

# U.S. Leaders Summit on Climate



22-23 April, 2021

## The Opportunity

Recognizing that the world faces a severe gap in ambition between our current trajectory and the path to a 1.5°C climate-resilient world, President Biden has committed to hold a summit of Heads of State and Government to raise ambition through powerful mitigation and adaptation commitments, and the launch of a “decade of performance” for transformative emission reductions. The summit will take place 22-23 April virtually. It will reconvene the [Major Economies Forum](#) (MEF) and will have a particular focus on the big emitters. However vulnerable country voices will also be represented through small island states and least developed countries.

**Core summit themes** will be addressed in plenary include **ambition, innovation, jobs/transition, and finance**; Ministerial breakout themes include **adaptation and resilience, nature-based solutions, sub-national action, and climate and security**.

Forty Heads of State and Government<sup>1</sup> have been invited and will have the opportunity to speak in plenary and in targeted thematic break-out sessions.

**WWF calls on invited leaders to announce strong, ambitious and transformational commitments and actions at the summit.**

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<sup>1</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Buhtan, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, DRC, Denmark, European Commission, European Council, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, South Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Vietnam

## Why the U.S. Climate Leaders' Summit Matters

Since President Biden first announced during his campaign for the presidency that he would hold a global climate summit in his first 100 days, attention has been squarely focused on plans, priorities, and intended outcomes. By holding the summit early in this critical year, committing to release the U.S. NDC by the date of the summit, and reconvening the MEF, it serves as a **powerful platform to set expectations and areas of focus for what we collectively hope to achieve in 2021, by the start of COP26**. It provides a platform for leadership and strong action from governments and non-state actors alike to halve global emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050, while addressing critical social equity and resilience questions.

## WWF Summit Priorities & Expectations

With a clear summit focus on increasing climate ambition – primarily in the form of NDCs and Long-Term Strategies, but inclusive of core adaptation and resilience priorities,

**WWF calls for leaders of countries who have been invited to the summit to make strong, ambitious and transformational commitments and actions in:**

- **their leaders' statements,**
- **Ministerial leadership in thematic breakout sessions, and**
- **immediately in advance of the summit**

**The top-line target should be 1.5°C aligned,** heeding the guidance of science to avoid the worst impacts of climate on nature and people, tailored according to what has already been committed.

For NDC commitments, countries largely break down into three categories: 1) those who have yet to submit an enhanced NDC, 2) those who have submitted an NDC, but are well-placed to resubmit and increase ambition, and 3) those who have already submitted an ambitious NDC.

Key priorities for strong, ambitious, transformational commitments and actions include:

- **A strong whole-of-society approach:** Governments should ground NDC and net zero commitments and in immediate, transformative decarbonization actions across sectors of the economy. While it should be no substitute for national action, leaders' statements should embrace the critical role that corporates, cities, states, Indigenous People, local communities, and other sub-national institutions will play in implementation. NDC

development should include a whole-of-society consultation process, and respect and embrace a rights-based approach.

- **Bring greater emphasis and action to nature-based solutions:** Country commitments at the heart of this summit should be inclusive of quality nature-based solutions (NbS) as part of their commitments to both reduce emissions and build resilience. This should build on existing commitments and include:
  - NDCs which include concrete policies on NbS, energy transformation, and climate finance with a focus on nature and the most vulnerable.
  - A commitment of at least 30% of international climate finance to NbS as a way of aiding countries to harness the power of nature for climate mitigation, adaptation, and social development.
  - A commitment to end deforestation and habitat conversion.
  - Ecosystem-based adaptation opportunities in all countries.
  - Equitable, climate and nature-positive economic stimulus and recovery packages.

WWF also encourages all Heads of State and Government invited to the Summit to endorse OR translate commitments of the "[Leaders Pledge for Nature: United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)" into required ambitious and transformational actions.

- **Scale up public and private finance:** Increase and encourage core finance commitments to bring the support needed to GCF, GEF, and other such public finance mechanisms, while harnessing the power of private finance to mobilize investors, including through the [Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures](#) (TCFD) and the [Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#) (TNFD). This should also include a firm commitment to eliminate and re-purpose fossil fuel, agriculture and fisheries subsidies to investments in NbS, beginning with a firm deadline to end fossil fuel subsidies.

## WWF Calls on Heads of State and Government invited to the U.S. Climate Leaders' Summit to:

*If an NDC has not been submitted:*

- Submit a 1.5°C-aligned NDC or long-term net zero strategy which includes:
  - A whole-of-society consultation process which directly involves sub-national and corporate actors, recognizes Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities rights, and includes these actors in the strategy's implementation.

- Strong, additional NbS commitments which end deforestation and habitat conversion, and reduce emissions from agriculture and food systems.
- Adaptation actions which systematically address vulnerability and do no harm to nature or people.

*If an NDC has been submitted:*

- Revise NDC and ensure 1.5°C alignment, resubmit if necessary.
- Present a strong, disaggregated implementation plan to ensure accelerated action and targeted sectoral changes.

*Additionally, in either event.*

- A commitment of at least 30% of international public climate finance to NbS.
- Commit to eliminate and re-purpose fossil fuel, agriculture and fisheries subsidies to investments in NbS, beginning with a firm deadline to end fossil fuel subsidies.
- Commitments to collectively meet or exceed US\$100 billion in the Green Climate Fund, and which extend both TCFD and TNFD.
- Endorse OR translate commitments of the Leaders Pledge for Nature: United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development into required ambitious and transformational actions

## For more information

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