BUILDING MOMENTUM FOR CLIMATE ACTION
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# A NEW APPROACH TO THE ACTION AGENDA

As the world approaches a critical juncture in the global response to climate change, the upcoming COP30 in Belém, Brazil, presents a pivotal opportunity to strengthen the UNFCCC Action Agenda. Originally launched to catalyse voluntary climate action by non-state actors and to complement formal negotiations, the Action Agenda has evolved into a vital platform for showcasing ambition, fostering collaboration, and accelerating implementation.

However, with the window to limit global warming to 1.5°C rapidly closing, there is an urgent need to enhance the Action Agenda's coherence, accountability, and impact. This paper explores how a decision text document at COP30 could institutionalize and elevate the Action Agenda, ensuring it becomes a more robust and enduring pillar of the international climate regime.

## Evolution of the Action Agenda

The Lima-Paris Action Agenda, as it was originally known, was conceived at COP20 in Lima in 2014, as the result of the willingness of the Peruvian and French governments, the UNFCCC Secretariat and the UN Secretary General's office to bring non-state actors (NSAs),such as businesses, subnational governments, and academia, among others, closer to the UN climate process.

The goal then was to use the power of the non-state actors to help create more momentum - through voluntary climate action – towards the adoption of an ambitious agreement in Paris, and to support its implementation once it was in place. Their pledges were then included in an Action Agenda. The first dedicated Action Agenda (only one day then) was held at COP20 in Lima.

At COP26 in Glasgow, the Action Agenda had a 5-year work plan approved. This second phase sought to define three elements: to create a mechanism to encourage more actors to define climate targets; to better organise sectors to encourage even hard-to-abate sectors to participate; and to make the Action Agenda more results oriented, seeking to concretely demonstrate that it was delivering climate impact.

Now, we are at the threshold of a third phase for the Action Agenda, with a new five-year plan to be delivered at COP30, aiming to align the efforts of all actors to deliver on the Paris Agreement. By integrating a broad range of perspectives, it will be anchored in the voices and priorities of those driving climate action worldwide — a pivotal step towards a coherent, effective, and inclusive Global Climate Action Agenda.

## Putting the economy at the heart of the Action Agenda

This crucial third phase must see the Action Agenda play a central role in driving and aligning action by economic actors to address climate change and demonstrating the progress they have made, in more closely aligning the economy with action on climate, and in ensuring that the economy becomes the key engine to move the climate process forwards.

The Brazilian presidency understands this. In his Seventh Letter from the Presidency, COP30 President Designate André Aranha Correa do Lago says, "to fully realize the potential of the Action Agenda, the COP30 Presidency sees the private sector as a beneficiary of the climate transition, and an indispensable partner in driving its implementation."

Below, we describe the indispensable role we see for the Action Agenda, and the thinking behind the increasingly important place we see it taking in the effort to implement the goals of the Paris Agreement

## Where climate action happens

We have always understood that much progress in addressing climate change takes place outside of the UNFCCC framework, outside the COP meetings, and indeed outside of the Action Agenda. It can take place as the result of any actor taking the responsibility to define climate targets or act on climate.

When the Lima-Paris Action Agenda was created, we sought to create a semi-formal process, outside of the negotiations, that connected three gears: that of the UNFCCC Secretariat; the Parties; and the Non-State Actors themselves. This process has been successful in connecting these actors and delivering progress – and is continuing to do so.

This has been successful in promoting collaboration and action, and in sending political, regulatory and market signals that have promoted action among economic actors towards a more climate-friendly global economy. We are at a moment where we need to double down on these efforts, to better demonstrate the economic case for action on climate change.

## Linking the Global Stocktake to the Action Agenda

The Brazilian Presidency recognises the need to draw a common thread throughout the negotiations and the wider Action Agenda process, and they have chosen to use the Global Stocktake (GST) as this common thread. The GST, approved at COP28, found that the world is substantially off track to hold warming below 1.5°C. It effectively creates a global climate plan, setting out what the world needs to do to get the Paris Agreement back on course to at 1.5°C world.

COP30 will, therefore, focus on the implementation of the outcomes of the first GST. To do so, the Presidency has created six axes (broad themes) within its COP30 Action Agenda, as set out in the President Designate' s fourth letter. Within these axes, it has defined 30 objectives and created 30 Activation Groups – collaborative bodies bringing together the full range of actors to accelerate action, unify efforts and promote collaboration in the pursuit of those objectives.

We think this is a sensible approach. It begs the question, however, of where the Presidency and the COP process will land this body of initiatives, Activation Groups and objectives. That is the key question for the next work plan of the Action Agenda.

## What is the role of the Action Agenda in the work plan?

The Action Agenda, the High-Level Champions and the Non-State Actors that participate in the Action Agenda must fulfil four key roles:

1. They must act as economic brokers and agents, demonstrating that the economy is moving towards net zero.
2. They must also be agents for greater accountability, organising and communicating in ways that demonstrate how they are acting and moving forward.
3. They must promote greater coherence across climate action that is underway in different parts of the world – bringing together the lessons and experiences of the highly-successful Climate Weeks that are taking place around the world, for example.
4. They need to identify and promote the synergies that can take place across the Rio Conventions, most notably between climate action and tackling biodiversity loss.

## Making the Action Agenda accountable

We need to strengthen the connections between the Action Agenda and the Parties themselves. Currently, the only direct links are through the Action Day during the COP, which brings together the Parties and the non-state actors, the High-Level Champions, which act as bridge between the COP and the NSAs, and the NAZCA portal, to track NSA commitments.

However, we need to develop a mechanism by which progress made in the Action Agenda is formally reported back to the Plenary of the COP, by the COP Presidency. This is an important requirement to bring accountability and transparency to the Action Agenda process and make explicit its role in moving the global economy towards net zero.

## An economic climate agenda

Ideally, the Action Agenda would produce, by the end of this COP, a manifesto, setting out the elements that demonstrate the extent to which we are developing a climate-aligned economy. That would identify the elements that define the maturity of the economic process, in terms of how much this is becoming a climate economic process.

The new 5-year work plan must build on the experience of the past 10 years of the Action Agenda, and the ambitious new efforts under the Brazilian Presidency, to create a manifesto for how the Action Agenda can build towards a climate aligned economy. The strategies and interventions that the Action Agenda has developed have matured over the years to the point where it is now not just a series of unconnected or loosely connected actions, but a blueprint for an economy that is built around the mandates of the Paris Agreement and the first Global Stocktake.

This manifesto must point the way to accelerating current trends where the economy is becoming more sustainable and climate responsive. These include progress in regulations, stock exchange rules, investor rules, market mechanisms and consumer preferences.

The objective is to demonstrate that addressing climate change is about economic progress – about improving competitiveness, producing positive development, creating employment and reducing poverty. The Action Agenda must produce a disruptive outcome that firmly links climate action with the climate maturity of the economy.

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