

#### **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

**NOVEMBER 2020** 



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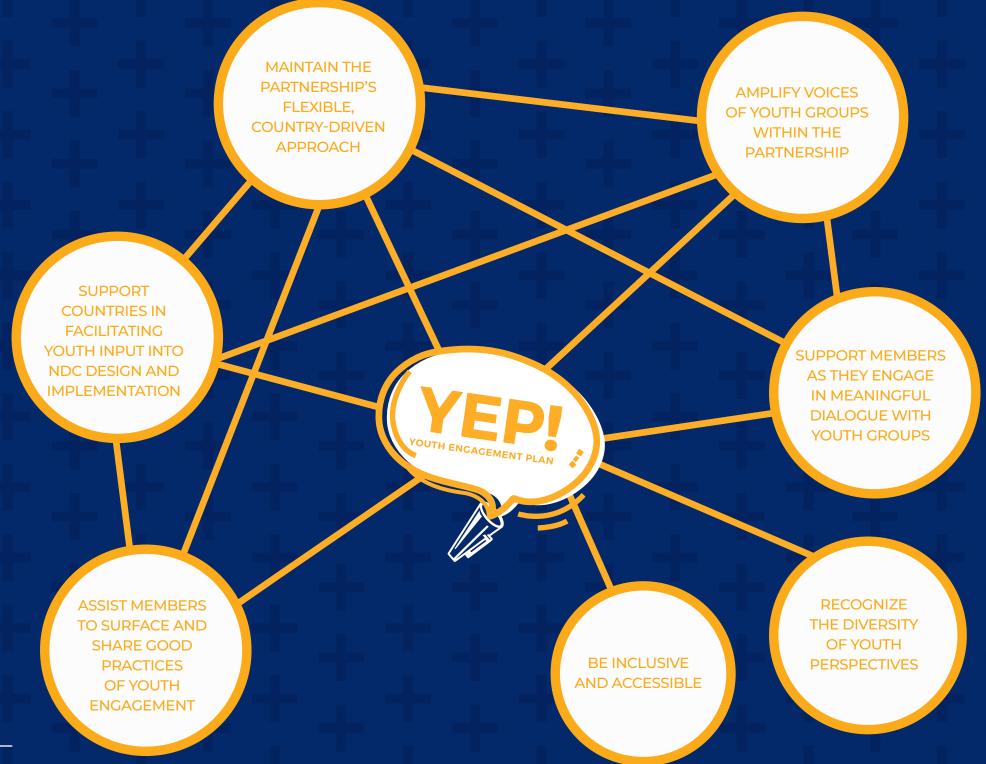
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#### I. INTRODUCTION

Youth today—and the generations that follow them—will have to live with and manage the impacts of a changing climate<sup>1</sup>. A 20-year-old today is likely to live on a planet up to three degrees warmer with sea levels more than a quarter of a meter higher than 1990 levels<sup>2</sup>. Already, the impacts of climate change are affecting young people and their families, while making existing inequities worse<sup>3</sup>. Around the world, young leaders and activists are organizing climate campaigns calling for urgent climate action<sup>4</sup>, developing innovations and solutions through entrepreneurship, contributing to government initiatives and research efforts<sup>5</sup>, and practicing sustainable living as models for society and communities. Children and youth often have access to information about the impacts of climate change or first-hand experience with climate change<sup>6</sup>. Yet, despite this, young people are typically not included in decision-making or lack the information and resources to engage meaningfully. Programs that aim to support youth in becoming effective agents of change are limited. Youth need to be empowered to participate in climate programs and policies—and decision-makers need inspiration and, in many cases, support to better engage youth in their processes<sup>7</sup>.

In view of the critical role of young people in facing climate change, the NDC Partnership's Steering Committee decided at its meeting in Spring 2020 to establish a Youth Task Force (YTF). The goal of the YTF was to guide a youth-led process to develop a Youth Engagement Plan (YEP) for approval during its Fall 2020 meeting. The YTF consisted of youth representatives nominated by Steering Committee members and led a broad and inclusive consultation process, gathering inputs from more than 500 young people from more than 80 countries across all regions. In addition, nearly 50 member countries and institutions were consulted through a survey, workshops, and interviews. These consultations are considered a starting point for youth engagement in the Partnership and will be expanded through ongoing consultation described in Section 4. The process and composition of the YTF is detailed in the Annex. Key findings and a selection of best practices from consultations with youth representatives and Partnership members are detailed in the Youth Engagement Resources Document.





## THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The YEP presents opportunities for increased, meaningful engagement of young people in the NDC Partnership's work<sup>89</sup>. Key components of the YEP are integrated into the NDC Partnership 2021-2025 Work Program. The mandate from the Steering Committee specified that the YEP should:

- Maintain the Partnership's flexible, country-driven approach.
   Recommendations are based on member input and the suggested options are non-prescriptive. Calls for resource mobilization are country-driven and all youth-related requests will be embedded within existing processes.
- Support countries in facilitating youth input into NDC design and implementation for youth-responsive NDC development and implementation.
- Assist members to **surface and share good practices of youth engagement** in NDC enhancement and implementation
  while acknowledging different country contexts.
- Amplify voices of youth groups within the Partnership, highlighting key vulnerabilities and challenges youth experience and proposing solutions and priorities as determined by youth.

• **Support members** as they engage in meaningful dialogue with youth groups by providing relevant information, tools, and guidance on how members can include young people in NDC processes more effectively.

#### Two additional principles emerged from the YTF's consultations and inform the YEP:

- Be inclusive and accessible: encourage members to consider connectivity and rurality when targeting youth to make climate change and NDC-related material widely accessible.
   This includes limiting jargon and non-technical terminology, providing local translation, and considering subtitles and sign languages to reach as many youth groups as possible.
- Recognize the diversity of youth perspectives: encourage members to consider diversity in socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, nationality, locality, life experience, abilities, and gender, among other youth realities.

# II. ACTIONS FOR MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Actions presented here are based on good practices, recommendations, and resources shared by members and by youth groups during the consultation. Members are encouraged to incorporate relevant actions in their country or organizational context and collaborate across the Partnership to strengthen youth engagement in NDC action. The Support Unit will play a supportive role to increase knowledge sharing, communications, and collaboration around youth engagement with members and youth groups.



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#### **KEY ACTION AREAS**



DESIGN YOUTH-INCLUSIVE NDC PROCESSES AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL



SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT
OF YOUTH-LED NDC
IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS



STRENGTHEN CLIMATE
CHANGE CAPACITY BUILDING
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



ENCOURAGE YOUTH
PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL
NDC PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

## DESIGN YOUTHINCLUSIVE NDC PROCESSES AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

### ENGAGE YOUTH ACROSS ALL NDC PHASES

Youth has a critical role to play across all phases of NDCs, from development and enhancement to implementation. In consultation and planning process around the NDCs at the country level, members are encouraged to consider the following actions pertaining to youth engagement:

- In developing NDCs and implementation plans, consider
  the needs and rights of youth, and recognize the impact
  of climate on youth and their role as positive agents of
  change. Members can draw on existing frameworks such
  as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UN
  Youth Strategy.
- youth engagement in climate policy and decision-making processes, such as a youth climate panel with a mandate to consult youth throughout the country on climate change and provide inputs to the government. Institutions can take a similar approach within their organizational structure to include a more structural youth voice on climate. When





members undertake a selection process to establish a more formalized structure for youth input on the NDC, they are recommended to ensure such process is open and accessible to youth from various backgrounds and parts of the country.

- Members should support and collaborate with existing structures for youth engagement such as national or local youth councils, as well as other youth groups and representatives. The Youth Task Force created an initial stakeholder list of youth groups and representatives across different countries and regions which will be shared and continuously updated by the Support Unit with inputs from Partnership members.
- Design consultation and decision-making processes
  for NDC development, enhancement, or implementation
  (including NDC Partnership processes) with youth needs in
  mind and include youth groups throughout. The Support
  Unit will periodically solicit and share examples of good
  practices and lessons learned from members regarding youth
  engagement.
- Support youth engagement by making resources available
  to support inclusion of youth from all socio-economic
  backgrounds and be transparent about the use of youth
  inputs when engaging them, establishing clear expectations
  on time and deliverable commitment as well as resource
  availability. Sustainability must be a key consideration for
  resource allocation and the establishment of new structures.

## 1.2 LEVERAGE YOUTH EXPERTISE

Members are encouraged to establish **dedicated capacity and technical expertise** to support mainstreaming of youth inputs and priorities. Possible actions include:

- Appoint a person in charge of youth engagement and inclusion related to the NDC process. This could be supported through a request for support to the Partnership.
- Be prepared to offer support to strengthen youth engagement in interested countries, at their request.
- Members are encouraged to engage youth groups in NDC project and program development and implementation to build on their ideas, networks, and expertise, and to help ensure projects meet the needs of future generations.
- Members are encouraged to provide, together with youth groups where possible, **trainings on why and how to design youth-inclusive engagement processes**, **projects**, **and programs** to decision-makers, technical experts, and staff working on NDC development and implementation, as well as related processes such as long-term climate strategies.
- Engage youth representatives in regular technical meetings with policy makers. The Support Unit will make efforts to invite youth leaders and organizations to relevant public thematic discussions to enhance understanding of each other's perspectives and offer opportunities for youth inputs in ways that support sustained engagement.





 In countries with an active NDC Partnership engagement process, in-country facilitators or national advisors can engage youth as part of their support for whole-of-society processes under the leadership of the governments.
 Facilitators and advisors will have access to similar trainings as stated above, supported by members.



Members are encouraged to explore ways to improve **access to funding** for NDC implementation projects of youth and youthled organizations. These can include:

- Establishing a fund or window of an existing fund that includes small grants for youth to support NDC implementation through relevant projects.
- Supporting youth in preparing NDC-relevant projects.
   Provide resources and support (e.g., seed capital) needed to take the next step toward raising capital, so that youth can take their climate solutions from idea to business plan.
- Supporting or collaborating with youth organizations in seeking funds from existing organizations, such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Small Grants Program.
   The Support Unit will make information on funds available

through the <u>Knowledge Portal</u>. Members may also use school, university, or other networks to disseminate this information.

- **Including youth-led projects** in Partnership Plans and mobilizing support for them.
- Considering formal structures at the local level to support
  youth participation in climate projects. Member institutions
  with expertise around local youth engagement can support
  providing technical guidance to governments on effective
  youth engagement and ensuring youth are key stakeholders
  in urban and rural programs.
- In COVID-19 green recovery planning and stimulus packages, supporting sustainable youth entrepreneurship and youthled projects that contribute to NDC implementation and economic development and employment creation at the same time.

## STRENGTHEN CLIMATE CHANGE CAPACITY BUILDING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Capacity development is essential for empowering youth to take action on climate change. Members are encouraged to **consider capacity building for young people** as a critical component of their climate work.





## 3.1 TOOLBOX

- resources, tools, good practices, and funding opportunities to help scale NDC action through sharing of knowledge. A new **tag related to youth** will be integrated in the system so that young people, members, and the general public can more easily find resources related to youth engagement and the NDCs and resources targeting youth audiences.
- In collaboration with youth groups, the Support Unit will
  identify and include existing resources on climate change
  to support formal, informal, and non-formal education
  curricula (where available) that can serve as examples for
  integration at the country level. Members are encouraged
  to use these educational resources at the national and local
  level as part of capacity building efforts for youth.
- The Support Unit regularly requests content from members for the Knowledge Portal. These requests will include educational curricula focusing on climate change, case studies that reflect success stories, and lessons learned from youth engagement around NDCs and youth-led or youth-supported NDC implementation projects. **Resources** meeting the guidelines for the Knowledge Portal will be incorporated by the Support Unit.

## 3.2 EDUCATION

There are low-cost, easy-access opportunities to build capacity on climate change and NDCs among youth at the national and local level.

- Members are encouraged to provide and support youth-led trainings and learning resources at the national and/or local level to help youth understand and engage in climate action in country and share their perspectives. These efforts should include ensuring the formal integration of climate, environmental, and disaster risk reduction practices into the national curriculum. Trainings based on young people's own experiences and projects that provide role models are effective and cost-efficient<sup>10</sup>. Members can also develop small communications pieces that youth can access via web downloading, for access in areas with no connectivity.
- The Support Unit will collaborate with members to develop an **educational video** on what the NDCs are and showcase best practices emerging from the Partnership for whole-of-society engagement (including youth) in NDC implementation projects.
- Member countries are encouraged to host regular virtual incountry workshops in collaboration with other members to strengthen the skills and networks of youth climate leaders and empower them to share their experiences, lessons, and challenges in their local communities, while educating their peers about climate action happening in the country. On request from countries, Partnership members





- may facilitate virtual regional events and/or these requests can be considered in designing the Partnership's annual Youth Engagement Forum (see Section 4.3).
- Members may consider creating a global, national, or regional scholarship fund for young climate leaders to strengthen their studies in areas that support the implementation of NDCs, both in academic and technical training (such as paid internships).
  - These scholarships can include public-private partnerships to finance more opportunities for young climate leaders.
  - If scholarships are already in place, members are
    encouraged to share details through the NDC Partnership
    for wider dissemination and more inclusive participation. A
    list of relevant scholarship resources will be made available
    and kept up to date on the NDC Partnership <u>Knowledge</u>
    Portal.

## REGULAR ANALYSIS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

- The Support Unit will gather best practices and updates on youth engagement in NDC action at least every other year, where possible, in collaboration with youth groups or experts.
   An initial overview has been developed based on inputs from members through the YEP consultations (see Youth Engagement Resources Document).
- The Support Unit will develop regular analyses, briefings, and other knowledge products for, about, and with young people.

The Support Unit welcomes collaboration with youth groups, networks, and members on these. This includes periodic **analysis** (at least once per year) focusing on **youth-related requests by countries** and highlighting new tools available on youth engagement in climate action.

- communication products (e.g., blogs, newsletter items) that provide insight into youth-related requests by countries, highlight best practices and lessons emerging from the Partnership, and provide suggestions for youth (especially via social media) on how they can best contribute to the Partnership's work. Members and the Support Unit can showcase 1-3 youth organisations or initiatives per year to highlight their work related to NDCs, including, for example, by providing a space on the NDC Partnership Pavilion at COPs.
- The Partnership will welcome collaboration with global or regional youth organizations and the Support Unit will use its communication platforms to ensure that opportunities to engage through the YEP are well publicized.







4.1 YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AS MEMBERS

Members are recommended to make youth organizations that meet associate member criteria aware of the NDC Partnership and encourage them to apply for membership, so as to support a systemic integration of youth perspectives into the Partnership's work.

4.2 LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Members are encouraged to engage in dialogue with youth representatives or organizations in conversations about the country's or institution's engagement with the Partnership. This can, for example, be done by organizing a youth input session at the country/institutional level ahead of a Steering Committee meeting, sharing information about the Partnership's plans, and gathering youth ideas and inputs to bring to a Steering Committee meeting, or to the broader Partnership.

## 4.3 YOUTH INPUTS AT THE HEART OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The Support Unit, together with members, will organize an annual virtual NDC Partnership Youth Engagement Forum to gather a wide array of youth perspectives on a regular basis, led by the Partnership's Co-Chairs, their youth representatives, or other youth representatives proposed by the Steering Committee. The Support Unit will proactively seek partnerships with youth constituencies and networks to connect the Forum with relevant processes and activities.

#### **Objectives of the Forum will include:**

- 1. Reflecting on progress in youth engagement through the Partnership, both in NDC processes and in implementation projects on the ground, highlighting insights from members and youth groups (see section 3.3).
- 2. Gathering inputs from young people on key topics relevant to the Partnership during that year through a dialogue between members and youth groups.
- **3. Exchanging best practices** in youth engagement in NDC implementation.
- **4. Building capacity** for youth on climate change and NDCs as well as related processes, such as long-term climate strategies, and for members on youth engagement.

## BRINGING YOUTH INPUTS INTO NDC PARTNERSHIP DECISION-MAKING

Through the Youth Engagement Forum, the Partnership is setting up a unique mechanism to welcome regular inputs from young people to the Partnership's work and strategic direction. This process recognizes the importance of creating a dedicated space for youth voices and providing access, and of addressing the identified need to ensure diversity and inclusion as part of such spaces. It is a unique addition to the deliberations and decision-making processes of the Partnership. With support from the Support Unit, the Partnership will combine the following actions to ensure inclusive and regular opportunities for youth inputs to the Partnership and Steering Committee, in particular:

- Regularly updating and validating a stakeholder list of youth groups and networks across regions and countries (as noted on page 6).
- Communicating to the youth stakeholder list ahead of the Forum via a survey. This survey will share upcoming issues under consideration by the Steering Committee so respondents can share their perspectives on those issues. It will also invite respondents to flag other issues of interest for further discussion at the Forum. These inputs will be used to shape the Forum's agenda.
- Organizing the annual virtual Forum, accommodating all time zones, to provide a space for youth around the world to provide and debate their inputs on NDC Partnership priority topics for the year

(as per the Work Program and Steering Committee agenda), as well as priority topics identified by youth themselves in advance.

Promoting the Forum on social media to increase visibility and encourage wide participation, and using interactive engagement techniques (e.g., breakout groups) so that youth get ample opportunity to speak up and be heard. The Forum will also engage members (including those on the Steering Committee) to create a unique space for direct intergenerational dialogue between youth and members, and will overcome barriers to access often present for youth.

Preparing a report of the Forum synthesizing key messages from youth to the NDC Partnership, including on relevant topics that are on the agenda for Steering Committee discussion and decision.

The report will be circulated ahead of a Steering Committee meeting once per year and dedicated time for discussion will be included on the respective meeting agenda. This will include a presentation of key messages by two youth representatives identified by the Co-Chairs, who will also be involved in the follow-up process.

Ensuring that identified examples and best practices also feed into the Partnership's work on capacity building, and publicly sharing key messages after Steering Committee discussion, e.g., as part of COP events.

This approach also allows for direct youth inputs into annual progress tracking on the YEP as part of the NDC Partnership Work Program, as the Forum and survey will gather data on young people reporting improvements in meaningful youth engagement in NDC action.

### III. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THE 2021-2025 WORK PROGRAM

Youth engagement in the work program is reflected through a specific indicator to measure perceived improvements in youth engagement in NDC processes and whether members are responding to youth priorities and recommendations. In addition, youth are reflected as a key stakeholder in the whole-of-society processes that the NDC Partnership supports for NDC implementation and development. Key indicators are:

- Percent of youth respondents reporting improvements in meaningful youth engagement in NDC action through youth-inclusive processes at the country level, support for youth-led NDC implementation projects, or climate change capacity building by Partnership members.
  - Measured through feedback at the Youth Engagement Forum and related survey.

- Percent of member countries with established or strengthened coordination mechanisms for NDC implementation which consult relevant stakeholders and meet at least twice annually.
  - Coordination mechanisms should include mechanisms for civil society organizations (including youth related).
- Percent of member countries that have engaged key stakeholder groups (including representatives from subnational entities, the national gender agency, private sector, and/or youth groups) in NDC consultations and Partnership Plan/Implementation Plan development/ execution.
  - There must be at least one agency represented from each, including youth groups.
- Total number of knowledge and learning outputs completed (briefs, peer exchanges, webinars).
  - Gender and youth relevant guidance and tools updated on the Knowledge Portal.
  - Tools and guidance for youth may be developed.
- Total number of communication products developed (blogs, videos, multimedia products).
  - be made accessible to youth and differently abled people (e.g., subtitles, sign language). A minimum of communication products developed for (and possibly with) youth.





## IV. THE WAY FORWARD

The YEP embodies the core values of the NDC Partnership. It is country-led; it brings together partners of diverse perspectives and expertise; it promotes inclusive decision-making processes, and it mobilizes actors that can have a major impact on NDC implementation and enhancement. Through the YEP, the Partnership will ensure more inclusive, more impactful climate and development action.

## ANNEX. YOUTH-LED CONSULTATION PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Because of the importance of youth-related processes to not just be "about youth" but "with youth", the NDC Partnership's Steering Committee agreed at its meeting in Spring 2020 to establish a Youth Task Force (YTF) to ensure a youth-led process in developing the Youth Engagement Plan (YEP). Representation in the YTF was voluntary and determined by the interest expressed by each SC member. The YTF was composed of youth representatives from interested Steering Committee member countries and institutions, as well as an additional institutional and associate member with strong programmatic activities around youth and climate action. Its final composition included representatives from Jamaica, the Marshall Islands, Pakistan, Costa Rica, the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, UNDP, UNICEF, and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC). Participants embodied a range of backgrounds and expertise, including in-country implementation, international law, and communications. The YTF was co-chaired by the Costa Rican and Dutch youth representatives and assisted by the Support Unit. Some organizations and countries included observer representatives to support youth representatives with additional insights and perspectives on youth engagement from their respective institutions, adding up to a total of 15 representatives and observers.

As leads of the YEP process, the YTF was tasked with ensuring the YEP was developed in consultation and close collaboration with youth from around the world, making additional efforts to include African voices. In providing their recommendations, they were asked to consider the Support Unit's capacity limitations and the parameters and scope within which the NDC Partnership operates.

## GLOBAL YOUTH CONSULTATIONS

Between June and August 2020, the YTF led a consultation process with youth from around the world. In order to be as inclusive as possible in a limited window of time, the consultation included a survey (in three languages), four workshops (in three languages and four time zones), and a Twitter campaign (#YESforYEP). The survey and invitations to the workshops were shared with a curated list of youth networks and relevant stakeholders, posted on the NDC Partnership website and in the newsletter, and promoted on social media in English, Spanish, and French. All feedback provided through these different consultation tools was

analyzed in aggregate to identify key youth priorities and obstacles for youth engagement in climate action.

A total of 472 survey responses representing 82 countries were received by the YTF. More than 60 percent of these responses came from the Americas, 20 percent from Africa, 10 percent from Europe, 6 percent from Asia, and 2 percent from the Pacific. About 42 percent of survey respondents are in the 23-27 age group, 20 percent in the 28-32 age range, 19 percent in the 18-22 age group and all other ages (12-18 or 32+). 53 percent are female respondents, 45 percent are male, and the remaining 2 percent are non-binary or preferred not to specify. Almost 30 percent of respondents identified as from rural areas, 10 percent from lower socioeconomic status, 5 percent as indigenous people, 4 percent as ethnic minorities, 5 percent from conflict areas, and 1 percent as differently abled.

## NDC PARTNERSHIP MEMBER CONSULTATIONS

In late July and August, NDC Partnership members were consulted on youth engagement. The member consultation was a three-tiered approach involving a survey, two workshops (in two different time zones), and the opportunity for members to partake in one-on-one interviews. The survey and workshop invitations were disseminated over email to the entire membership to gather perspectives of member countries and institutions with regards to best practices and challenges engaging youth in climate action. The workshops allowed for

deeper reflection and were leveraged to prepare the Youth Engagement Resources Document.

A total of 31 countries<sup>11</sup> and 15 institutions<sup>12</sup> were consulted, 53 percent of which consider youth engagement a priority for their organization. In fact, 76 percent of members indicated they already engage with youth in the context of NDC implementation and enhancement.

The NDC Partnership Support Unit was also consulted on their observations with respect to priorities and obstacles to youth engagement in NDC Partnership processes.

#### **CONSTRAINTS**

The YTF had two months to conduct this consultation process, amid the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. The work was done virtually, spanning six time zones. YTF members contributed their time on a voluntary basis. The group worked well under these constraints, using a variety of online means to ensure as inclusive a process as possible. The YTF made inclusiveness a priority in all its meetings and activities.

Nevertheless, the time constraints, time zone challenges, and uneven representation from certain regions and languages mean that the elements of the YEP are a starting point, not the end of consultation. Further engagement with youth will be crucial in implementing the YEP and ensuring that the full range of youth perspectives and priorities inform NDC action across the Partnership.

#### **ENDNOTES**

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- 12 RCCC, SNV, UNEP, LEDS GP, UNDP, UNESCAP, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, CAN, GIZ, EBRD, Climate Analytics, GGGI, ILO



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