

Building Toward Breakthrough: Energizing the Paris 2015 Climate Negotiations and Post-Paris Action Agenda through Broader Engagement

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Raising the trajectory of the 2015 Climate Change Agreement demands fresh thinking. A truly ambitious outcome needs to launch a framework that emphasizes broader engagement on climate change mitigation and adaptation—and celebrates the real progress that mayors, governors, CEOs, and other civil society leaders are already achieving in this regard.

This white paper presents a portfolio of legal and policy options to link and institutionalize the contributions of cities, states/provinces, civil society, companies, and other non-state actors in order to reinforce the international climate negotiations. Under the auspices of the Yale Climate Change Dialogue, a diverse group of thought-leaders from around the world have framed a set of options and opportunities for delivering a meaningful global response to climate change. This model—which aims to energize the global response to climate change and shift the psychology of the negotiation—would:

1. Highlight the successful commitments of non-state actors in the 2015 Paris Agreement or one of its associated decisions or annexes;
2. Encourage city, state/province, and corporate commitments—and gauge their effectiveness through innovative metrics that capture broader climate action, measure performance across scales, and provide accountability; and
3. Scale up clean energy finance through strategies designed to support wide-ranging action, particularly using limited public funding to leverage private capital.

Together, these three components will invigorate the climate change negotiations, support the “Agenda of Solutions” that the 2015 Paris Agreement needs to advance, and build post-Paris momentum for broadened action to protect and restore the climate system upon which humans depend.

1. Broadening the Engagement of Non-State Actors at COP 21

Climate change success will require moving beyond the 20th century focus on nation-state targets and timetables to emphasize a broader, bottom-up base of *action*. We propose that the COP 21 outcomes provide a mechanism for non-state actors to signal their endorsement of the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement and formalize their own climate change contributions. This broadened framework of action does not undermine the importance of multilateral leadership within the UNFCCC—instead, it helps to bolster and galvanize the multilateral process by bridging the

efforts of nation states with on-the-ground climate leaders, using real world power to turn the corner on climate change.

To avoid an unwieldy outcome that attempts to incorporate specifics of each non-state contribution, the outcome could list the those entities that have made action pledges or cross-reference a platform that houses the detail of these pledges, such as the Non-state Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) portal.

2. Encourage and Track Non-Nation-State Contributions Through Innovative Metrics

An “all-hands-on-deck” approach to future climate change action could establish a simple reporting structure within the 2015 Paris Agreement. Such a structure should encourage commitments from non-state actors, provide an easy-to-follow set of metrics, and promote action by all who are positioned to contribute to the global response to climate change.

Whether built upon the existing NAZCA platform or established elsewhere, the 2015 Paris Agreement needs to achieve a delicate balance—establishing a simple reporting and review structure that facilitates contributions from the widest possible range of parties while also promoting robust commitments to mitigation, adaptation, and finance activities. Two methods for achieving this balance include:

- A *tiered approach* towards including non-state actions within a platform like NAZCA that allows actors who may not have the capacity to submit detailed information to be “phased in,” and stricter criteria for inclusion (e.g., emissions information) that could be specified for actors who seek greater recognition for their efforts.
- A *broader suite of metrics* that captures information from both state and non-state actors to allow for better evaluation of ambition, implementation, and progress toward global climate goals.

3. Scale Up Clean Energy Finance Strategies That Support Wide-Ranging Action

To help a new set of players engage in climate change action and build confidence in their own commitments, it is essential to increase the flow of private capital to climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. The scale of traditional public financing is simply too small. The UNFCCC can bring private capital to center stage by making this a goal of the Paris Agreement, and by endorsing and supporting the efforts of development finance institutions, research and policy institutions, and others who are developing and implementing new structures and tools (e.g., green banks, green bonds) to attract new private capital to clean energy investments.

For more information about the Yale Climate Change Dialogue please visit envirocenter.yale.edu/programs/yale-climate-change-dialogue