

International Coalition on Multi-level and Multi-stakeholder Climate Governance for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement

Key arguments supporting a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation

The Paris Agreement is a considerable achievement in that it is universal, binding and balanced (UNFCCC, 2015).

However, even if fully implemented, the Parties' current pledges will not be sufficient to achieve the agreed goals. Additional transformative action is therefore necessary, to be implemented by civil society and social movements, business and trade unions – the non-Party stakeholders – in coordination with subnational governments, cities and municipalities. Meeting the climate change challenge is a shared responsibility.

Below are key arguments on why it is important to take such an approach to tackling climate change and how it can make a difference compared to the traditional top-down approach, that of making what central governments consider appropriate happen. These arguments highlight how integrating the active involvement of subnational governments and non-Party stakeholders into the respective nationally determined contributions (NDCs) can help governments reach their targets (OECD, 2016).

- Local and regional authorities (LRAs) are the closest level of public administration to citizens. It is mainly these authorities that make many decisions on policy areas that fall under the scope of the Paris Agreement (CoR, 2018). Cities and regions are therefore well placed to test and pilot climate actions in their geographical areas. Such actions are often more ambitious than national projects or initiatives, given the appropriate and feasible scale for a number of climate-related policies. For example, in 2015 they accounted for 40% of public investment worldwide (OECD/UCLG, 2016). The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) launched Cities and Regions Talanoa Dialogues (ICLEI, 2018) to maximise LRA involvement in climate action through multi-level policy dialogue, coordination, collaboration and coherence between relevant processes and initiatives (ICLEI, 2017; ICLEI, GIZ and UN Habitat, 2018).
- The shift towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy has been driven to a great extent by bottom-up initiatives led by citizens, innovative businesses, regions, cities and various civil society stakeholders, collectively referred to as non-state and subnational actors. Governments put the policy framework in place, but non-state and subnational actors implement actions on the ground. Many non-state and subnational actors are the true leaders of innovative and effective actions (EESC, 2017; EESC, 2016).
- The private sector, the primary source of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), is another key player in reaching the GHG emission reduction targets. That is why we must listen to what the private sector has to say, get it doing things and help it implement the Paris Agreement and the ensuing commitments. It is in the private sector that the improvements implemented will have the greatest impact. This global transformation of our economies cannot take place without the involvement of everyone. There is therefore a need to mobilise different forms of investment and public-private climate financing to be able to rise to the challenges of mitigation and adaptation (Comité21, 2016; UNEP, 2015).
- The scientific community also plays an important part in supporting the transition required to reach the 1.5 C limit. Researchers increasingly recognise that rather than simply gathering knowledge, they need to actively contribute to finding transformative solutions (ECOLISE, 2018a; ECOLISE, 2018b).

By combining the efforts of local communities, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations,

businesses, researchers and multi-level governments, it will be possible to bring about climate action that can make a real difference and effect positive change. Non-state and subnational climate action can also strengthen overall climate governance. For instance:

- It could feed into more ambitious climate policies by showing national governments that it is possible to set and reach more ambitious climate targets;
- It could significantly contribute to implementing national policies, and to fulfilling national NDC requirements;
- It could help detect opportunities to strengthen the regulatory environment.

The International Coalition on Multi-level and Multi-stakeholder Climate Governance (International Climate Governance Coalition), co-managed by the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of the Regions, Comité 21, the OECD, the European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability (ECOLISE) and ICLEI, supports a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach.

Global climate governance cannot be ignored, so it is essential that the UNFCCC regulatory framework acknowledge this form of bottom-up governance by formally recognising its role in the decision-making process regarding climate change.

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European Economic and Social Committee



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