



# **IEEP summary analysis: Outcomes of the United Nations Climate Action Summit**



23 September 2019



IEEP is an independent, non-profit research institute dedicated to advancing an environmentally sustainable Europe through policy analysis, development and dissemination.

## What were the results?

The UN Climate Action Summit was intended to galvanise increased ambition from Member States and non-state actors in order to urgently fill the gap between current climate policy and what is needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. Unfortunately, despite some unusually bold diplomatic moves on the part of the UN, the world's large emitters have not met that challenge. Even the announcements from the most progressive major emitters were mostly incremental, aspirational, or re-stated existing plans; the gap between these plans and the minimum efforts recommended by the [IPCC special 1.5-degree report](#), recently commissioned and welcomed by world leaders, is wide, and [widening](#).

According to the UN, the following major announcements were made by governments:

- France announced that it would not enter into any trade agreement with countries that have policies counter to the Paris Agreement.
- Germany committed to carbon neutrality by 2050
- 12 countries today made financial commitments to the Green Climate Fund, the official financial mechanism to assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change. This is in addition to recent announcements from Norway, Germany, France and the United Kingdom who have recently doubled their present contributions.
- The United Kingdom today made a major additional contribution, doubling its overall international climate finance commitment
- India pledged to increase renewable energy capacity to 175gw by 2022 and committed to further increasing to 450GW and announced that 80 countries have joined the International Solar Alliance.
- China said it would cut emissions by over 12 billion tons annually and would pursue a path of high-quality growth and low carbon development.
- The European Union announced at least 25% of the next EU budget will be devoted to climate-related activities.
- The Russian Federation announced that they will ratify the Paris Agreement, bringing the total number of countries that have joined the Agreement to 187.
- Pakistan said it would plant more than 10 billion trees over the next five years.

However, most of these commitments are neither new and nor sufficient given the widening ambition and finance gap. It is for instance highly unlikely that objectives for the replenishment of the Green Climate Fund will be met, which means that the international community is unlikely to fulfil its promise to developing countries to reach \$100bn in climate finance by 2020, as other countries are finding it difficult to make up for the shortfall in funding to the withdrawal of the US governments from its commitments to climate finance.

Nonetheless, some important diplomatic coalitions were formed and sectoral announcements made, notably with regard to sustainable climate finance. Of particular note are: the '[Business Ambition for 1.5 °C](#)', 87 major companies committed to setting targets consistent with 1.5°C across their operations and value chains. The companies are committed to setting science-based targets through the [Science Based Targets initiative \(SBTi\)](#), which independently assesses corporate emissions reduction targets in line with what climate scientists say is needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. In another initiative, 12 major investors formed the '[UN-convened Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance](#)', with over USD 2 trillion in assets, agreeing to transition their investment portfolios to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, consistent with a maximum temperature rise of 1.5°C above pre-industrial

temperatures, including establishing intermediate targets every five years in line with Paris Agreement Article 4.9. 130 banks agreed to [the Principles for Responsible Banking](#) under which they commit to strategically align their business with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. The Principles are supported by a strong implementation framework that defines clear accountabilities and requires each bank to set, publish and work towards ambitious targets. Together these initiatives represent an important step forward for sustainable finance.

In terms of addressing climate justice, including intra-country, intercountry and intergenerational equity challenges, a large number of non-state actor youth-related initiatives have been launched but it is unlikely these will be sufficient to fulfil youth demands into action or political power, despite the rhetoric congratulating the youth climate strikes. A new initiative called the '[Climate Action for Jobs](#)' initiative, joint by 50 countries, calls on countries to "formulate national plans for a just transition, creating decent work as well as green jobs". In terms of climate change and health, 47 countries and 71 sub-national entities committed to achieve air quality that is safe for populations and to align their climate change and air pollution policies, by 2030.

Despite these many worthy initiatives, the urgency is very much lacking behind national action both in terms of mitigation and adaptation. More generous public grant financing support, and especially increased financing for adaptation is needed for developed countries to take responsibility and provide climate justice. New financing in this area is still grossly insufficient to the needs and no new innovative funding instruments were announced.

The drive to phase out coal and prevent the construction of new coal plants has become an important point in the international discussion, with the Powering Past Coal Coalition expanding to incorporate a number of new members, notably Germany and Slovakia, and Secretary-General António Guterres calling for no new coal power plants to be built after 2020. Nonetheless, several major emitters, have refused to commit to this standard, and pointedly did not mention this during the Summit.

The focus will now shift to the formal UNFCCC climate negotiation process. Parties are required to submit new or updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which formally outline the actions the party will undertake to address climate change, by the end of 2020. To this end, the Chilean Presidency of COP25 has launched a new "Climate Ambition Alliance" intended to spur countries to enhance their ambition in the NDCs they must submit by COP26 at the end of 2020. So far, 66 parties have indicated their intention to enhance the ambition of their NDC. However, combined they represent only [6.9% of global emissions](#). Although major emitters such as the European Union, Japan, and China did not make any formal announcement on enhancing ambition today, and clearly do not yet accept the need for urgent action, it is possible that diplomatic progress and public pressure over the next year could lead to enhanced ambition.

At the same time, the international situation is not auspicious for progress given active hostility to climate policy from vital countries such as Australia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, and the United States; two of those, the USA and Saudi Arabia, will host the presidencies of the G7 and G20 next year. Fossil fuel companies continue to exert major political influence around the world and are not afraid to use their clout to prevent progress.

*For details of the Action Areas and the specific initiatives announced under those areas, as well as some associated developments see the table below. Note that details are still forthcoming for some, and final numbers of signatories are not available in many cases.*

Action Area	Coalition coordinators	Objectives	Key expected outcomes	Initiatives Presented at the Summit	Assessment from IEEP
Mitigation	Chile (COP 25 presidency)	More ambitious commitments ahead of the 2020 deadline for enhanced NDCs Call from UN Secretary General to adopt concrete measures e.g. no new coal plants by 2020, ending fossil fuel subsidies and introducing carbon taxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcement by countries of enhanced commitments (NDCs), especially from countries with sizeable emissions</li> <li>Announcement by countries regarding long-term strategies with concrete steps and interim targets towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050</li> </ul>	<p><b>Climate Ambition Alliance: Enhanced National Climate Plans &amp; Net Zero 2050</b></p> <p>Commit to enhance ambition in national climate plans by 2020, and/or,</p> <p>Commit to achieve net zero CO2 emissions by 2050</p>	<p>So far, 66 parties have indicated their intention to enhance the ambition of their NDC. However, combined they represent only <u>6.9% of global emissions</u>.</p> <p>65 countries, 10 regions, 87 companies, 15 investors, and 65 countries have indicated they are working toward net zero CO2 emissions by 2050.</p> <p>In this area, major emitters still need to come forward with significantly enhanced NDCs and LTSS. A major diplomatic push between now and COP26 in November 2020, the final due date for NDC revisions, will be needed to ensure alignment between the cumulative effort of all NDCs and the goals of the Paris Agreement. Currently they are completely out of alignment.</p>
Social & Political Drivers	Perú and Spain	A new approach to decarbonisation, managed in ways that secure decent work for all, reduce inequalities, promote social justice, and protect health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcement by countries of commitment to achieve safe air quality by 2030. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scaled up investments in climate-resilient health systems, and in air quality policy measures</li> </ul> </li> <li>Announcement by countries of commitment to support women's leadership and gender-responsive climate actions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clean Air Initiative</b></p> <p>Commit to achieving air quality that is safe for populations, and to align their climate change and air pollution policies, by 2030. Financial institutions commits to scale up investment to support climate action, health and sustainable development. Forty-one countries that have joined the initiative to date along with 71 sub-national governments and 2 health finance organizations, including the Clean Air Fund which announced a US\$50 million fund aligned to the initiatives' objectives.</p> <p><b>Gender</b></p> <p>Commit to implementation of climate action which contributes to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. So far, 45 countries have signed onto this initiative.</p> <p><b>Just Transition Initiative</b></p> <p>Support ecological transition and businesses to commit on creating decent green jobs. Calls on countries to</p>	<p>The Justice Transition initiative has potential and should be mainstreamed into the NDCs for all parties. The actionability and accountability around the gender plan is less clear.</p>

					"formulate national plans for a just transition, creating decent work as well as green jobs". 50 countries have joined.
<b>Youth Engagement &amp; Public Mobilization</b>	Ireland, Republic of the Marshall Islands	Response to the mobilization of young people worldwide who are demanding ambitious climate action  Support to young entrepreneurs in innovation for low-carbon solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation of the Youth Climate Summit</li> <li>• Youth Pledge</li> <li>• Start of an intergenerational Dialogue</li> <li>• "Summer of Solutions" campaign— presentation of the best ideas from young people around the world to create innovative technology-based solutions with corresponding funding pledges</li> </ul>	A large number of initiatives by non-state actors was mentioned including a 'Preferenda' (Reaching out to 1bn users of social media platforms) or a Global Alliance of Youth Councils. The government of Italy committed to organise a youth gathering as part of the 2020 pre-COP.	Information is still very sparse on any concrete initiatives for real engagement of youth in policy making, or for addressing the issue of inter-generational equity.
<b>Energy Transition</b>	Denmark, Ethiopia	Greater investments for the clean energy transition including high-emitting sectors, (shipping, cooling, buildings, oil and gas) while leaving no one behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcement by public and private actors of concrete commitments to increase clean energy investments and of cross-sectoral market-driven partnerships</li> <li>• New announcements and initiatives in high-emitting sectors</li> <li>• Initiatives to increase energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency as well in developing countries.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cool Coalition</b></p> <p>Inspire ambition and accelerate action on the transition to clean and efficient cooling. 80 partners from government, the private sector, cities, international organizations, finance, academia and civil society.</p> <p><b>3% Club for Energy Efficiency</b></p> <p>Strengthen domestic policy action on energy efficiency to drive a global 3% annual energy efficiency improvement. 15 governments and 13 businesses and international organizations.</p>	<p>The 'Keeping Cool' initiative is a major step forward in one of the most important areas for climate mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>3% club for energy efficiency is also an important initiative after progress on energy efficiency has stalled in recent years.</p> <p>Major progress and investment needs to be made on the energy transition over the next ten years if we are to have any chance of achieving the Paris Agreement targets. This is an area that still comprises the bulk of emissions and we understand how to quickly lower emissions.</p>

				<p><b>Accelerating Sustainable Energy in SIDS to Achieve Enhanced and Ambitious Energy Transition Targets by 2030</b></p> <p>Commit to the transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency targets by 2030</p> <p><b>Climate Investment Platform</b></p> <p>Accelerate investments for low carbon, climate-resilient development</p> <p><b>Decarbonizing Shipping: Getting to Zero Coalition</b></p> <p>Accelerate the development and deployment of zero emission vessels by 2030 and reduce GHG emissions from shipping by at least 50% by 2050</p> <p><b>Towards Clean and efficient Energy Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean</b></p> <p>Attain a regional goal of at least 20% share of Non-Conventional Renewable Energy (NCRE) in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2030</p> <p><b>Powering Past Coal Coalition adds members</b> - Notably Slovakia and Germany.</p>	
<b>Industry transition</b>	India and Sweden	New industry Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announcements from at least 6-7 CEOs from heavy industry and transport (i.e. chemicals, cement, steel, aluminium, trucking, shipping, aviation), across different geographies, making commitments to net-zero emissions by 2050.</li> <li>Creation of a 'leadership group' of governments and businesses that will deliver 'sustainable industry growth plans'</li> </ul>	<p><b>Business Ambition for 1.5 °C – Our Only Future</b></p> <p>Set Science Based Targets aligned with a 1.5°C trajectory for a net-zero future. 87 companies with a market capitalization of USD 2.3 trillion. Committed to setting targets consistent with 1.5°C across their operations and value chains. The companies are committed to setting science-based targets through the <a href="#">Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)</a>,</p>	Business Ambition group is important for mobilising and tracking the total emissions of businesses, including through their supply chains. Voluntary initiatives need to be developed alongside, and in coherence with, regulatory and other Government action. Firms with an ambition to show what is possible can help to accelerate ambition in public policy.

				<p>which independently assesses corporate emissions reduction targets in line with what climate scientists say is needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.</p> <p><b>Leadership Group for Industry Transition</b></p> <p>India-Sweden led private-public partnership, accelerating transformation in hard-to-decarbonize and energy-intensive sectors like steel, cement, aluminum, aviation and shipping to low carbon pathways to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.</p>	
<b>Infrastructure, Cities and Local Action</b>	Turkey, Kenya	<p>Vision of carbon neutrality by 2050 Decarbonisation of land-based transport at scale and promotion of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. Mitigate impacts for 100% of the most vulnerable urban dwellers by 2030.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitments by local governments on carbon neutrality</li> <li>• Announcements of initiatives for alternatives to private vehicles in urban transport and shifting towards low or zero emissions vehicles</li> <li>• National commitments for decarbonised buildings by 2030 and 2050 backed by commitments to mobilize necessary investments in developing countries.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action towards Climate-Friendly Transport (ACT)</b></p> <p>Accelerate the development and deployment of zero emission vehicles by 2030 and establish a multi-region platform for e-bus deployment in 500 cities by 2025 with focus on the Global South</p> <p><b>Africa Initiative for Sustainable Cities</b></p> <p>Integrate and enable national strategies and decision-making processes at the city level. 13 countries participating.</p> <p><b>Leadership for Urban Climate Investment (LUCI)</b></p> <p>Create 1000 climate smart urban projects in 2000 cities by 2030</p> <p><b>Zero Carbon Buildings for All</b></p> <p>Decarbonize the world’s building stock. Zero Carbon Buildings for All will leverage the leadership of government, industry and civil society to both secure commitments to ambitious targets (national policy roadmaps to decarbonize new buildings by 2030 and existing</p>	<p>We welcome the focus on decarbonisation of transport sectors in developing countries; there needs to be more focus and ambition in developed countries as well. Parties’ long-term strategies need to have clear and credible visions for how transport will develop and be powered and consumed in the future.</p>



				<p>buildings by 2050) and mobilize significant funding (at least \$1 trillion in Paris Agreement-compliant buildings investment in developing countries by 2030).</p> <p>The national governments announcing their commitment to Zero Carbon Buildings for All include an impressive cross-section of developing and industrialized countries: Kenya, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.</p>	
<b>Nature-Based Solutions</b>	China and New Zealand	Recognition of the interconnection between humans and nature and the integration of natural systems into concrete climate action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating nature’s systemic role into governance and economic planning</li> <li>Enhancing actions and implementation in key areas of NBS</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Building Resilience in the Central American Region - AFOLU sector</i></b></p> <p>Establish and manage ten million hectares of "Sustainable productive landscapes that are resilient to climate change" with a goal of no less than 40% reduction in (2010) emissions in the sector by 2030. 7 countries.</p> <p><b><i>High Level Panel for Sustainable Ocean economy</i></b></p> <p>Achieve sustainable use of the oceans by decarbonizing maritime industries, investing in ocean-based renewable energy, managing food systems, and expanding ocean research</p> <p><b><i>One Planet Business for Biodiversity</i></b></p> <p>Danone is launching OP2B, a coalition of 17 companies. One Planet Business for Biodiversity (OP2B) is a unique international cross-sectorial, action-oriented business coalition on biodiversity with a specific focus on agriculture, launched within French President Macron’s One Planet Lab</p>	<p>The initiatives on NBS further emphasize that the climate and nature crisis the world is facing needs shared solutions.</p> <p>For several years, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development has been motivating progressive business actors to increasingly invest in natural infrastructure solutions, with the goal that by 2020, investing in ecosystems-or natural infrastructure-will no longer be just a good idea, it will be a common practice across industry sectors worldwide. At this year’s Trondheim Biodiversity Conference in Norway <a href="#">a global coalition</a> was launched to elevate a business call for comprehensive action to reverse nature loss and restore the planet’s vital natural systems.</p> <p>IEEP recently <a href="#">published a blog</a> pointing to EU actions within reach for tackling simultaneously the interlinked crises of biodiversity loss and climate change.</p>

				<p>framework. Actions are focused around three pillars: scaling up regenerative agricultural practices; boosting cultivated biodiversity and diets through product portfolios; and eliminating deforestation / enhancing the management, restoration and protection high value natural ecosystems.</p> <p>Engage decision makers, and develop and promote policy recommendations in the CBD COP 15 framework to be held in 2020.</p> <p><b><i>The Contribution of Central African Forests to the Global Fight Against Climate Change Initiative (CAFI)</i></b></p> <p>Preserve the value of the forests in the region to mitigate climate change, reduce poverty, and contribute to sustainable development . It supports strategic, holistic and country-level REDD+ and Low Emission Development investments while focusing on Central African high-forest cover countries. Its objective is to recognize and preserve the value of the forests in the region to mitigate climate change, reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable development. 13 countries.</p>	
<b>Resilience and adaptation</b>	Egypt and United Kingdom	<p>New policies to support the transition towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Resilient people</li> <li>o Resilient environment</li> <li>o Resilient economies and investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong political signal on resilience and adaptation endorsed by world leaders and CEOs backed by commitments</li> <li>• New high-profile initiatives</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>African Adaptation Initiative</i></b></p> <p>Enhance action on adaptation with the aim of addressing the financing gap, and implementing measures to address disaster risk reduction and resilience needs in Africa. By 2025 the African Adaptation Initiative aims for all African countries to have doubled the amount of finance accessed and mobilized for adaptation.</p> <p><b><i>Early Warning Early Action</i></b></p>	<p>There are a number of good initiatives under adaptation and resilience, including the creation of the CCRI to better price in physical climate risk in infrastructure investment, scaling up disaster insurance, and funding for smallholder farmers. Nonetheless, adaptation remains broadly underfunded and under-addressed.</p>

				<p>Reduce the impact of specific disaster events on agriculture and livelihood through the monitoring of major risks. The partnership brings together the humanitarian, development and climate communities and aims to make 1 billion people safer from disaster by delivering new and improved early warning systems and helping communities prepare the plans and resources needed to respond when disaster strikes.</p> <p><b><i>InsuResilience Global Partnership</i></b></p> <p>Scale up climate and disaster risk finance and insurance solutions by developing countries. Will ensure that 500 million poor and vulnerable people worldwide will be covered against climate shocks by pre-arranged risk finance by 2025. The governments of Germany and the United Kingdom are enhancing risk finance and insurance programs, and the private insurance industry will commit up to US\$5 billion of risk capacity until 2025.</p> <p><b><i>LDC Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR)</i></b></p> <p>The LIFE-AR programme aims to help the world's poorest countries to adapt to climate change and build a climate-resilient future for their citizens. The initiative will: (1) Review, analyse and deliberate on evidence on long-term adaptation and resilience interventions from around the world, and (2) Deliver an LDC long-term vision for adapting towards a climate resilient future by 2050.</p> <p><b><i>Mainstreaming of Climate Risks in Investment Decision-Making</i></b></p> <p>The Coalition for Climate Resilient Investment (CCRI) led by the private sector—representing more than 20</p>	
--	--	--	--	---	--

				<p>institutions with USD\$8 trillion in assets under management—was launched at the Summit with the goal of developing and piloting the first framework for pricing physical climate risks in infrastructure investing. CCRI will build the economic and financial case for making investment climate resilient. The Coalition’s work will build on the recommendations of the taskforce for climate-related financial disclosure, to better reflect the materiality of the physical climate risk borne by investors.</p> <p><b><i>Supporting smallholder farmers and fostering a just rural transformation</i></b></p> <p>US\$750 million to enhance resilience to climate shocks and extreme events for 300 million small-scale farmers, increase household incomes and food security, and reverse ecological decline. This is part of the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA) work on Agriculture and Food Security for small-scale food producers.</p>	
<p><b>Climate finance and carbon pricing</b></p>	<p>France, Jamaica and Qatar</p>	<p>deliver on the concrete commitments for the scaling-up of climate finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcements for scaled up climate finance to reach USD 100 billion goal by 2020</li> <li>• Signals for the pathway for ambitious climate finance goals post-2020.</li> <li>• Securing the successful replenishment of the Green Climate Fund.</li> <li>• Domestic resource mobilisation: Emissions Trading Systems, phasing-out fossil fuel subsidies, and carbon taxes.</li> <li>• Push on equity investment and mobilize private equity funds to make their portfolios Paris Agreement-compatible.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>UN-Convened Asset Owners Alliance</i></b> (12 major insurers and pension funds responsible for directing more than USD 2.4 trillion in investments. ) The members of this Alliance commit to transitioning their investment portfolios to net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 consistent with 1.5 degree goal, taking into account the best available scientific knowledge including the findings of the IPCC, and regularly reporting on progress, including establishing intermediate targets every five years in line with Paris Agreement.</p> <p><b><i>Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF)</i></b> - an international,</p>	<p>These are significant initiatives for enhancing the sustainability of finance internationally. Although the funds still represent a small portion of international investment they still represent significant players, setting a new benchmark. PCAF also represents a major new international standard.</p>

				<p>industry-led initiative harmonizing the financial measurement and disclosure of greenhouse gas emissions generated by loans and investments. Mortgages and other products will be assessed using a global standard for the first time, allowing banks to encourage behaviour change. More than 50 financial institutions representing \$2.9 trillion in assets have pledged to unveil the carbon impact of their investments. While the sum is but a fragment of the <a href="#"><u>\$386 trillion-high global stock of financial capital</u></a>, it represents the single largest carbon disclosure initiative within the financial sector. It also marks the first time the financial sector will apply a global carbon accounting standard. The PCAF will enable investors to judge whether their portfolios are compatible with the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit warming to “well below” 2C and make “finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development”.</p>	
--	--	--	--	--	--