.[10] Following our current linear trajectory, this material use is set to rise by a further 60 percent by 2060.[11] Currently, only 6.9 percent of materials used are cycled back into our economies after use – a drop from 7.2 percent in 2023.[12] As a result, our planet's rich biodiversity is being lost, our land, water and air are being degraded and polluted, and global temperatures continue to rage on.

Both scientific consensus[13] and the first global stocktake[14] emphasize the critical need for circular economy approaches in ramping up efforts to address the climate crisis. Such approaches provide countries with a key entry point as they prepare their new NDCs this year. Only 28 percent of second generation NDCs[15] explicitly include circular economy and this is often limited to waste management measures. Circular economy approaches span beyond the waste sector, with potential to unlock mitigation and adaptation progress across other key sectors, including the energy transition, regenerative food and agriculture, buildings and construction, and mining and extractive industries, among others.

Circular economy approaches are a prime example of an integrated solution that can drive ambitious climate action, protect and restore nature, and unlock new economic opportunities in order to advance sustainable development priorities. For example, Lao PDR, with support from UNDP's Climate Promise, identified 17 circular solutions that could achieve carbon neutrality by 2040, boost GDP by US$16 billion annually, and create 1.6 million jobs by 2050. Globally, a circular transition model could generate $4.5 trillion in economic benefits by 2030,[16] opening new nature-positive and climate-resilient economic markets.

Figure 4: Overview of circular economy references in new NDCs for the 2025 submission cycle as of 31 July 2025



Analysis of new NDCs submitted as of 31 July 2025, as illustrated in Figure 4 above, reveals that 18 countries (67 percent) reference circular economy and related approaches as part of the policy and measures identified that contribute to delivering their new climate commitments. Of these countries, 15 countries (56 percent) explicitly mention circular economy. Circular measures range from establishing a taskforce of experts from industry, academia and civil society to developing a circular economy strategy and sectoral roadmaps in addition to reducing and preventing food waste (**the United Kingdom**), to establishing material recovery facilities in all municipalities by 2035 (**Nepal**), to improving material circularity indices and circular practices in agriculture by 2035 (**Uruguay**). Furthermore, five countries (33 percent) reference SDG linkages such as sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption and production patterns, helping ensure their NDC and circular economy measures are aligned with the 2030 Agenda. To date, nine countries (33 percent) do not specifically mention circular economy. With over 150 NDCs still to be submitted, there is ample opportunity to further integrate circular economy in climate action to help tackle the triple planetary crisis and ensure a just and inclusive transition for all.


Photo Credit: UNDP Viet Nam

A practical toolbox for building circularity into NDCs

To help countries achieve these multiple co-benefits, UNDP together with UNEP's One Planet Network, and the UNFCCC Secretariat co-developed a first-of-its-kind interactive digital platform "Building Circularity into NDCs – A Practical Toolbox". It aims to support countries both in the global south and the global north to assess, prioritize, implement and track circular economy measures in their new NDCs for greater ambition and accelerated implementation. The toolbox is currently being implemented in seven countries worldwide, with more expected to join.[17]

In **Viet Nam**, for example, UNDP has worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment to apply the toolbox in the agriculture sector, focusing on rice and coffee value chains, aiming to inform the development of Viet Nam's new NDC. Findings revealed significant benefits from returning all rice straw and rice husk to the soil. This practice could substitute an estimated 24.21 million tonnes of carbon, 0.8 million tonnes of urea, 0.54 million tonnes of single super phosphate, and 1.36 million tonnes of potassium sulphate fertilizers. This demonstrates a huge opportunity to not only replace manure and chemical fertilizers but also to reduce methane (CH_4) emissions from straw incorporation and nitrous oxide (N_2O) from chemical fertilizers, thereby broadening the GHG scope and ambition of the NDC. Viet Nam has also developed the Carbon Calculator for Circular Practices in Rice Production (CARICE), which calculates GHG emissions from circular practices in rice production to inform the mitigation chapter of the new NDC. Analysis has shown that converting rice stubble and rice straw into biochar not only achieves the highest reduction in emissions (71.4 percent) but also enhances carbon sequestration in the soil. This circularity approach demonstrates strong potential to enhance economic efficiency and security and improve people's well-being, by reducing or eliminating dependency on imported fossil fuel-based inputs, regenerating the soil, improving water quality, and enhancing food quality, diversity and security.

Leveraging the complementarity of offerings from each UN partner agency and building on the success of phase one of the joint collaboration (2021-2023) with the establishment of the infrastructure, expertise, networks and partnerships, phase two of "Building Circularity into NDCs" (2024-2028) aims to scale up efforts to further support countries in raising NDC ambition and delivering concrete action on the ground through circularity. In doing so, this support will help close the gap on reaching the collective 1.5°C goal and accelerate implementation of national climate pledges, while ensuring a just, nature-positive and climate-resilient transition for all.

Country spotlight: Somalia

Somalia, an LDC, and notably, ranked the most fragile state in 2024,[18] underscores its unwavering commitment towards climate action by submitting its third NDC. This submission also marks a significant milestone as the third NDC from the LDC group, demonstrating leadership despite immense challenges. Informed by the outcome of the first global stocktake, Somalia's third NDC emphasizes its steadfast commitment to achieving carbon neutrality and enhancing adaptation and resilience.

Despite a negligible contribution to global emissions, Somalia has set a relatively ambitious GHG emissions reduction target of 34 percent (29.5 $MtCO_2e$) by 2035 relative to a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario, with emissions peaking at 57.5 $MtCO_2e$ in 2032. This target includes an unconditional 5 percent reduction (4.2 $MtCO_2e$), representing a concrete domestic commitment, and an additional 29 percent reduction (25.3 $MtCO_2e$) being conditional on international support. This marks a notable increase in ambition compared to its previous pledge of 30 percent reduction, which was entirely conditional to international support. The third NDC was further enhanced to include a new gas, HFCs, in addition to CO_2, CH_4 and N_2O. It also expands sectoral coverage to include, for the first time, the industrial processes and product use (IPPU) sector, in addition to the energy, agriculture, LULUCF, transportation and waste sectors.

A cornerstone of Somalia's third NDC is its profound prioritization of adaptation, recognizing the nation's extreme vulnerability to climate impacts. The new pledge outlines an estimated $6.33 billion investment need for adaptation measures from 2025-2035, with a strong focus on enhancing climate-resilient agriculture, improving water resource management, strengthening public health systems, and building resilient infrastructure and urban areas, in line with Somalia's long-term adaptation vision.

Furthermore, the new NDC prominently integrates cross-cutting principles, emphasizing gender equality, the meaningful inclusion of youth and vulnerable groups, climate justice and a just transition. It also highlights the importance of alignment with nature-based solutions and the SDGs, particularly SDGs 5, 7, 13 and 15. Crucially, the NDC also explicitly addresses the critical issue of loss and damage, a paramount concern for highly vulnerable nations, with past climate-related losses in Somalia estimated at 3.3 percent of its GDP between 2000 and 2021.[19]

Total financial needs for both mitigation and adaptation are projected at approximately $11.5 billion for 2025-2035. Somalia plans to mobilize finance through a diversified approach that includes a blend of domestic resources, international climate funds, carbon market mechanisms, and innovative financing instruments such as the proposed Diaspora Climate Fund. UNDP, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the NDC Partnership, provided crucial support for Somalia's NDC stocktake assessments and the overall development of its third NDC.


Photo Credit: UNDP Somalia

Endnotes

1. The 27 countries are: Andorra, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Niue, Norway, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Somalia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The UNFCCC tracks new NDC submissions in the 2025 cycle on a dedicated NDC 3.0 page.
2. World Resource Institute's Climate Watch Historical GHG Emissions 2021.
3. Sahadevan, D., Irfan, M. T., Luo, C., Moyer, J. D., Mason, C., & Beynon, E. (2025). Charged for change: The case for renewable energy in climate action. UNDP; Pardee Institute for International Futures; Octopus Energy.
4. UNFCCC (2024). NDC Synthesis Report.
5. National priorities are assessed using UNDP's SDG Push Diagnostic tool which enables users to explore the priorities of a country in terms of SDGs by analysing the content of relevant documents. It uses natural language processing to extract and parse the content of a document and a custom-built machine learning model to link this content to SDGs. The main underlying assumption of the tool is that the amount of text linked to an SDG correlates with how important that SDG is in terms of priorities, i.e., the larger the amount, the higher the priority. Once each piece of text in a document is classified with respect to SDGs, we normalize the counts of texts linked to each SDG by the highest count. This results in all values being squeezed in the range from 0 to 1 and at least one SDG always having the value of 1. We call these values "relative salience" or "relative importance". We assume that a higher relative salience implies a higher priority for the country. Finally, we assign the priority tier to each SDG based on its salience as follows: high priority (> 0.75), medium priority (=> 0.25 and <= 0.75) and low priority (< 0.25).
6. WMO (2023). Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water-related Hazards (1970-2021).
7. UNFCCC (2024). NDC Synthesis Report.
8. UNFCCC (2016). NDC Synthesis Report.
9. WHO (2023). 2023 WHO review of health in NDCs and long-term strategies: health at the heart of the Paris Agreement.
10. UNEP (2024). Global Resource Outlook 2024.
11. Circle Economy (2025). Circularity Gap Report 2025: A global call to action.
12. Ibid.
13. The IPCC's 6th assessment report calls for more circular material flows and coordination across sectors and value chains.
14. The first global stocktake, para 36 "notes the importance of transitioning to sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production in efforts to address climate change, including through circular economy approaches, and encourages efforts in this regard."
15. UNFCCC (2023). NDC Synthesis Report.
16. UNEP (2020). New UNEP report lights the way for financial institutions to shift to more sustainable circular economies.
17. These seven countries include: Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Philippines, South Africa, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe, with Zambia starting in Q3-Q4 2025.
18. Somalia was ranked the first most fragile states in 2024 according to the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index 2024.
19. SPARC (2024). Assessing and financing loss and damage due to climate change in Somalia.

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