

A POCKET GUIDE TO THE

# United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change



*A POCKET GUIDE TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE*

Version 1 | October 2017

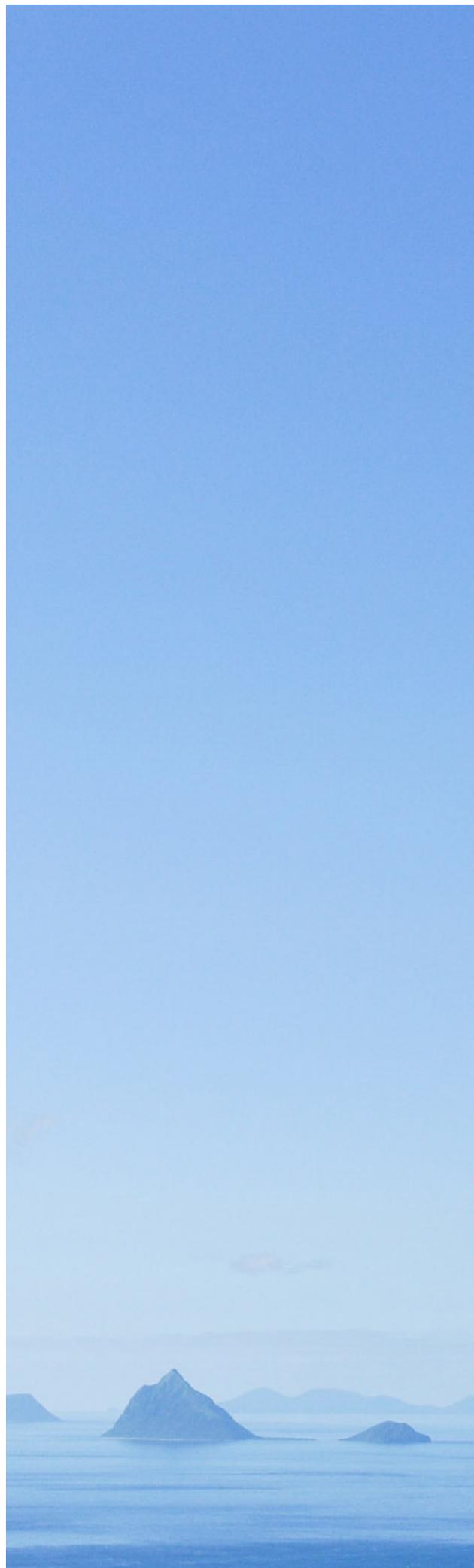
**Produced by** MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION  
& NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION, GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

**For the** NATIONAL DELEGATION TO THE 23<sup>rd</sup> CONFERENCE  
OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC

**With support from** SPC/GIZ COPING WITH CLIMATE  
CHANGE IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND REGION PROGRAMME  
& UNDP/GEF VANUATU COASTAL ADAPTATION PROJECT

**Design and layout by** SECRETARIAT OF THE  
NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD ON CLIMATE CHANGE &  
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

**Cover image by** KATE DONNELLY  
SHEPHERD ISLANDS, VANUATU



## CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	4
UNFCCC GLOSSARY	5
THE CLIMATE SYSTEM	8
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	8
THE CONVENTION	9
Objective	9
Guiding Principles	9
Parties	10
Commitments	10
Technical Bodies	12
Negotiating Groups	15
KYOTO PROTOCOL	13
PARIS AGREEMENT	13
Declaration	13
IPCC Special Report: 1.5°C	14
Nationally Determined Contributions	14
Implementation Guidelines	14
2018 Facilitative Dialogue and the Global Stocktake	14
VANUATU AT COP23	16
2017 UN Climate Change Conference	16
Session Agendas	16
National Thematic Priorities	16
NOTES	17

## ACRONYMS

AC	Adaptation Committee
AF	Adaptation Fund
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
APA	Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement
AR5	Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC (released 2014)
CBDR	Common but differentiated responsibilities
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
CMP	Conference of the Parties serving as meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
COP	Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
EIT	Economies in Transition
EU	European Union
G77 + CHINA	Group of 77 plus China
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KP	Kyoto Protocol
L&D	Loss and Damage
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LDCF	Least Developed Country Fund
LEG	Least Developed Countries Expert Group
MCCA	Vanuatu Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation
NAB	Vanuatu National Advisory Board on Climate Change & Disaster Risk Reduction
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PA	Paris Agreement
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage

## UNFCCC GLOSSARY

Adapted from UNFCCC Online Glossary on climate change acronyms and terms.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Adaptation Committee</b>	Established to promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation under the UNFCCC.
<b>Adaptation</b>	Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.
<b>Adaptation Fund</b>	Established to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in vulnerable developing countries.
<b>Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA)</b>	Established to prepare for the entry into force of the Paris Agreement and to convene the first session of the CMA.
<b>Alliance of Small Island States</b>	AOSIS is an ad-hoc coalition of low-lying and island countries.
<b>Annex-I Parties</b>	Industrialised countries listed in Annex I of the UNFCCC. Annex I lists OECD members, EITs and the EU.
<b>Annex-II Parties</b>	The OECD members of Annex I but not EIT Parties.
<b>Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC (AR5)</b>	The most recent assessment report of the science relating to climate change and solutions, published by the IPCC in 2014.
<b>Capacity Building</b>	The process of developing technical skills and institutional capability in developing countries and EITs to enable them to effectively address causes and impacts of climate change.
<b>Clean Development Mechanism</b>	A mechanism under the KP through which developed countries can finance GHG emission reduction or removal projects in developing countries for credit towards their mitigation targets.
<b>Common but differentiated responsibilities</b>	A legal principle that has shaped the international climate change regime (Preamble; Art 4(1) UNFCCC). It recognizes that Parties have different levels of responsibility for climate change and different abilities to cope with impacts.
<b>COP serving as meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA)</b>	All States that are Parties to the PA are represented at the CMA, which oversees and takes decisions to promote effective implementation of the PA.
<b>COP serving as meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol</b>	All States that are Parties to the KP are represented at the CMP, which oversees and takes decisions to promote effective implementation of the KP.
<b>Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP)</b>	The supreme body of the Convention, which meets annually to review the Convention's progress.
<b>European Union (EU)</b>	The regional economic integration organisation for Europe.
<b>Economies in Transition (EIT)</b>	EITs are the Russian Federation and several Central and Eastern European countries. EITs are included in Annex I of the UNFCCC, and are granted flexibility in the implementation of their obligations.
<b>Financial Mechanism</b>	Established to provide funds to developing country Parties under the UNFCCC. Accountable to the COP. The GEF and GCF are operating entities of the mechanism.
<b>Group of 77 plus China</b>	G77 plus China is a large negotiating alliance of developing countries.
<b>Gender Action Plan (GAP)</b>	The <b>GAP</b> is a proposed plan to mainstream gender considerations in all work under the UNFCCC.
<b>Green Climate Fund (GCF)</b>	Provides finance to developing countries to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to climate impacts.

---

<sup>1</sup> Available at <[http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/glossary/items/3666.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/glossary/items/3666.php)>

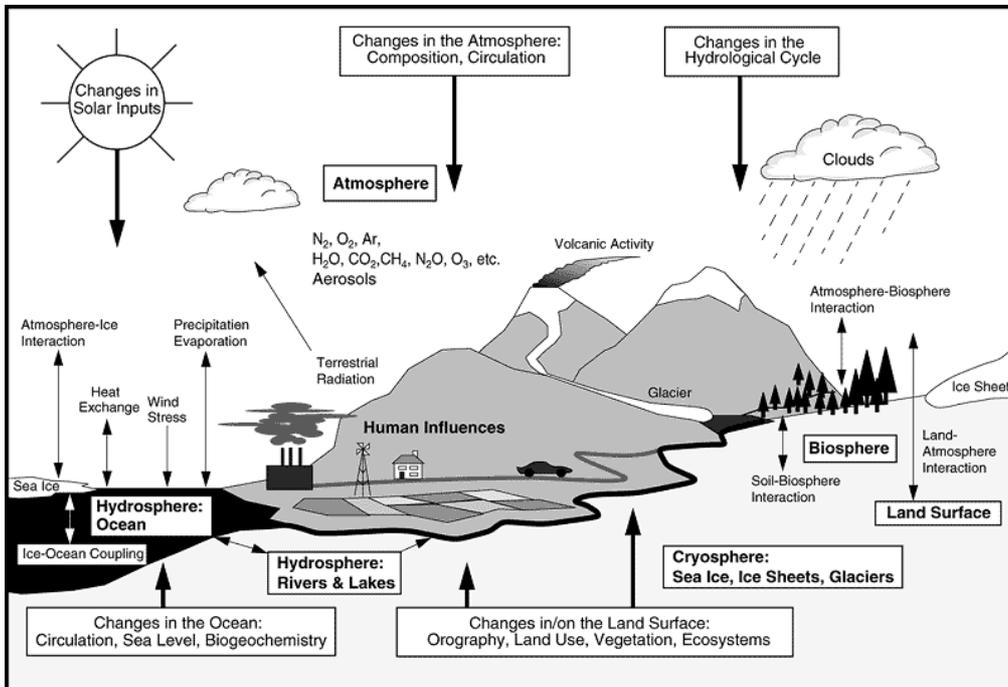
<b>Global Environment Facility (GEF)</b>	An independent financial organisation that provides grants to developing countries for projects that benefit the global environment and promote sustainable livelihoods.
<b>Greenhouse Gases (GHG)</b>	Atmospheric gases responsible for causing global warming. Major GHGs: carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.
<b>Greenhouse gas sinks and reservoirs</b>	A GHG sink is any process, activity or mechanism that removes GHG from the atmosphere. A reservoir is a component of the climate system (other than the atmosphere) that has the capacity to store, accumulate or release GHGs. Oceans, soils and forests are carbon reservoirs.
<b>Implementation</b>	Actions (legislation, regulations, judicial decrees) that governments take to translate international accords into domestic law and policy.
<b>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)</b>	The international body that assesses climate science. The IPCC provides policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.
<b>Kyoto Protocol (KP)</b>	An international agreement linked to the UNFCCC that, among other things, sets binding targets for the reduction of GHG emissions by industrialised countries.
<b>Loss and Damage</b>	Loss and damage to infrastructure, property, livelihoods, life and culture, caused by slow-onset events and natural disasters.
<b>Least Developed Countries (LDC)</b>	The world's poorest countries. Criteria includes low income, human resource weakness and economic vulnerability.
<b>Least Developed Country Fund</b>	A fund established to support a work programme to assist LDCs to prepare and implement NAPAs.
<b>Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)</b>	A panel of 13 experts which advises LDCs on NAPAs.
<b>Long-term temperature goal (Article 1(a), Paris Agreement)</b>	Parties commit to "hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C".
<b>Mitigation</b>	Human actions to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of GHG.
<b>Ministry of Climate Change Adaptation (MCCA)</b>	Established in 2013 to streamline the Republic of Vanuatu's approach to climate change and natural disasters.
<b>National Advisory Board on Climate Change &amp; Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB)</b>	Established by the MCCA with a mandate to coordinate all government and non-government initiatives addressing climate change and disaster risk reduction in Vanuatu.
<b>Nairobi Work Programme</b>	Established in 2005 at COP11, the <a href="#">NWP</a> is a mechanism overseen by SBSTA. It's purpose is to facilitate and catalyse information and knowledge that can inform and support adaptation policies and practices.
<b>Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)</b>	Actions undertaken by developing countries to mitigate GHG emissions. NAMAs are recorded on a registry to facilitate appropriate support from Annex I Parties.
<b>National Adaptation Plan (Least Developed Countries)</b>	NAPs allow LDCs to identify medium and long-term adaptation needs, and strategies and programmes to address those needs.
<b>National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)</b>	Documents prepared by LDCs identifying urgent and immediate needs for adapting to climate change.
<b>National Communication</b>	A document submitted to the UNFCCC by a Party which informs other Parties of activities undertaken to address climate change.
<b>Non-Annex I Parties</b>	Parties not included in Annex I of the UNFCCC.

<b>Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)</b>	Parties must prepare, communicate and maintain successive NDCs that they intend to achieve (Art 4(2) PA). NDCs are domestic mitigation actions that contribute to the long-term temperature goal.
<b>Party</b>	A State or regional economic integration organisation that agrees to be bound by a treaty, and that treaty has entered into force.
<b>Paris Agreement (PA)</b>	<p>The Paris Agreement is an agreement under the UNFCCC that entered into force on 4 November 2016.</p> <p>The PA’s main aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.</p>
<b>Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)</b>	<p>“Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries” (REDD+) was first introduced as an agenda item at COP11, due to the significant contributions that deforestation makes to global emissions.</p> <p>Developing countries take action to reduce emissions from deforestation and enhance the role of forests as carbon sinks.</p>
<b>Submission</b>	Information or views of Parties or non-Party stakeholders submitted at the invitation of a UNFCCC body.
<b>Subsidiary Body</b>	A committee that assists the COP. SBI and SBSTA are the two permanent subsidiary bodies under the UNFCCC.
<b>Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI)</b>	A permanent subsidiary body that makes recommendations on policy and implementation issues to the COP.
<b>Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)</b>	A permanent subsidiary body that serves as a link between information and assessments provided by expert sources (i.e. the IPCC) and the COP.
<b>Sustainable development</b>	Development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
<b>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)</b>	<p>A set of 17 “global goals” (169 targets) to end poverty, tackle climate change, address systemic social needs and build economic growth.</p> <p>The SDGs were adopted as part of the <a href="#">2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</a> at the UN Summit in September 2015.</p>
<b>Technology transfer</b>	Processes that cover the flows of “know-how”, experience and equipment for mitigating and adapting to climate change.
<b>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC)</b>	A landmark international agreement adopted in 1992. The main aim of the <a href="#">Convention</a> is to stabilise anthropogenic GHG emissions to prevent dangerous climate change.
<b>Vulnerability</b>	The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extreme.
<b>Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM)</b>	The <a href="#">WIM</a> was established at COP19 to address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow-onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

## THE CLIMATE SYSTEM

The climate system is at the heart of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The IPCC defines the climate system as as:<sup>2</sup>

An interactive system consisting of five major components: the atmosphere (air), hydrosphere (rivers and lakes), cryosphere (sea ice and glaciers), land surface and biosphere (areas occupied by living organisms), influenced by external forcing mechanisms (i.e. the sun and human activities).



## INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change, established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The IPCC's purpose is to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the science that relates to climate change, including its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.

The IPCC regularly reviews all available climate science and produces reports (including summaries for policymakers). These **assessment reports** provide a scientific basis for governments at all levels to develop climate-related policies. Most recently, the IPCC published the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) in 2014.

### IPCC Fifth Assessment Report



Working Group I Report  
"Climate Change 2013: The  
Physical Science Basis"

[CLICK HERE](#)



Working Group II Report  
"Climate Change 2014:  
Impacts, Adaptation, and  
Vulnerability"

[CLICK HERE](#)



Working Group III Report  
"Climate Change 2014:  
Mitigation of Climate Change"

[CLICK HERE](#)



"Climate Change 2014:  
Synthesis Report"

[CLICK HERE](#)

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2001 <<https://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/tar/wg1/040.htm>>

## THE CONVENTION

The **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC) was adopted at the Rio Earth Convention in 1992 and entered into force on 21 March 1994. 197 Parties have ratified the UNFCCC.<sup>3</sup>

The UNFCCC is a landmark international agreement that sets an ambitious goal: to stabilise greenhouse gas emissions to prevent dangerous climate change, to allow ecosystems to adapt, to protect food production, and to enable sustainable economic development (Article 2).

It recognises that **a safe climate is the common interest of all nations**, but acknowledges that **developed countries are historically responsible** for the GHG emissions that are driving anthropogenic climate change. As such, these developed States have a greater responsibility to take and finance climate actions (common but differentiated responsibilities). The specific **needs and vulnerabilities of developing countries** are also recognised and supported through a range of mechanisms under the UNFCCC.

### OBJECTIVE

The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is set out in Article 2:

“The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, **stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.**

Such a level should be **achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.**”

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The UNFCCC is founded on the basis of **equity, common but differentiated responsibilities, the precautionary principle, and the right to sustainable development** (see Article 3).

When you are negotiating, these principles mean:

- All nations are equal, and have an equal right to influence negotiated outcomes;
- All nations have a right to develop in a way that benefits all its citizens, that does not jeopardise the integrity of its ecosystems, and that does not risk the needs and rights of future generations;
- All nations depend upon a safe climate system and share responsibility for protecting our planet for future generations;
- The nations who have economically benefited from industrial development since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century are directly responsible for causing human-made climate change, and must now fund the global transition to sustainable economies, and adaptation to the negative impacts of climate change;
- Countries should act immediately to prevent and minimise the causes of climate change and to mitigate its adverse affects, whether or not there is full scientific certainty of its causes and impacts;
- Parties should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that promotes sustainable economic growth and development across the globe.

---

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2014 <[http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/convention/items/6036.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/6036.php)>

## PARTIES

Parties to the UNFCCC are categorised to have different obligations and rights under the Convention.<sup>4</sup>

**Annex I Parties** Annex I Parties are classified as industrialised (developed) countries that are members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and “economies in transition” (EIT). There are 43 Annex I Parties, including the EU.

---

**Annex II Parties** Annex II Parties are the OECD members of Annex I, but not the EIT Parties.  
Annex II Parties are required to provide financial resources to enable developing countries to undertake emissions reductions and to fund adaptation initiatives.

---

**Non-Annex I Parties** Non-Annex I Parties are mostly developing countries, for which special provisions are made under the UNFCCC (e.g. technology transfer and adaptation finance).

---

**LDCs** Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are Non-Annex I Parties that are given special consideration, in recognition of their limited capacity to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.

## COMMITMENTS

The UNFCCC is the foundation of the global response to climate change. All Parties are committed to two broad policy measures: **mitigating** GHG emissions and supporting **adaptation** to climate impacts.

All Parties to the Convention must:

Article 4.1(a) **Submit reports** that track domestic GHG emissions

---

Article 4.1(b) **Implement national and regional mitigation programmes**

---

Article 4.1(c) Cooperate to **develop, apply and share technology** that controls, reduces or prevents GHG emissions

---

Article 4.1(d) Cooperate to **manage, conserve and enhance GHG sinks and reservoirs**

---

Article 4.1(e) **Prepare for adaptation** to adverse climate impacts

---

Article 4.1(f) **Include climate change in social, economic and environmental policies** and actions, including those intended to mitigate or adapt to climate change

---

Article 4.1(g) **Promote and cooperate in climate research** and data archives

---

Article 4.1(h) **Promote and cooperate in the full, open and prompt exchange of all information** relevant to climate change

---

Article 4.1(i) **Promote and cooperate in education, training and public awareness**

In accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the Convention establishes additional obligations for Annex I and Annex II Parties.

---

<sup>4</sup> List available at <[http://unfccc.int/parties\\_and\\_observers/items/2704.php](http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/items/2704.php)>

**Annex I Parties** must:

Article 4.2(a) **Adopt and implement national mitigation policies**, by limiting GHG emissions and protecting and enhancing its GHG sinks and reservoirs

---

Article 4.2(b) **Submit national communications** to the UNFCCC containing detailed information about its national mitigation policies and measures (see Article 12)

---

Article 4.2(e) Coordinate with other Annex I Parties to **develop economic and administrative instruments that will help achieve the Convention's objective**; and identify and review domestic policies that lead to greater levels of GHG emissions

**Annex II Parties** have an even higher degree of responsibility, and must:

Article 4.3 **Provide new and additional finance** to meet the full costs incurred by developing country Parties when meeting their reporting obligations under Article 12; and provide financial resources (including technology transfer) to meet the incremental costs incurred by developing country Parties when implementing Article 4.1

---

Article 4.4 **Provide adaptation assistance** to developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change

---

Article 4.5 Take all practicable steps to **promote, facilitate and finance the transfer of, or access to, environmentally sound technologies** to other Parties (particularly developing country Parties) to enable them to implement the Convention

**Developing and vulnerable countries** have specific needs under the international climate regime, which are also recognised by the Convention:

Article 4.6 **Economies in transition are granted flexibility** in the implementation of Annex I obligations (Article 4.2)

---

Article 4.7 The implementation of **developing country Parties' commitments are dependent on the extent to which Annex II Parties provide financial resources** and the transfer of technology (Article 4.3)

---

Article 4.8 Parties should give full consideration to the actions needed to meet the specific needs and concerns of **developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable** to adverse climate impacts (including small islands and countries prone to natural disasters)

---

Article 4.9 Parties should take full account of the specific needs and special situations of **least developed countries** with regard to funding and the transfer of technology

## TECHNICAL BODIES

The international climate change regime is driven by the work of several bodies under the UNFCCC.<sup>5</sup>

<b>COP</b>	<b>Conference of the Parties</b> The supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC. All Parties are represented at the COP, which acts as an annual review of the implementation of the Convention.
<b>CMP</b>	<b>Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol</b> Made up of all Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The CMP oversees implementation of the KP and takes decisions to promote its effective implementation, and meets at the same time as the COP.
<b>CMA</b>	<b>Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement</b> Made up of all Parties to the Paris Agreement. The CMA oversees implementation of the PA and takes decisions to promote its effective implementation, and meets at the same time as the COP.
<b>SBSTA</b>	<b>Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice</b> Supports the work of the COP, CMP and CMA by providing information and advice on scientific and technological matters.
<b>SBI</b>	<b>Subsidiary Body for Implementation</b> Supports the work of the COP, CMP and CMA by reviewing and assessing the implementation of the Convention, KP and PA.
<b>APA</b>	<b>Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement</b> Established at COP21 to prepare for the entry into force of the Paris Agreement.
<b>AC</b>	<b>Adaptation Committee</b> Established at COP16 as part of the Cancun Agreements to promote the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation under the Convention.
<b>SCF</b>	<b>Standing Committee on Finance</b> Has a mandate to assist the COP in exercising its functions with respect to the financial mechanism of the Convention, including the GEF and GCF.
<b>PCCB</b>	<b>Paris Committee on Capacity-building</b> Established at COP21 as part of the Paris Agreement to address gaps and needs, both current and emerging, in implementing capacity-building in developing country Parties and further enhancing capacity-building efforts.
<b>LEG</b>	<b>Least Developed Countries Expert Group</b> Established to support the preparation and implementation strategies of national adaptation programmes of actions in LDCs.
<b>WIM</b>	<b>Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage</b> Established at COP19 to guide the implementation of the WIM.

<sup>5</sup> List available at <[www.unfccc.int/bodies/items/6241.php](http://www.unfccc.int/bodies/items/6241.php)>

## INSTRUMENTS UNDER THE UNFCCC

Legally binding agreements have been negotiated by the COP to help implement the UNFCCC.

### KYOTO PROTOCOL

The Kyoto Protocol<sup>6</sup> (KP) was adopted at COP3 in December 1997, and entered into force (became binding under international law) in February 2005.

The KP introduced binding emission reduction targets for Annex I Parties. To meet these targets, Parties were required to cut their domestic carbon emissions from energy, agriculture and other sectors.

The first commitment period under the KP ran from 2008 to 2012. The second commitment period, introduced by the **Doha Amendment**, commenced in 2012 and will expire in 2020. After this time, the nationally determined contributions submitted under the Paris Agreement will come into effect.

### PARIS AGREEMENT

The Paris Agreement<sup>7</sup> (PA) was adopted at COP21, and entered into force in November 2016. The PA entered into force in record time, reflecting a strong global commitment to climate action.

The PA aims to “strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C” (Article 2.1). This is referred to as the **long-term temperature goal**.

The PA also aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change. To achieve its ambitious goals, the PA seeks to establish appropriate financial flows, a new technology framework and an enhanced capacity building framework to support developing countries.

#### DECLARATION: REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

Vanuatu was one of the first Parties to ratify the Paris Agreement, depositing its instrument of ratification on 22 April 2016. With this instrument, the Government of Vanuatu declared that:

“...in light of best scientific information and assessment on climate change and its impacts, [Vanuatu] considers the emission reduction obligations in ... the Kyoto Protocol, the Doha Amendment and the Paris Agreement to be inadequate to prevent global temperature increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-Industrial levels and as a consequence, will have severe implications for our national interests...”

This position is consistent with statements given by the leaders of Pacific Island States<sup>8</sup> and AOSIS<sup>9</sup>, whose nations face existential threats from climate change.

Vanuatu, along with other SIDS, further declared that “ratification of the Paris Agreement shall in no way constitute a renunciation of any rights under any other laws, including international law.” This means that Vanuatu’s ratification of the Paris Agreement cannot be understood as a renunciation (letting go) of any rights under international law, especially concerning State responsibility for the adverse effects of climate change, or a derogation of the principles of international law.

---

<sup>6</sup> Available at <[http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/items/2830.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php)>

<sup>7</sup> Available at <[http://unfccc.int/paris\\_agreement/items/9485.php?](http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php?)>

<sup>8</sup> Suva Declaration, Pacific Island Development Forum (2015) <<http://pacificidf.org/suva-declaration-on-climate-change/>>

<sup>9</sup> Alliance of Small Island States (2015) <<http://aosis.org/small-islands-propose-below-1-5%CB%9Ac-global-goal-for-paris-agreement/>>

The Paris Agreement is a dynamic framework for enhanced climate action. There are several issues and expected developments in connection with the Agreement that delegates should be aware of.

### **IPCC SPECIAL REPORT: 1.5°C**

As a result of lobbying by SIDS leaders at COP21, the COP requested that the IPCC produce a Special Report on the impacts of 1.5°C of warming. This report is due to be released in 2018.

Given the serious threats to sovereignty, food security and peace that a warming world presents, it is expected that this report will increase the pressure for accelerated climate action in pursuit of the 1.5°C target set by the Paris Agreement.

### **NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS**

The PA requires all Parties to make and communicate their best efforts to meet the global long-term temperature goal (2°C above pre-industrial levels, with serious efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C). These efforts are called nationally determined contributions (NDCs). While the content of NDCs are not prescribed or legally enforceable, each Party is expected to do the most it can to help achieve the targets.

Vanuatu has committed to a sector-specific mitigation target in its first NDC: to generate 100% of domestic electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030.<sup>10</sup> This target was originally established by Vanuatu's National Energy Road Map (NERM) (2016-2030).<sup>11</sup>

Vanuatu's NDC also reiterates the national adaptation targets set out in its National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and the national Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCDRR) Policy. A summary of Vanuatu's national and sectoral climate change policies is available from the NAB.

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR THE PARIS AGREEMENT**

While the PA was adopted at COP21, further decisions are required on a range of topics before the Agreement can be implemented. The PA and Decision1/CP.21 (a decision taken by the COP in 2015) made the APA, SBI and SBSTA responsible for making these decisions: the provisional meeting agendas for these bodies are available from the COP23 event page.<sup>12</sup>

Collectively, these decisions will create the Implementation Guidelines for the Paris Agreement, a detailed "rule book" to guide the implementation of the PA. The **Fiji COP Presidency** has made it a priority for these Guidelines to be finalised by the end of 2018, making the Implementation Guidelines the focus of the negotiations at COP23.

### **2018 FACILITATIVE DIALOGUE & GLOBAL STOCKTAKE**

The Paris Agreement establishes an "ambition mechanism": a process that ensures action on climate change will keep getting stronger. A **global stocktake** is a critical part of this process. The stocktake brings all Parties to the UNFCCC together every 5 years to review progress, especially towards mitigation goals, and decide how to move forward. The first global stocktake is scheduled by 2023.

The COP will first meet in 2018 for a **Facilitative Dialogue** to review global climate action to date, to see if we are on track to meet the long-term temperature goals in the PA.

---

<sup>10</sup> Republic of Vanuatu, *Nationally Determined Contribution* (2015), <<http://www4.unfccc.int/ndcregistry/PublishedDocuments/Vanuatu%20First/VANUATU%20%20INDC%20UNFCCC%20Submission.pdf>>

<sup>11</sup> Available at <<http://www.nab.vu/vanuatu-national-energy-road-map>>

<sup>12</sup> Available at <[http://unfccc.int/meetings/bonn\\_may\\_2017/meeting/10076.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/bonn_may_2017/meeting/10076.php)>

## NEGOTIATING GROUPS

Each Party to the UNFCCC has an equal voice at the COP. To maximise each Parties' influence in the negotiations, Parties form negotiating groups (also referred to as "negotiating blocs").<sup>13</sup> These groups may share common circumstances, interests and positions, as well as geographical location and features.

Vanuatu is a member of:

**G-77 + China**      **The Group of 77 plus China**  
 Chair: Amb. Horacio Sevilla Borja (Ecuador)

*An alliance of developing countries. G-77 + China is the largest negotiating alliance, and includes almost all Non-Annex I Parties to the UNFCCC*

**AOSIS**      **The Alliance of Small Island States**  
 Chair: Amb. Ahmed Sareer (Maldives)

*A coalition of small island and low-lying coastal countries that share development challenges and concerns about the environment, especially their vulnerability to the adverse climate impacts.*

**LDC**      **Least Developed Countries**  
 Chair: Amb. Gebru Jember Endalew (Ethiopia)

*An alliance of low-income countries with high vulnerability to economic and environmental shocks, that confront severe structural impediments to sustainable development.*

Other major negotiating groups include:<sup>14</sup>

**African Group of Negotiators**

**Coalition of Rainforest Nations**

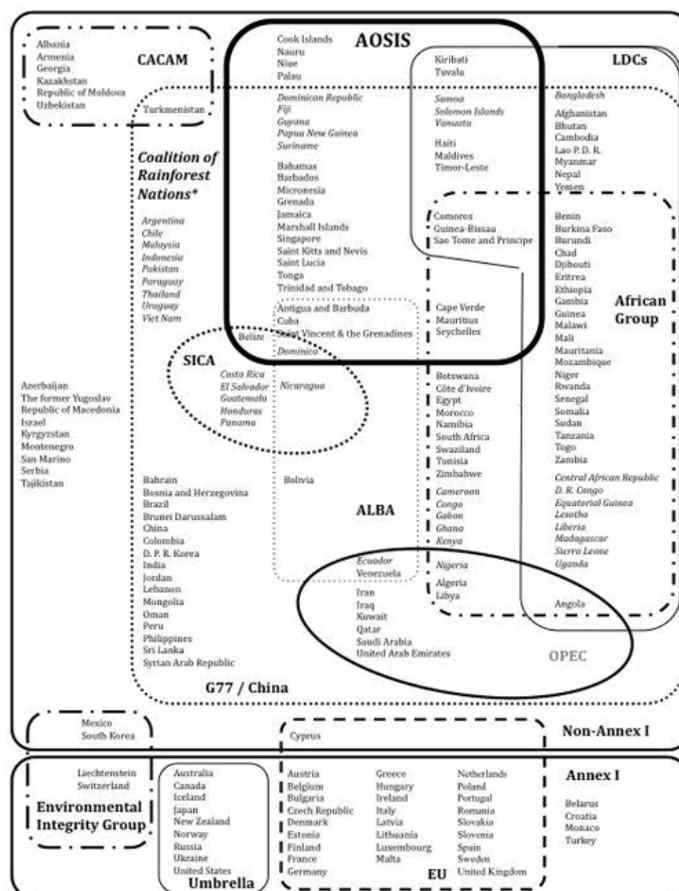
**Environmental Integrity Group**

**Umbrella Group**

*A loose coalition of non-EU developed countries which formed following the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol. The Group usually includes Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation, Ukraine and USA.*

**European Union (EU)**

*The 27 member countries of the EU negotiate with common positions. The EU is also a separate Party to the UNFCCC, as it is a regional economic integration organisation, though it doesn't have a separate vote to its members.*



\* countries in italics form part of the Coalition of Rainforest Nations.

<sup>13</sup> Full list available at <[http://unfccc.int/parties\\_and\\_observers/parties/negotiating\\_groups/items/2714.php](http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/parties/negotiating_groups/items/2714.php)>

<sup>14</sup> Image available at <[http://unfccc.int/parties\\_and\\_observers/parties/negotiating\\_groups/items/2714.php](http://unfccc.int/parties_and_observers/parties/negotiating_groups/items/2714.php)>

## VANUATU AT COP23

### 2017 UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Every year, the Parties to the UNFCCC meet to progress action under the Convention. While the bodies of the UNFCCC meet throughout the year to progress their own specialised mandates (these meetings are called *intersessionals*), once a year multiple bodies meet at the same time. This year, the Convention will host sessions of the:

- Conference of the Parties (COP 23)
- Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 13)
- Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1.2)
- Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 47)
- Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 47)
- Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA 1.4)

### SESSION AGENDAS

The UNFCCC Secretariat produces an annotated agenda for each session that will meet at COP23. These agendas outline the topics for discussion, provide background information and links to background notes, and state the expected outcome of the negotiations (i.e. what decision is likely to be taken). The expected outcome is often included at the end of an item's annotations.

### NATIONAL THEMATIC PRIORITIES

As an LDC and a SIDS, Vanuatu is classified as one of the most vulnerable countries to adverse climate impacts. Accordingly, Vanuatu has seven priority areas under the UNFCCC. Vanuatu's negotiating positions on the technical issues within these areas are set out in its *Country Position Papers*.

1. **Implementation**—The Paris Agreement establishes ambitious goals for the global community. It's vital to Vanuatu's national interests and security that the PA is fully implemented. Parties' actions under the PA must be transparent, and must become more ambitious with time.
2. **Climate finance**—Annex II Parties must provide finance to support adaptation and mitigation initiatives, and to assist non-Annex I Parties to meet their obligations under the UNFCCC.
3. **Mitigation**—The global community must prevent a temperature rise of 1.5°C to avoid the worst impacts of anthropogenic climate change.
4. **Adaptation**—It is critically important that Vanuatu's adaptation needs are met through adequate financial and capacity-building support. Adaptation to climate impacts is closely related to sustainable, climate-resilient development, which is the right of all nations.
5. **Loss & Damage**—Climate change causes unavoidable loss and damage to infrastructure, property, livelihoods and culture. It is vital that mechanisms are in place to compensate such losses.
6. **Gender**—Vanuatu is a champion for gender rights under the international climate change regime, and seeks to enhance women's participation at every level, from decision making in island communities to negotiating on behalf of their country at the COP.
7. **Non-Party Stakeholders**—To meet the long-term temperature goal in the PA, the entire global community must contribute, from national governments and companies to universities and community groups. Different mechanisms and support should be in place to ensure that the contributions of all stakeholders are recognised and supported for maximum impact.

## NOTES