

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION IN ASEAN



Southeast Asia is currently facing a critical climate change crisis which threatens the human rights of all of the region's inhabitants. Parliamentarians play a crucial role in ensuring countries' adequate response to the climate emergency. This document aims to explain key information and steps that lawmakers in Southeast Asia can take to ensure adequate climate change mitigation action.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION?

Climate change refers to the rise in global temperatures caused by the accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. There are two ways to address the impacts of climate change: **Climate change mitigation**, which refers to the action of reducing the accumulation of greenhouse gases. **Climate change adaptation**, which refers to minimizing the impact of climate change on society.

WHAT IS THE PARIS AGREEMENT?

More than 180 nations have ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change, which entered into force in November 2016. This includes all ASEAN member states and Timor-Leste. One of the aims of the agreement is to limit the increase in the world's temperatures to: ***“well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.”***

WHAT ARE NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS?

To achieve this Paris Agreement aim, all nations must submit to the United Nations, by December 2020 climate action plans called “Nationally Determined Contributions” (NDCs). The NDCs lay out how nations intend to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. All ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste have already submitted their NDCs. The NDCs are reviewed every 5 years, starting in November 2021 at COP 26 in the UK.



WHAT IS COP26?

The Paris Agreement was signed in 2015 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP). The COP takes place every year. Next year's COP will be COP26 and take place in Glasgow, UK, in November 2021, after it was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. This will be the first COP to review countries' climate action plans (or NDCs - Nationally Determined Contributions).

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH ASEAN'S NDCS?

According to the UN, the world's NDCs are **considerably insufficient** and not on track to meet the Paris Agreement aim of limiting temperature increases to "*well below 2°C.*" Rather the world is on track for a **3.2°C** increase in the world's temperatures, a catastrophic scenario for the people of Southeast Asia. All of Southeast Asia's NDCs have been identified by scientists as "insufficient" to reach the Paris Agreement with the NDCs of Indonesia and Singapore identified as "highly insufficient".

WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENTS DO?

In light of the insufficiently ambitious NDCs across the region and the catastrophic scenario facing the region, ASEAN governments must re-submit ahead of COP26, **enhanced NDCs with more ambitious objectives** compatible with the Paris Agreement by the end of 2020. Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Laos PDR and Cambodia have already committed to enhancing their NDCs. The remaining ASEAN governments must follow their example.

WHAT CAN PARLIAMENTARIANS DO?

Urge your government to submit new and more ambitious NDCs by December 2020.

Currently, only Timor-Leste, Myanmar, Laos PDR and Cambodia have committed to enhancing their NDCs. The remaining ASEAN governments must follow their example. Please see below for country specific recommendations.

Hold your government to account by asking, in Parliament, your government to clarify its policy regarding its decision not to increase their NDCs, despite the catastrophic situation.

Debates on budgets are another good opportunity to discuss the government's action on climate change mitigation.

Raise awareness and encourage dialogue among your constituents and policy-makers about the importance of action on climate change, making use of the media and public events.

Use parliamentary committees.

Ensure that the committee you are a member of formally integrates climate change as a key concern and works with climate experts, civil society organisations and others.

In some countries, select committees can ask for and undertake enquiries on the performance of governments in achieving the Paris Agreement and request official responses.

Familiarize yourself with the Paris Agreement objective and scientific recommendations for greenhouse gas emission reductions for your country.

See the recommendations section below for more information. Discuss with climate scientists and other stakeholders, including civil society in your area.

Meet with constituents and take up their concerns regarding the climate.

For example, discuss with them ways to secure their livelihoods as their environment changes. Include those who cannot vote, such as children and migrants.

You can raise these grievances to advocate for the need to increase climate ambition and make sure approaches to climate change meet the needs of your constituents.

Write to your government's UNFCCC focal point to seek information on your country's NDC and to request that you attend the COP26 in November 2021 as part of your country's delegation.

This can ensure increased parliamentary oversight of the negotiation and NDC reviewing process.

WORKING WITH THE UNFCCC

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international treaty adopted in 1992. Its objective is the “*stabilization and reconstruction of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.*” Each country has a focal point to the UNFCCC designated by the government. The tasks of the focal point is to liaise with the UNFCCC and to distribute information at the national level.

MPs can reach out to their countries’ UNFCCC focal point to find out more about the status of their NDC and advocate to enhance its ambition.

CAMBODIA

H.E. Mr. Say Samal, Minister, Ministry of Environment (1)
Mr. Mao Hak, Director, General Secretariat of National Council for Sustainable Development (2)

☎ (855-23) 21-3908 / 4-27894 (1)
✉ moe-cabinet@camnet.com.kh (1)
✉ cceap@online.com.kh(2)

INDONESIA

Mr. Ruandha Agung Sugardiman, Director General, Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

☎(62-21) 5730 144
✉ nfpc.indonesia@gmail.com

MALAYSIA

Mr. Jaya Singam Rajoo, Senior Undersecretary (1)
Mr. Md Yusup Yusmazy, Principal Assistant Secretary (2)
Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change.

☎ (60-3) 8885-8690 (1)
✉ jayasingam@mestecc.gov.my (1)
☎(60-3)8885-8675 (2)
✉ yusmazy@mestecc.gov.my (2)

MYANMAR

Mr. Hla Maung Thein, Director General For Environmental Conservation Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

☎ (95-67) 431343
✉ dg.ecd@moecaf.gov.mm
✉ hlamaungthein.env@gmail.com

THE PHILIPPINES

H.E. Mr. Emmanuel De Guzman, Minister and Vice Chairperson of the climate change commission (1)
Ms. Noralyn Jubaira-Baja, Assistant Secretary of the climate change commission (2)

☎ (63-2) 735-6201 / 564-1451 to 80 (1)
✉ emmanuel.m.deguzman@gmail.com
✉ osec.ccc.ph@gmail.com (1)
✉ unio.div2@dfa.gov.ph (2)

SINGAPORE

Mr. Cheah Sin Liang, Lead Coordinator for Climate Negotiations, Deputy Director, Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office

☎ (65) 6354 9221, (65) 6354 9218
✉ nccs_international@pmo.gov.sg
✉ cheah_sin_liang@pmo.gov.sg

TIMOR-LESTE

Mr. Adao Soares Barbosa, National Focal Point for UNFCCC, Secretariat of State for Environment and Reforestation

☎ (670) 333-1118
✉ adaosoaresb@yahoo.com

THAILAND

Ms. Natthanich Asvapoositkul, Director, Climate Change Management and Coordination Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

☎ (66-2) 265 6690
✉ natthan.asv@gmail.com
✉ unfccc.thailand.focalpoint@gmail.com

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE CLIMATE ACTION PLANS

The following table summarises the key scientific recommendations for ASEAN countries' NDCs to comply with the Paris Agreement's climate mitigation aim. MPs can ensure that these recommendations are integrated and taken up by their governments.

INDONESIA

NDC Objective*:

Conditional reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of up to 41 % of the 'business as usual' (BAU) scenario by 2030.

NDC Assessment:

+4 degrees**
✗ Highly Insufficient
✓ Mentions human rights
✗ No commitment to increase ambition by 2020

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase ambition of NDC objective
- Disinvest from and phase out coal by 2040
- Phase out fossil fuel subsidies
- Ensure Indonesia meets its renewable energy targets
- Address forest clearance, fires and haze
- Regulate expansion of the palm oil sector, including for biofuel.
- Set a deadline through legislation to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions
- Make all finance flows fully aligned with the Paris Agreement goals

MALAYSIA

NDC Objective*:

Reduce its greenhouse gas emissions intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030 relative to the emissions intensity of GDP in 2005.

NDC Assessment:

✗ Insufficient
✗ No mention of human rights
✗ No commitment to increase ambition by 2020

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase ambition of NDC objective.
- Encourage public transport development
- Make all finance flows fully aligned with the Paris Agreement goals
- Disinvest from and phase out coal by 2040
- Phase out fossil fuel subsidies
- Regulate expansion of palm oil sector, including for biofuel and increase certification standards
- Set a deadline through legislation to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions
- Commit to protecting, promoting and respecting human rights in climate action.

THE PHILIPPINES

NDC Objective*:

Reduce its emissions of about 70% relative to its Business as Usual scenario (BAU) by 2030.

NDC Assessment:

+2 degrees**
✓ Mentions human rights
✗ Policies not on track to meet the NDC's objective
✗ No commitment to increase ambition by 2020

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase ambition of NDC objective
- Submit new NDC clarifying what is the business as usual scenario
- Quantify future land use emissions
- Set a deadline through legislation to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions
- Phase out fossil fuel subsidies
- Make all finance flows fully aligned with the Paris Agreement goals
- Disinvest from and phase out coal by 2040

SINGAPORE

NDC Objective*:

Reduce its Emissions Intensity by 36% from 2005 levels by 2030, and stabilize its emissions with the aim of peaking around 2030.

NDC Assessment:

+4 degrees**
✗ Highly Insufficient
✗ No mention of human rights
✗ No commitment to increase ambition by 2020

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase ambition of NDC objective
- Address reliance on gas (undiversified energy mix likely to result in dependence on fossil fuels)
- Address low starting level of carbon tax
- Set a deadline through legislation to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions
- Phase out fossil fuel subsidies
- Make all finance flows fully aligned with the Paris Agreement goals
- Disinvest from (including abroad) and phase out coal by 2040.
- Commit to protecting, promoting and respecting human rights in climate action.

THAILAND

NDC Objective*:

Reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 25% from the projected BAU level by 2030.

NDC Assessment:

✗ Insufficient
✗ No mention of human rights
✗ No commitment to increase ambition by 2020

Recommendations for improvement:

- Increase ambition of NDC objective
- Expand clean transportation system
- Set a deadline through legislation to achieve zero net greenhouse gas emissions
- Phase out fossil fuel subsidies
- Make all finance flows fully aligned with the Paris Agreement goals
- Disinvest from (including abroad) and phase out coal by 2040.
- Commit to protecting, promoting and respecting human rights in climate action.

**This refers to the Nationally Determined Contributions' conditional emissions target. Unlike the NDC unconditional target, the conditional target depends on the provision of appropriate funds from the global community to take action.*

***This means that if all countries had the same level of ambition compared to their level of emissions, our planet's temperatures would increase by 4 (or 2 for Philippines) degrees Celsius by 2100.*

Data is According to the [The truth behind the climate pledges report](#), [UNFCCC NDC registry](#), [Climate scorecard](#), [Climate Action Tracker](#), [Climate Watch 2020 NDC Tracker](#), [NDC Explorer](#), [Climate Analytics report](#), [STOTEN 650 \(2\) 1858-1871](#), accessed December 2019.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- [Climate Action Tracker](#)
- [The Truth Behind the Climate Pledges, report](#)
- [United Nations Emissions Gap report 2019](#)
- [UNFCCC NDC registry](#)
- [Climate Watch 2020 NDC Tracker](#)

If you are interested in further information or support to address these issues in your country and parliament, please contact Cannelle Gueguen-Teil at cannelle@aseanmp.org.



**ASEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

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