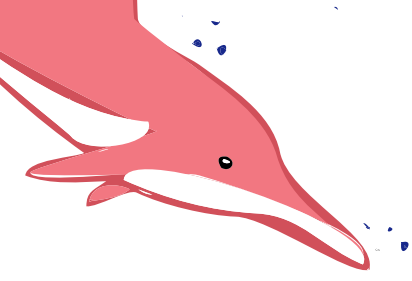


An illustration of a hand holding a seashell. The hand is brown with a yellow and multi-colored striped wristband. The seashell is red with a spiral pattern. The background is light blue with various sea creatures: a pink fish at the top left, a pink whale at the top right, a pink fish at the middle left, a pink fish at the middle right, a pink fish at the bottom left, and a pink fish at the bottom right. There are also blue bubbles and a white wave at the bottom.

What is climate governance?



What is climate governance?

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Authors: Sara Cognuck González and Emilia Numer

Technical advice: Adrián Martínez

Coordination: Hanoch Barlevi, Regional Specialist on
Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, UNICEF
Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office

Design: Matías Daviron

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Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office

Building 102, Alberto Tejada Street, City of Knowledge

Panama, Republic of Panama

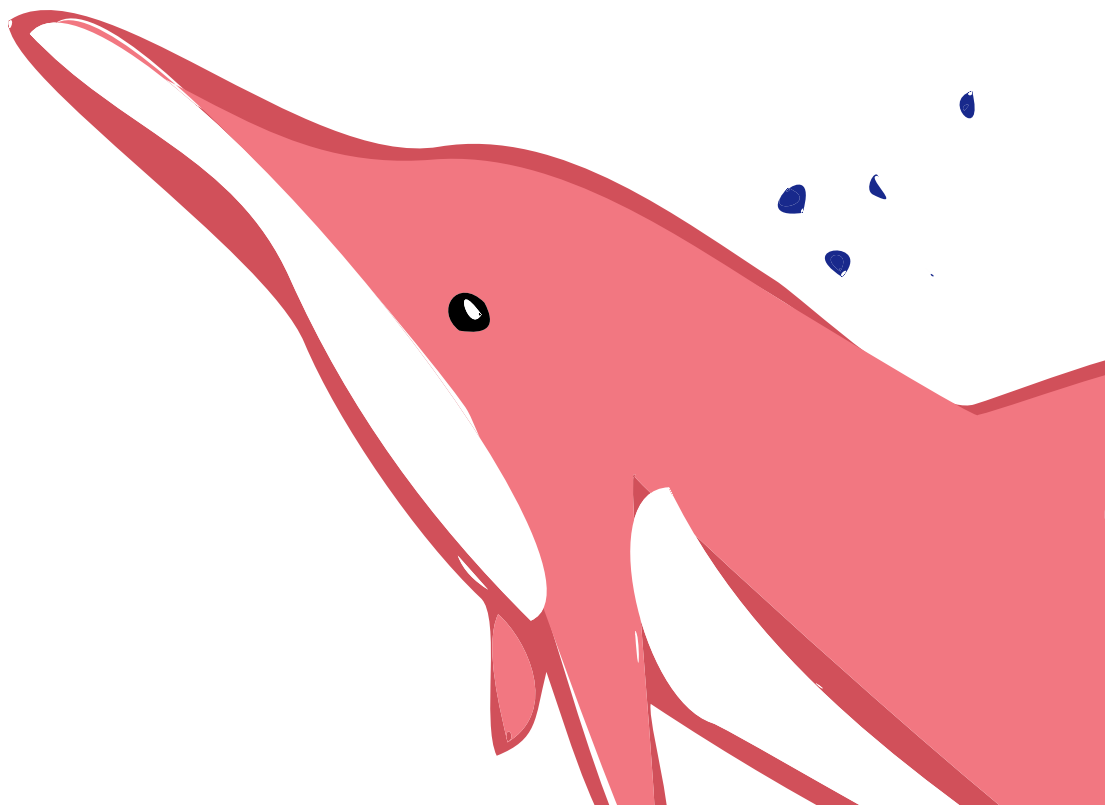
PO Box: 0843-03045

Telephone: (+507) 301 7400

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Twitter: [@uniceflac](https://twitter.com/uniceflac)

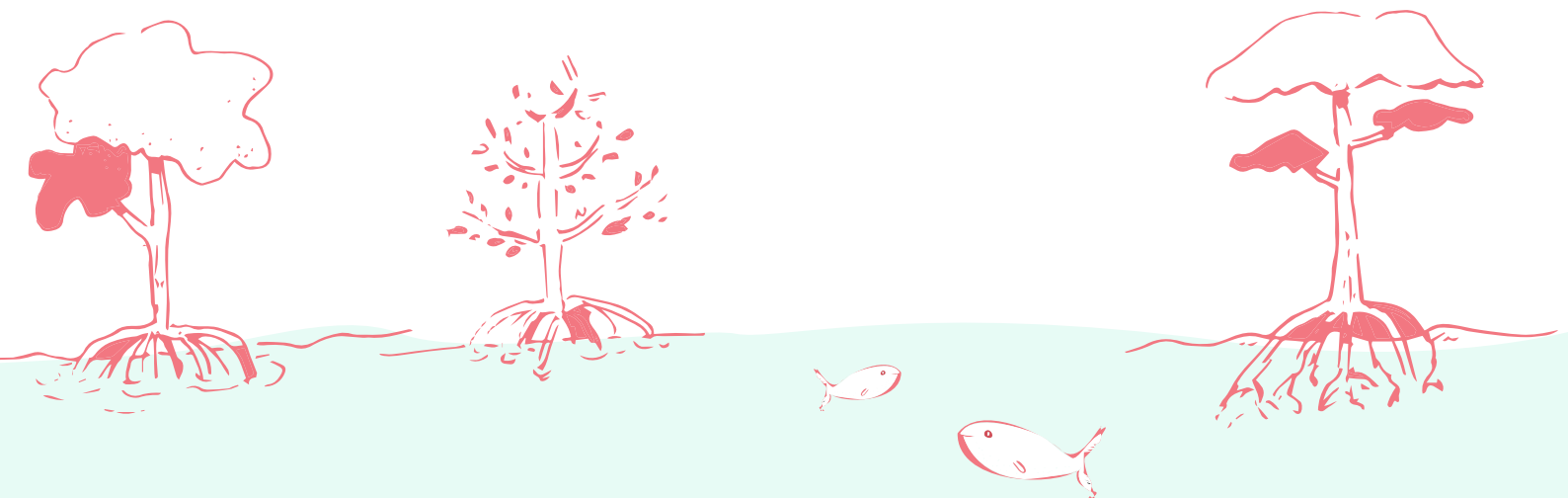
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What is climate governance?

A guide to understanding national climate governance and international climate negotiations.

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Presentation

“We, as young people, are agents of change in different sections of society. We are not being left behind in **climate action**: our voices are being increasingly heard and we are demanding the right to **participate fully**. In fact, our participation is a right that should be central to the formulation of public policy.”

The **Toolkit for Young Climate Activists in Latin America and the Caribbean** was created by young people who, like you, are concerned about our planet's situation and who, as activists, have faced many challenges when advocating and taking action.

Our goal is to share clear, concise, easily understandable information that describes the course that global, regional and national climate action is taking, in order to prepare you for **meaningful and informed participation**.

The booklets interrelate and are designed so that you can read them in succession and progressively deepen your knowledge of each of the topics. You can also consult them independently, according to your needs.

These are:

Tools for climate action: Key tools for making progress towards the global climate action goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, including the Paris Agreement, nationally determined contributions and other tools.

What is climate governance? Information about climate governance and the decision-making process at the national and international levels, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change, how it works and the mechanisms for participation.

Prepare to take action! Practical advice and accounts of other activists' experiences to help you develop the skills needed to take part in and influence the climate agenda.

The Paris Agreement for young people: Details of the Agreement, its importance, and all its articles in simple language.

Escazú Agreement for young people: Essential information about the Agreement, its importance, and its articles in simple language.

Climate glossary for young people: Important concepts and definitions that every climate activist needs to know.

This booklet uses the terms “youth” and “young people” to refer to adolescents and young people between 15 and 24 years old.

0 to 17

10 to 19

15 to 24

10 to 24

Acknowledgements

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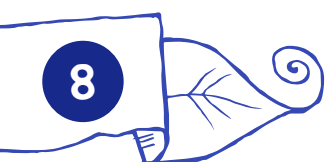
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Acronyms and abbreviations

5C	Consejo Consultivo Ciudadano de Cambio Climático (Citizen Climate Change Council)
AC	Adaptation Committee
ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
AILAC	Asociación Independiente de América Latina y el Caribe (Independent Association for Latin America and the Caribbean)
ALBA	Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America)
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
BINGO	Constituency Business and industry NGOs
CACAM	Group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova
CAN-LA	Climate Action Network - Latin America
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
COP	Conference of the Parties
COY	Conference of Youth
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
EIG	Environmental Integrity Group
ENGO	Constituency of environmental NGOs
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPO	Indigenous peoples organizations
LCIPP	Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform
LGMA	Local government and municipal authorities
LMDC	Like-Minded Developing Countries
MOCIC	Movimiento Ciudadano frente al Cambio Climático (Citizen Movement against Climate Change)
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NAPA	National Adaptation Programmes of Action

NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OLAC	Observatorio Latinoamericano para la Acción Climática (Latinamerican Observatory for Climate Action)
PCCB	Paris Committee on Capacity-building
Pre-COP	Preparatory meeting for the Conference of Parties
RINGO	Research and independent NGOs
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
SCAC	Sociedad Civil para la Acción Climática (Civil Society for Climate Action)
SCF	Standing Committee on Finance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SICA	Sistema de Integración Centroamericana (Central American Integration System)
TEC	Technology Executive Committee
TUNGO	Trade Union NGOs
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WGC	Women and Gender Constituency
WIM	Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage
YOUNGO	Constituency of Youth NGOs



Introduction

Building climate solutions is a complex, global-scale process that **involves all levels** and is relevant to all sections of society. Climate change governance is linked to countries' development, and the well-being of nature and people.

For processes to be participatory and result in efficient and effective climate action, people's rights and the regulations that protect them must be taken into account. It is also vital that climate decisions and policies are sensitive to the perceptions, interests and rights of vulnerable populations. Young people are important actors for climate action success, and their participation in climate decision-making processes is a human right.

This guide focuses on the climate negotiation and decision-making processes that impact our well-being and set the course for climate action.

It covers the following topics:



What multilevel climate governance is and its implications for climate change decision-making processes




How climate governance is developed at the national level, analysing who its actors are and which processes may offer opportunities to participate



How international climate change negotiations are carried out: this section gives a detailed explanation of how negotiation processes work, the relevant agencies and how social actors get involved



What is multilevel climate governance?

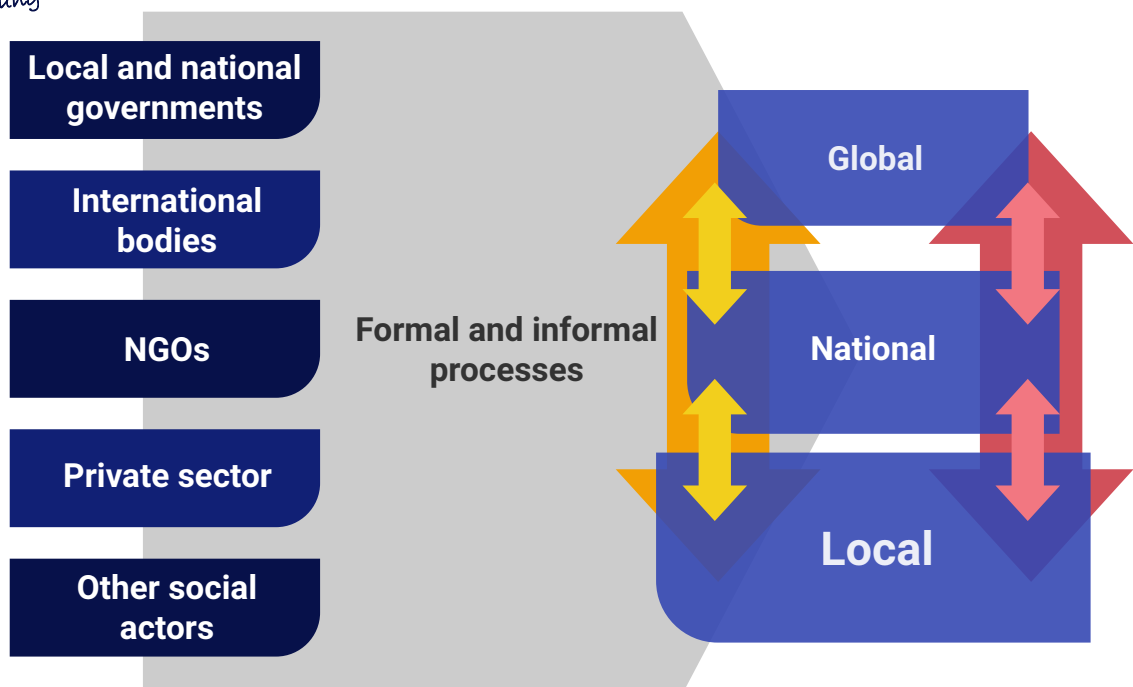


Multilevel climate governance is a continuous process of discussions and negotiations involving a diverse group of national and local governments, international organizations, the private sector, NGOs and other social actors. Its purpose is to promote opportunities and prompt action to address climate change. These decision-making and discussion processes may be formal or informal, flexible and adaptive, and take place at various levels: local, national, regional or international.

Given the global, national and local reach of the effects of climate change, multilevel governance is crucial to address its multilevel causes and impacts, and the **participation of all social actors is necessary to provide an effective response.**


You can find the definition of "climate governance" in the Climate glossary for young people booklet

Multilevel climate governance¹

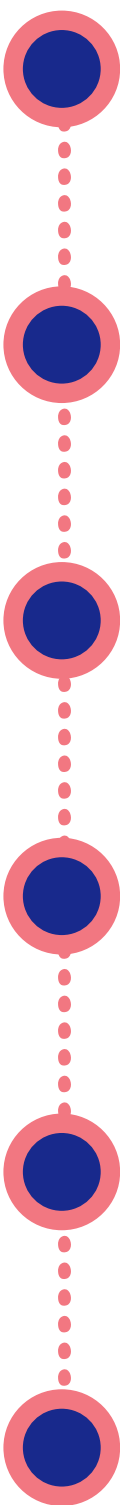


¹ Jänicke, M., 'The Multi-level System of Global Climate Governance – the Model and its Current State', *Environmental Policy and Governance*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2017, pp. 108–121, <<https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.1747>>, accessed June 28 2020.

The comprehensive nature of multilevel governance also means that it strengthens and promotes innovation, problem-solving capacity, learning, and the development of solutions that benefit more sectors. In addition to this, **it can make decision-making or public policy processes more efficient** and create mechanisms that can be adapted to specific contexts and a wide range of topics. Therefore, when trying to understand climate-related decision-making processes, we need to bear in mind their multilevel nature.



Multilevel climate governance has many benefits:

- 
- It ensures coherence between local, national and international plans and policies.
 - It promotes collaboration, innovation and learning among actors and authorities at various levels.
 - It integrates the knowledge, ideas and perspectives of the different levels and sections of society.
 - It establishes objectives, mechanisms, policies and solutions jointly, ensuring that they maintain a certain level of harmony.
 - It establishes tools or structures for information exchange, decision-making, follow-up, monitoring and reporting.
 - It enables better collaboration between actors at different levels through the agreement of clear roles, relationships and responsibilities.
-

National or subnational climate governance

Many decision-making processes take place at the national level or the subnational level (meaning a country's territorial divisions), especially on the creation of programmes, public policies and regulations. **It is mainly at these levels that climate action is implemented.**

Actors from various levels and subject areas are involved in the dialogue and negotiation processes, regardless of the decision maker's level of authority. These national and subnational decision-making spaces are opportunities for public participation, which youth organizations can take advantage of.

Let's start by getting to know the different social actors and their roles in national climate governance.

Social actors and their roles in decision-making

Participation in environmental and climate decision-making processes is a human right. All people, including young people and the organizations that represent them, have the right to participate in climate decision-making processes, and the State has a duty to ensure that this right can be exercised. As such, rights of access to environmental information, climate justice, and the participation and protection of advocates on climate-related matters set out in the Escazú Agreement are extremely important to climate activists.

See the [Escazú Agreement for young people](#) for more details

This list of actors is helpful for understanding who is involved in climate-related decisions:



Public sector

This includes public institutions, ministries and other entities that represent the national government or other State powers. These actors are **responsible for the development of public policies**, regulations and decision-making at the national or subnational level.



Local governments

This is the level of public administration closest to citizens. Their role is to make locally implementable decisions that fit within climate action, including within the objectives of international agreements such as the Paris Agreement.



Civil society

This includes various types of organizations that represent the people, who have the right to participate in climate decision-making processes. These organizations contribute to decision-making processes with comments, opinions and proposals based on their local, ancestral, traditional, technical and scientific knowledge and experience. They can influence decision-making processes by contextualizing discussions within citizens' experiences, interests, rights and opinions. Civil society also drives local-level action that helps improve the conditions for community adaptation. Organizations for children and young people are also part of civil society and have the same right to participate.



Private sector

This is one of the sectors that generates the most greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, meaning that the action it takes to reduce these emissions is an important component of climate action. Action that should be prioritized includes changing production patterns, modifying energy matrices, and developing more sustainable production cycles (or distribution and marketing systems). **Because of its responsibility for emissions and its potential to create mitigation and adaptation technologies, the private sector is an essential actor in climate action.**



Academia

This sector provides knowledge and research that enables informed decisions to be made based on scientific knowledge. It also makes essential resources and spaces to strengthen education by creating new opportunities, increasing capacities and promoting understanding of the changes needed, making the process more effective and efficient.

Key processes and agencies for advocacy


Participatory processes may involve developing workshops, surveys, consultations, receiving documents or studies and even virtual participation spaces. They may also promote the creation of permanent spaces for citizen consultations and participation in climate governance. These processes are opportunities for young people to participate at the national or subnational level.


This section describes the main spaces, so that you can set out your strategies and advocacy action. Bear in mind that these spaces may vary from country to country.


1 **Creating public policies and making decisions that directly relate to the international climate governance processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** for example, the national communications that each country must present to the UNFCCC may be **a starting point for climate activists to request spaces for accountability regarding climate ambition in their countries.** These communications include a national inventory of GHG emissions and other details on climate action implementation.


2 **Updating the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** all countries must update their NDCs every five years. To enrich this process, different social sectors, local governments, ministries, public institutions and international organizations should all participate. Young people should be part of any consultations or workshops so that they can add their comments and perspectives and increase the ambition and effectiveness of the new NDCs.

3 **Creating or updating other climate action tools:** in addition to the NDCs, there are other tools for climate action that enable us to participate in national climate governance:

 **Nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs):** these sectoral processes should be linked through consultations with the relevant social actors. Young people in the sectors linked to these processes should be guaranteed participation.

 **Long-term strategies:** because they are long-term, these spaces do not come up frequently, but there is great potential for participation in Latin America since very few countries have developed long-term strategies. Young people can participate to ensure that these strategies are sensitive to young people's rights and needs.

 **National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs):** these are created voluntarily by the least developed countries because they are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Their implementation enables participation in the national or subnational consultation process through contributions and proposals.

 **Adaptation Communications under the Paris Agreement:** these provide an opportunity to discover the status of adaptation actions implemented in your country. Information gained from this will enable you to advocate and request spaces for dialogue with the authorities.

See the [Tools for Climate Action booklet](#)

To learn more about NDCs, see the [Tools for Climate Action booklet](#)

4 **Creating framework laws, regulations or public policies on climate change:** these processes can generate dialogue and consultations that may inform the development and regulation of standards. They regulate climate governance at the national level and set out duties and rights that people can claim on climate action. For example, to create Peru's framework law on climate change and its regulations, dialogues (promoted by the Ministry of the Environment and different organizations) were held with multiple actors and sectors, including young people. The content of the bill was discussed in these spaces and put out for public consultation. The public's input was then included in the draft texts that were discussed.

5 **Decision-making on issues less directly related to climate change:** climate change must be considered a cross-cutting issue that can be included in the processes of other important issues, such as water, education, gender, energy or finance.




More opportunities to make a difference!


Climate action is directly related to the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). [SDG 13](#) on climate action calls for urgent measures to address climate change and its effects. However, climate action can also be linked to all the other SDGs. You can influence their implementation processes, which contribute to the socioeconomic transformation needed to address climate change.


The 2030 Agenda is the road map towards a new development paradigm in which people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships take centre stage. It contains 17 goals to achieve by 2030 at the latest.


6 **Citizen councils or platforms for climate action:** these spaces may be created by the authorities or by public initiative to strengthen their participation. They can also become formal spaces. For example:

 In its first NDC, Costa Rica committed to creating a [Consejo Consultivo Ciudadano de Cambio Climático \[Citizen Climate Change Council- 5C\]](#). This is a deliberative space that aims for participation in designing and implementing climate policy.

 Chile has a [Sociedad Civil para la Acción Climática \[Civil Society for Climate Action- SCAC\]](#) made up of organizations from different sectors aiming to raise awareness about the climate crisis and propose solutions from a civil society perspective.

 In Peru, [Citizen's Movement against Climate Change \(MOCICC\)](#) was formed, through which citizens generate debate and action. This movement has facilitated public participation in processes and is recognized as a civil society representative to the National Committee on Climate Change.

 The Latin American Observatory for Climate Action (OLAC) aims to monitor the region's progress on implementing its NDCs.

 [The Climate Action Network Latin America \(CAN-LA\)](#) promotes action at the government and individual level to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels.

Be inspired!

Youth participation experiences

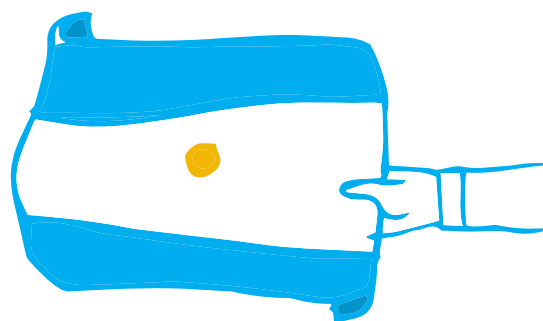
Here are some national experiences of youth participation in climate action processes which may inspire and encourage you to take similar actions.

Climate Emergency Declaration in Argentina!

We are Nicole Becker and Bruno Rodríguez from Youth for Climate Argentina, a youth movement that demands action for climate justice. Together with 44 organizations, we are leading the efforts to make Argentina declare a climate and ecological emergency, so that the country's first climate change law can be passed.

Action taken

- We assessed the appropriate advocacy procedures in institutional settings.
- We prepared a preliminary document that served as the main basis for the instrument that was finally introduced to the parliamentary debate in the senate Environment Committee. The legislative initiative was in a "Draft Declaration" format.

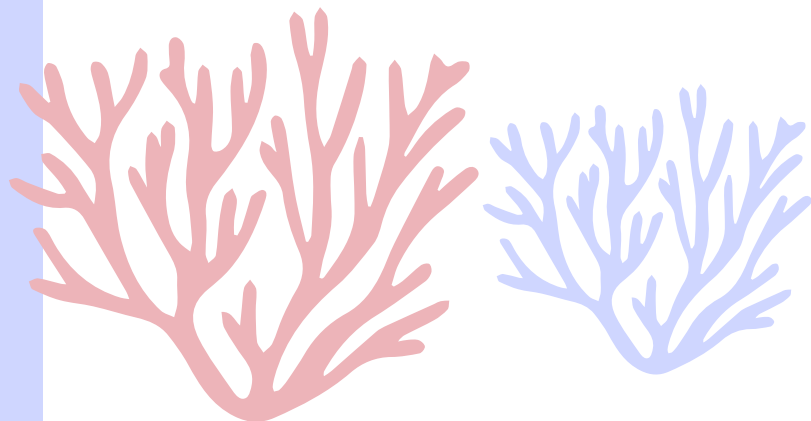


Challenges faced

- During the first submission of the draft, we dealt with countless problems due to the conflicts of interest that marked the electoral situation in 2019.
- Senatorial parliamentary team advisers constantly underestimated us and some sectors opposed the project and did not wish to move forward.

Outcomes

- We brought together the senate Environment Committee for the first time after years of paralysis due to lack of a quorum.
- We managed to get more than half of the senators to sign the draft submitted by Youth for Climate Argentina. We also managed to ensure that it was heard in the house of the upper chamber.
- We made the country the first Latin American State to declare a climate and ecological emergency.



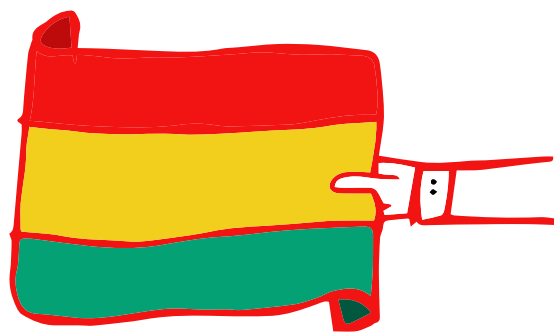
Young people updating Bolivia's NDCs!

We are an alliance of more than 24 youth organizations committed to climate change and Mother Earth. Together we have gone through several peer-learning processes on climate governance and the commitments made in the Paris Agreement, especially the NDCs.



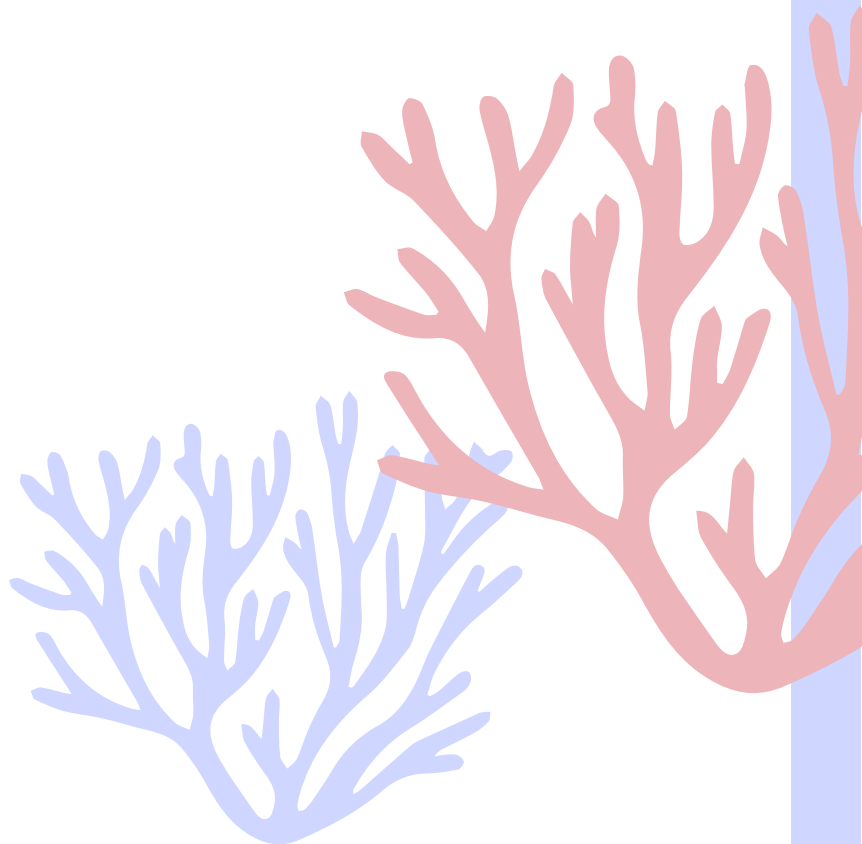
Action taken

- With the support of UNICEF, we have carried out research on the impact of climate change on children and young people in our country, providing information that allows us to identify strategic issues for proposals.
- We have created spaces to develop proposals on updating the NDCs, which include topics of interest and young people's strategic needs.
- We will present the proposals during dialogues with the Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth, where the content of children-focused guidelines and policies will be agreed for the NDCs.



Outcomes

- All of these participatory youth processes help to identify and define children-centred indicators to incorporate into the NDCs. We have also made progress on consolidating the national strategy for Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), advocating for the official and sustained participation of children and young people in our country's climate change planning.

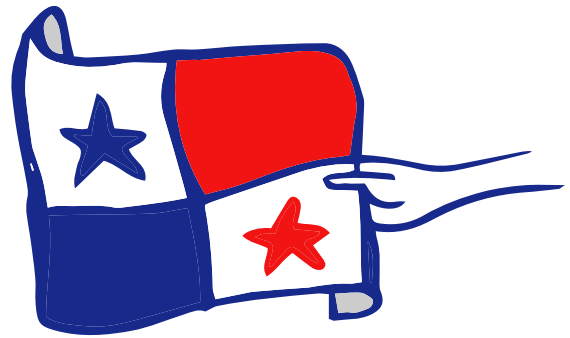


Including climate change in Panama's Constitution!

We are the Red de Jóvenes Frente al Cambio Climático de Panamá [Panama Climate Change Youth Network] and we are participating in the constitutional review process. This process emerged as part of the public call made by Panama's Council of the National Coalition for Development, a space for dialogue among diverse sectors. As part of the process, a group of young Panamanians developed a transcendental and globally unique proposal: **include climate change at the constitutional level**. The proposal focused on adaptation and mitigation, with an emphasis on productive systems for the country's sustainable development.

Action taken

- We proposed the article, through which we found our first strategic partners: environmental organizations, indigenous peoples and young people.
- We participated in the debate process, defending our proposal of the article, which was seconded by our partners and accepted unanimously.
- We disseminated and raised social awareness of the article, meeting with organizations, movements and civil society so that they could learn about the process.
- We participated in the National Assembly of Deputies' own consultation process, to present the reform package to civil society.
- We also presented the article to international bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme, which gave us their support.



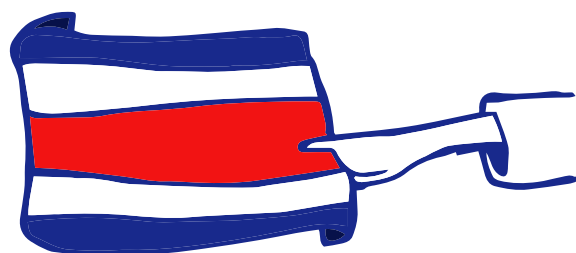
Challenges faced

- Society's general lack of knowledge and conceptualization of climate change (including that of the authorities).
- Rejection of the constitutional reform process by some sectors, causing national protests that resulted in the whole process being cancelled.
- Options for reopening the process are being considered, either through open and impartial dialogues led by international bodies (which will serve as justices of the peace to include the ideas in the current constitution) or through a native constituency that will completely replace the current constitution drafted by society-elected representatives.

Outcomes

- Mobilization of organizations in favour of the climate change article.
- Increased public awareness in various settings about what climate change is and what it means.
- Creation of strategic partnerships.
- Society's acceptance of climate change's inclusion at the constitutional level, which will encourage us to keep fighting to make it a reality.

Climate change as a cross-cutting concept in Costa Rica



I am Sara Cognuck González, a climate activist from Costa Rica, and I was one of the people who led the process of including climate action in the Public Policy of the Young Person 2020–2024. The initiative was born out of the need to make climate action part of government policy for young people, since we are one of the groups most vulnerable to climate change.



Action taken

- We included the climate in discussions within the official structure of the National Youth System.
- We worked with the Deputy Minister for Youth to gain the necessary political support.
- We raised awareness among Costa Rican young people about the concept and effects of climate change.
- We requested institutional support from the Vice-Ministry for Youth and the Council of the Young Person (the governing body of the Public Policy of the Young Person) to incorporate the concept.
- We created inputs from the Vice-Ministry for Youth to support the climate component.



Challenges faced

- Misconceptions about climate change and its effects.
- Young people from other sectors sought to exclude climate change from the priorities.



Outcomes

- Climate change was included in the Public Policy of the Young Person 2020–2024. It was also included as an approach, allowing climate change to be a cross-cutting component of the Public Policy of the Young Person 2020–2024.
- We raised awareness among young people on climate change and the importance of climate action.
- Starting from working as a collective, we took the first steps to create the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) Costa Rica and the Costa Rica Youth and Climate Change Network.



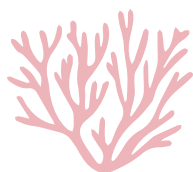
Youth participation in climate governance spaces in Peru

We are youth members of the Advisory Council for Children and Adolescents and the National Secretariat for Youth, who, with the support of UNICEF Peru, make our voices, demands and needs heard so that they are reflected in national and subnational climate policies, incorporating our fundamental rights and ensuring effective participation in various spaces.



Action taken

- We developed the Regional Meeting with Adolescents for Climate Action in the Amazon region of Loreto, with the aim of raising awareness among authorities about the climate emergency and how it affects the rights of adolescents.
- We developed a National Meeting of Adolescents and Young People: "Let's engage in dialogue for a Peru that takes action against climate change", with the help of UNICEF and in collaboration with the relevant State entities.
- We created decentralized workshops to make the voices of young people heard in the different spaces, and to achieve legitimate representation in the National Committee on Climate Change and the Regional Environmental Commissions, both recognized by the Framework Law on Climate Change.



Challenges faced

- Limited financial resources prevented us from mobilizing young people from the country's more remote regions to participate in the assemblies convened.
- Difficulties in dialogue between younger and older groups of youth: initially it was difficult to find common ground, but eventually we managed to converge our opinions towards a single aim.



Outcomes

- The Ministry of Environment developed a proposal to include two adolescents and two young people in the National Committee on Climate Change as legitimate representatives of climate activists' different organizations. This will allow them to advocate and ensure that their demands are incorporated in the implementation and/or updating of the NDCs.
- The Regulations of the Framework Law on Climate Change were approved, with the incorporation and recognition of young people as agents of change whose participation is vital in the different coordination and articulation mechanisms at the regional level, with the support of the competent authorities.
- A Regional Virtual Network of Adolescents for Climate Action and a children's manifesto for climate action in the Amazon region of Loreto were formed.
- The Minister of Environment accepted commitments such as signing the [Interministerial Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action](#).

Local Youth Conference in Ecuador!

I am Priscilla Moreno and I was part of the organizing group of the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) Ecuador, led by the Terra Viva Ecuador network in conjunction with the National Environmental Front, the Quito Youth Parliament and the International Association of International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences. They were joined by 25 partner organizations including universities, NGOs, collectives and more. The Terra Viva Ecuador network wanted to hold a National Summit on environmental issues led by young people, and so the initiative to organize the LCOY was born.

Acciones que emprendimos

- We designed and planned the LCOY.
- We established partnerships with other youth organizations.
- We completed the procedure with YOUNGO to get our LCOY recognized.
- We made sponsorship requests to various organizations in the country.
- We systematized information to create a Declaration.

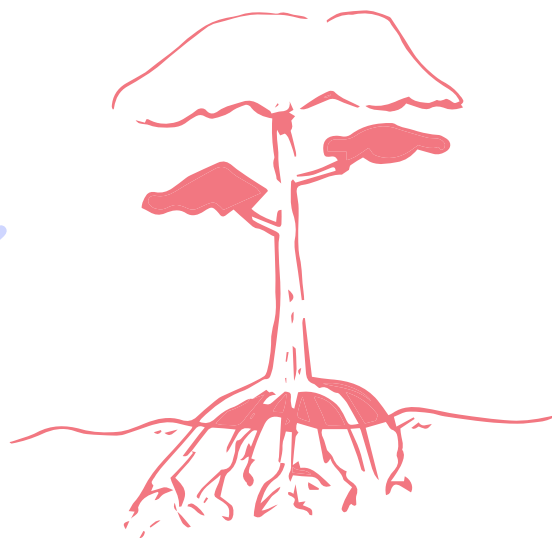
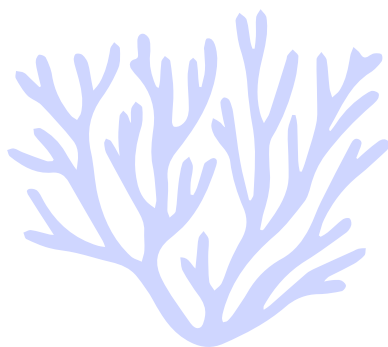
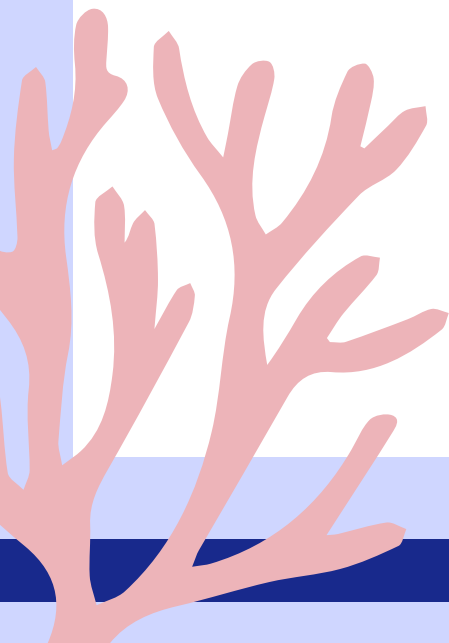


Challenges faced

- Initially it was a challenge to raise the money and donations needed to support all areas of the LCOY.
- It was difficult to coordinate all the logistics of bringing young people from all over the country to Quito.
- Following up the proposals.

Outcomes

- We managed to bring together 150 young activists to participate from all over Ecuador.
- We created a final declaration containing all the problems raised and the solutions proposed by all of the event's participants.
- We presented the declaration at the COY 2019 and COP25. We also presented it at a meeting with representatives of UNICEF and the Ministry of Environment.

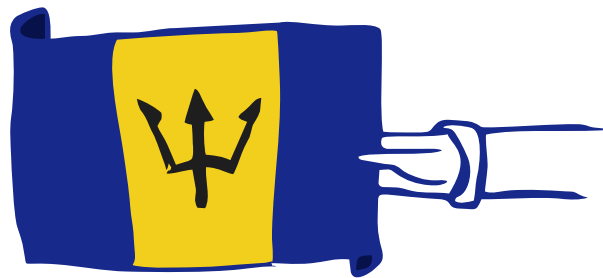


Mobilizing universities to act for climate change in the Caribbean

I am Kevin Manning from Barbados and I was part of the team coordinating The University of the West Indies participation in the regional [HEY Campaign](#). I also coordinated the drafting of the '[Student Declaration on Climate Action in the Caribbean](#)' which proved to be a critical stepping stone for Caribbean youth to voice their opinion and concerns in the area of climate change. The declaration was drafted in conjunction with St. George's University and the American University of Barbados reaching to students from Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica and Grenada.

Action taken

- Convene drafting committee to examine the key challenges of youth in the Caribbean in the area of climate change.
- Creation of networks among students and youth organizations including the three universities.
- Institutional preparation and sharing for student signatories to the Declaration.

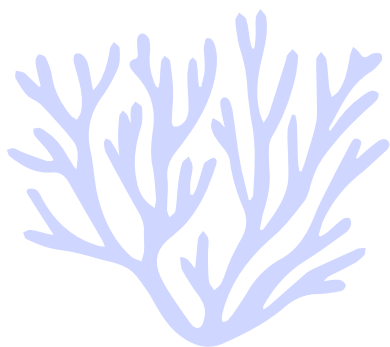


Challenges faced

- Coordination of persons to convene to discuss the challenges facing Caribbean youth.
- Shifting timelines from partnering organizations.


Outcomes

- We exposed university students to the process of drafting a declaration.
- We provided real world experience for Caribbean students on the organization of a regional and global movement towards the achievement of collective support for the Declaration.
- Over 100 participants and attendees from all over the world were introduced to the contents of the Student Declaration on Climate Action in the Caribbean. This included officials from the United Nations, Regional Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations.
- Commitment from regional universities to the Declaration and plans to create an action plan to ensure that it is achieved.
- Total of 53 signatories to the Declaration.



International climate governance*

International climate negotiations are the processes developed to create **agreements between countries** to promote and ensure ambitious action against climate change and its effects. Negotiations within the international framework are important because they **set out the guidelines to be followed at the global level** under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities aimed at ensuring sustainable development.



The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is a fundamental principle of the UNFCCC that recognizes countries' different capacities and responsibilities in the face of climate change.




What happens during climate negotiations has consequences for now and the future. That is why young people can (and should) have their say in negotiation processes, sharing their perspectives and knowledge and participating in discussions on the various issues. Conferences and meetings related to climate negotiations have certain mechanisms that regulate participation, and it is important to understand them. In this section you will learn about the process and how you can get involved.

* This section of the booklet is primarily based on: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo, Guía de apoyo para negociadores iberoamericanos, UN, Panama, 2019, <www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/es/home/library/environment_energy/guade-apoyo-para-negozadores-iberoamericanos-hacia-la-impl.html>, accessed 19 June 2020..

The negotiation process

The decision-making processes of the UNFCCC climate negotiations bring together local, national and international actors. Climate summits and related activities are attended by actors from local governments, international or national NGOs, international organizations, the national or transnational private sector, and organizations representing children and young people.

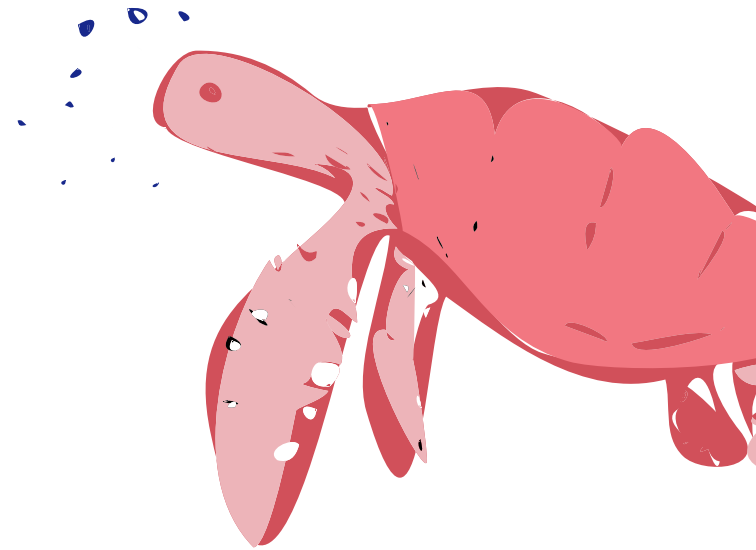
These actors, or the groups that represent them, can participate in side-discussions and conferences, request bilateral meetings, intervene during plenary sessions or during meetings of the Convention bodies along with countries' delegations. In these spaces, actors from different areas of influence, such as industry, academia, agriculture or biodiversity, all mix. They can also take action at the international, national or local level to reinforce the multilevel nature of climate governance.



While the official delegations of each country have the power to make decisions in UNFCCC climate negotiations, active exchanges with the different actors are fundamental for influencing and advancing the decision-making process.

You already know that climate negotiations take place in the UNFCCC². Now let's look at its structure and its members and participants, under the following headings:

- 1 we start with the **bodies and institutions**,
- 2 we continue with **the participants**,
- 3 we finished with **the negotiation groups**.



² United Nations, 'Parties', UN, n.d., accessed 30 June 2020

Bodies and institutions

Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC:

this is made up of all the countries that are part of the UNFCCC. It is the supreme body which regulates the implementation of the Convention and any related instruments.

Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA)³:

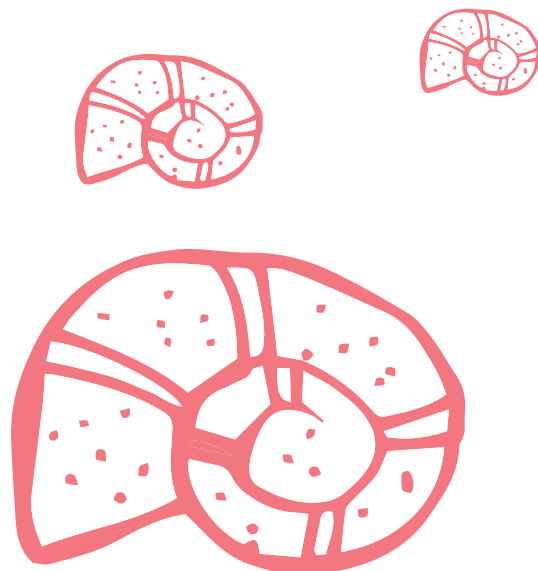
this consists of all the countries that have signed the Paris Agreement. Countries that are part of the UNFCCC **but have not** signed the Paris Agreement can participate as observers. The role of the conference is to monitor the Paris Agreement's implementation and make decisions to promote its implementation.

Bureau: this is made up of country representatives assigned by the five regions. It provides advice and guidance on the work of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA): this advises on climate science, environment and technology matters. It adopts conclusions which are then submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI): this supports the implementation of the UNFCCC and the agreements made under it. It adopts conclusions which are then submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

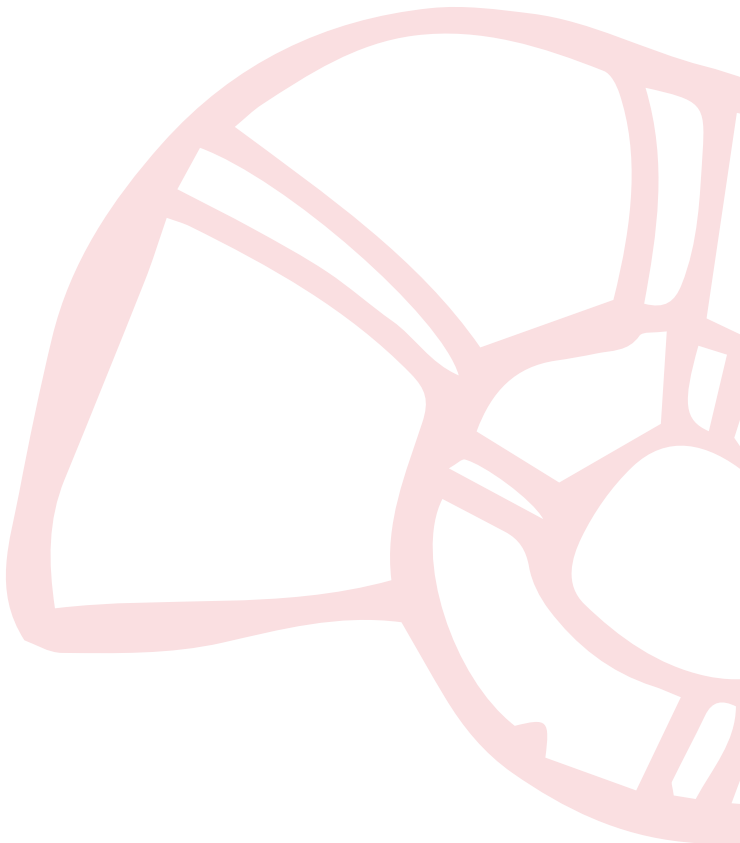
UNFCCC Secretariat: this is the main provider of technical and administrative support to the UNFCCC.



Constituted bodies: these were formed under the framework of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. They aim to promote and facilitate dialogue on different issues and facilitate the implementation of tools. These constituted bodies include:

- Adaptation Committee (AC).
- Standing Committee on Finance (SCF).
- Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM excom).
- Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP).
- Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB).
- Technology Executive Committee (TEC).
- Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN).
- Adaptation Fund Board.
- Clean Development Mechanism Executive Board (CDM EB).
- Compliance Committee.
- Consultative Group of Experts (CGE).
- Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee (JISC).
- Green Climate Fund (GCF).

³ United Nations, 'Chapter XXVII Environment. 7. d Paris Agreement', UN, 2016, <https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=_en>, accessed 20 June 2020.




Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): this consists of scientists and experts from around the world on issues related to climate change. The IPCC is not part of the UNFCCC; it **provides scientific information to countries** to strengthen the global response to climate change.

It is structured as three working groups:

- Group I: the physical science of climate change.
- Group II: impacts, adaptation and vulnerability.
- Group III: mitigation of climate change.

It also has a special team in charge of GHG inventories.



Financial mechanisms: financial assistance is available from countries with more resources for countries with fewer resources that are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. To facilitate this, the UNFCCC established a Financial Mechanism which is also a response to the financing established by the Paris Agreement. These mechanisms are implemented or overseen by constituted bodies such as the SCF, the Adaptation Fund Board, the GEF and the GCF.

Participants

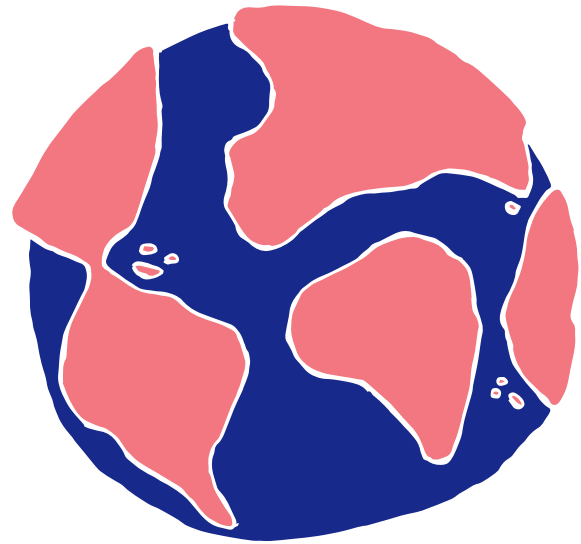
Climate negotiations involve different participants with different roles.


 **Countries:** in the UNFCCC **a Party is a country**. All countries can participate in the climate negotiations. Countries that have signed and deposited the official UNFCCC document only intervene in decisions or agreements once they have carried out the corresponding ratification process. Countries that have not done so can only participate as observers.

Countries meet through the Conference of the Parties (COP). They are divided into five regional groups:

- Africa
- Asia
- Central and Eastern Europe
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Western Europe along with other countries (Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the United States).

These groups do not function as negotiation groups, but are used to elect the Chair and Bureau for each session of the COP. The presiding officer usually coincides with the regional rotation. This rotation is important because countries agree on a country within their region to host the COP and elect a Chair from that same country to facilitate the session. Sessions of the COP rotate by region to ensure greater representation and participation.












 **Observers:** there are several groups of observers who attend negotiations but cannot vote or object to proceedings. This category includes:


- people from the General Secretariat
- United Nations organizations
- intergovernmental organizations
- non-governmental organizations

For NGOs to be admitted to a negotiation as an observer, they must submit their application to the relevant COP. They must fill out a **form** with the organization's contact details and express whether they wish to join a constituency.

Admitted NGOs are grouped into constituencies according to interests and perspectives. Currently, **constituencies** include 90 per cent of NGOs admitted to the Convention. Each of these constituencies has a focal point who interacts with the Convention Secretariat.

The constituencies are as follows:

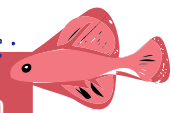
-  Business and Industry NGOs (BINGO)
-  Environmental NGOs (ENGO)
-  Local government and municipal authorities (LGMA)
-  Indigenous peoples organizations (IPO)
-  Research and independent NGOs (RINGO)
-  Trade union NGOs (TUNGO)
-  Women and Gender Constituency (WGC)
-  Youth NGOs (YOUNGO)
-  Farmers.



If your organization is admitted by the COP, do not hesitate to contact the constituency focal points, whose contact details are available on the [UNFCCC website](#).

It is not mandatory for NGOs to join a constituency, but it makes participation more effective. NGOs can participate in the following negotiation spaces:


- Development of statements and interventions made by groups in the negotiation bodies.
- Meetings, when the terms of reference allow observers to participate.
- Side events and exhibitions.
- Provision of written input on their views and information on various issues under negotiation.



You have the right to participate in decisions regarding climate action. As a young person, you can join international negotiations through your country's official delegation, join the NGOs admitted to the UNFCCC, or participate through [YOUNGO](#), which is the official youth representation group at the UNFCCC.



[Accredited journalists](#) can participate in negotiations as observers. The number of spaces given to the press depends on the issues being discussed in the negotiations and their relevance. **The Secretariat** has encouraged journalists from developing countries to attend negotiation sessions to promote media coverage in these countries, where awareness of the climate change process is often low.

-  **Non-state actors:** to strengthen processes, non-state actors can participate in UNFCCC dialogue spaces, which may include civil society, the private sector, financial institutions, cities and other subnational authorities, local communities and indigenous peoples.

Negotiation groups

In international negotiations, countries have historically organized themselves into coalitions or negotiating blocs to align their positions and make the process viable, since there must be consensus among all countries for an agreement to be reached.

Blocs are organized according to affinity and positions on specific issues, power-based coalitions, or institutional or political groups. Groups are as follows:

1 Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America – ALBA]

- Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua y Venezuela

2 Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)

- It is a coalition of 40 islands, the majority are from the G-77 and they are very vulnerable to sea levels rising

3 Alianza Independiente de América Latina y el Caribe [Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean – AILAC]

- Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Peru

4 G77 and China

- Developing countries and China

5 African Group

- A subgroup within the G77 consisting of 53 African countries

6 BASIC Group

- The emerging countries of Brazil, South Africa, India and China

7 CACAM Group

- A group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova

8 Like-minded Developing Countries (LMDC) Group on Climate Change

- Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela and Vietnam

9 Arab States

- Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen

10 Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)

- Georgia, the Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Monaco and Switzerland

11 Umbrella Group

- Australia, Belarus, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States

12 Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

- Algeria, Angola, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela

13 Least Developed Countries

- A subgroup within the Group of 77 (G77) made up of the 48 least developed countries, as classified by the United Nations

14 Central American Integration System (SICA)

- Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama

15 European Union (EU)


- The 27 EU countries


These are the groups that have historically participated in international climate negotiations. A country can be a member of one or more negotiation groups, and other groups emerge as negotiations progress. We suggest that you investigate the interactive [digital platforms](#) which are regularly updated and show the dynamics between the different groups.




Advocacy and negotiation spaces

International climate negotiations and advocacy take place in different spaces under the UNFCCC framework and can be formal or informal. There are also other related spaces that influence decision-making. You can make an impact in the following spaces:





 **Plenaries:** formal negotiations take place in the plenary sessions of the COP and the Agreements of the UNFCCC (such as the CMA). They also take place in plenary meetings of the subsidiary bodies. During formal negotiations, **positions which have been informally determined and negotiated are consolidated.** Simultaneous interpretation services are provided so that negotiations can be followed in all languages. All countries and representations can participate. Accredited observers and the press may also participate if the Chair of the COP allows it.

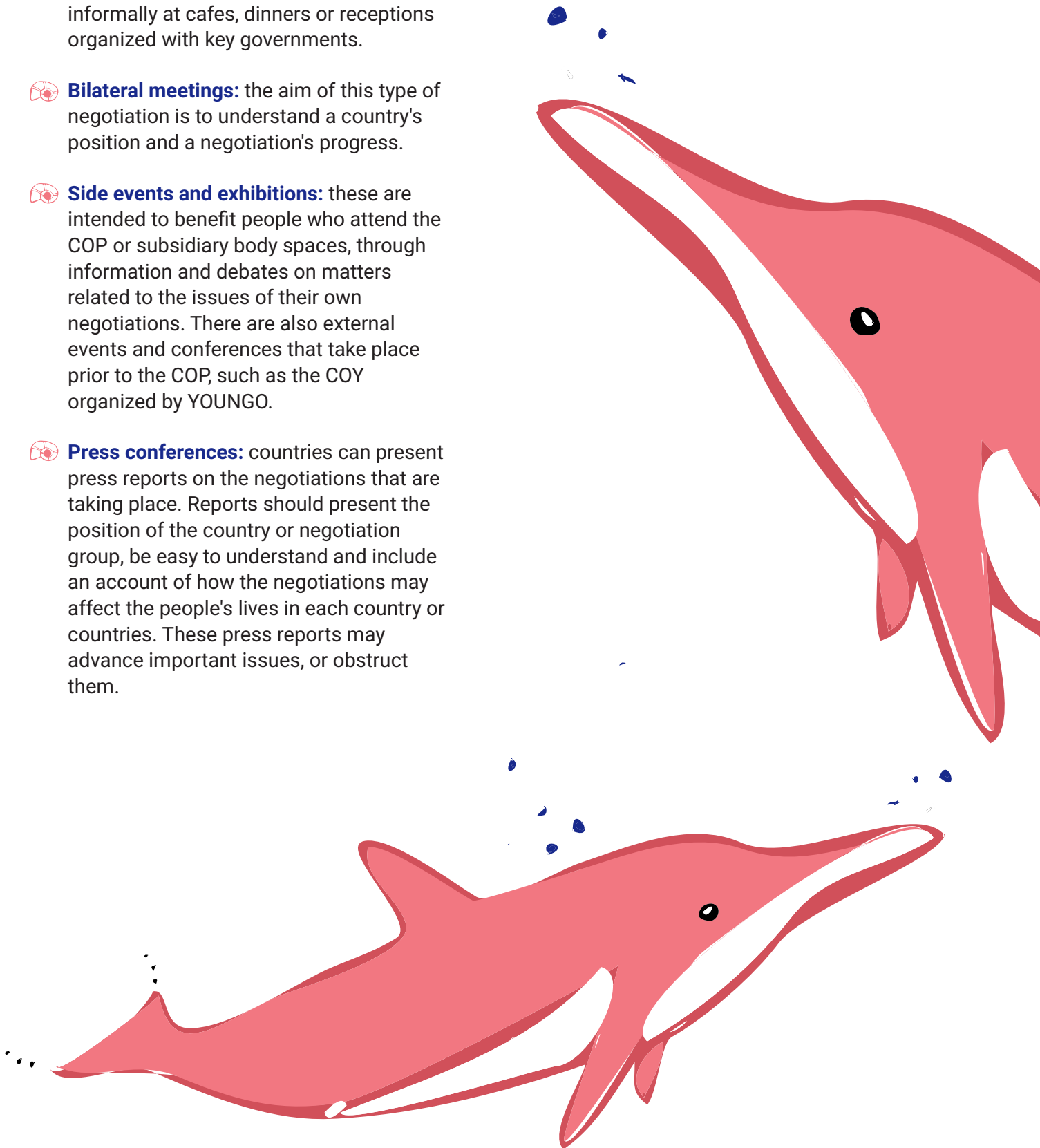
 **Informal groups:** the purpose of these is to achieve consensus on the different issues before the formal sessions. Informal sessions have fewer observers and are held in small rooms. Observers may attend, unless the host or moderator asks them to leave. The sessions are usually in English and happen at the same time as other similar sessions, so not all delegations can attend them all. If this happens, absent parties are excluded from some of the decisions made.

Informal sessions are organized by the Chair of the COP or by the Chair of the supporting bodies. There are different types of informal groups:

- 
- **Contact groups:** these are convened by the COP or the supporting subsidiary bodies.
 - **Joint contact groups:** these are multiple contact groups joined together.
 - **Drafting groups:** these are made up of delegates who volunteer or convene to help draft the text to be discussed.
 - **Friends of the Chair:** the Chair may invite a group of prominent negotiators to help achieve informal consensus on certain issues.
 - **High-level segment:** these are the segments that occur in the key decision-making bodies. Political leaders from each country come together and give the political support needed to reach agreements.

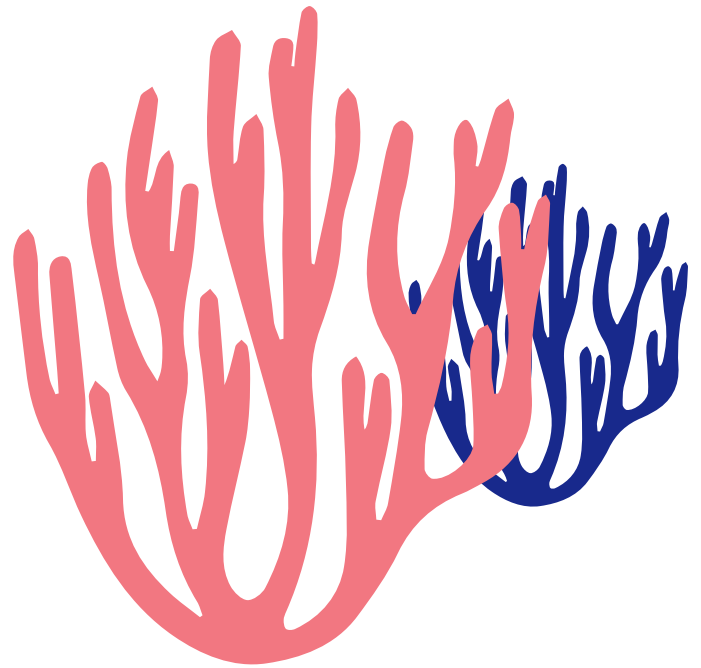
Other advocacy and negotiation spaces

-  **Sidebars:** negotiations sometimes happen informally at cafes, dinners or receptions organized with key governments.
-  **Bilateral meetings:** the aim of this type of negotiation is to understand a country's position and a negotiation's progress.
-  **Side events and exhibitions:** these are intended to benefit people who attend the COP or subsidiary body spaces, through information and debates on matters related to the issues of their own negotiations. There are also external events and conferences that take place prior to the COP, such as the COY organized by YOUNGO.
-  **Press conferences:** countries can present press reports on the negotiations that are taking place. Reports should present the position of the country or negotiation group, be easy to understand and include an account of how the negotiations may affect the people's lives in each country or countries. These press reports may advance important issues, or obstruct them.

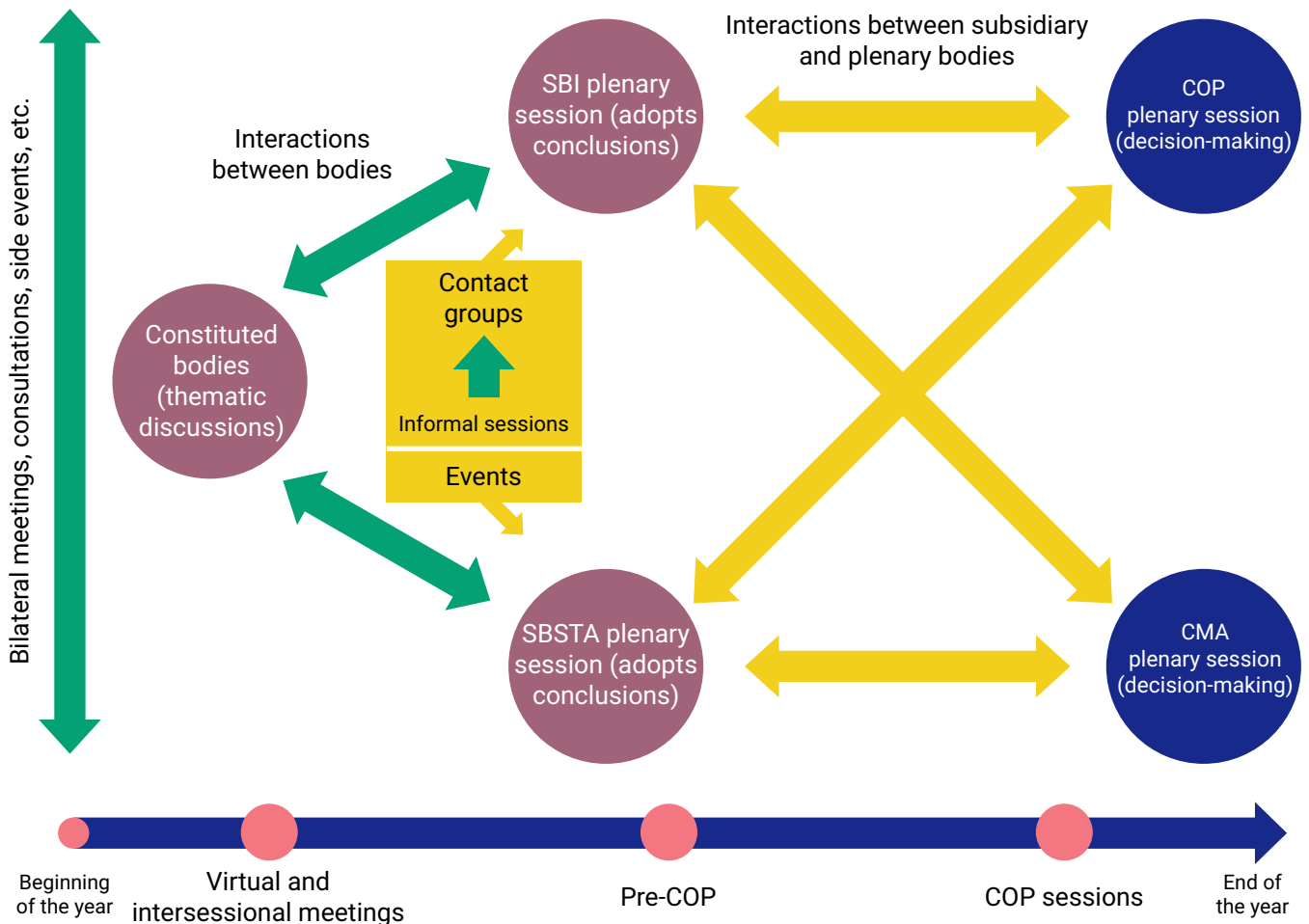


The negotiation process


We have covered the institutions that make up the UNFCCC, which are necessary for countries to reach agreements and for these agreements to be implemented. We have also looked at which actors participate in and influence negotiations and the formal and informal negotiation spaces where you can have an impact. Now let's broadly look at the negotiation process. **It is important to know that international climate change negotiations are a year-round process which culminates in the COP.**





The negotiation process⁴





⁴ International Institute for Environment and Development, 'Q&A: Key decisions needed at COP22', IIED, 2016, <www.iied.org/qa-key-decisionsneeded-cop22>, accessed 25 June 2020.


 Subsidiary bodies and working groups within the IPCC hold meetings to discuss and debate the issues that fall within their area of expertise and reach conclusions that will be brought to the attention of countries at the COP.


 The constituted bodies (created under the framework of the UNFCCC or the adopted agreements) meet to make progress on the corresponding issues and to reach a consensus among different countries. The groups in charge of the negotiations also meet to discuss positions and to develop joint positions.


 Prior to the COP, the Preparatory Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Pre-COP) is held. In this space, countries start to prepare the agreements to be presented at the COP and try to reach a consensus. During the Pre-COP, some political positions may come to light on the different issues.

 At the end of the year, the COP takes place, starting with a plenary session where the meeting agenda is approved. This agenda includes the conclusions of the supporting bodies and the IPCC.

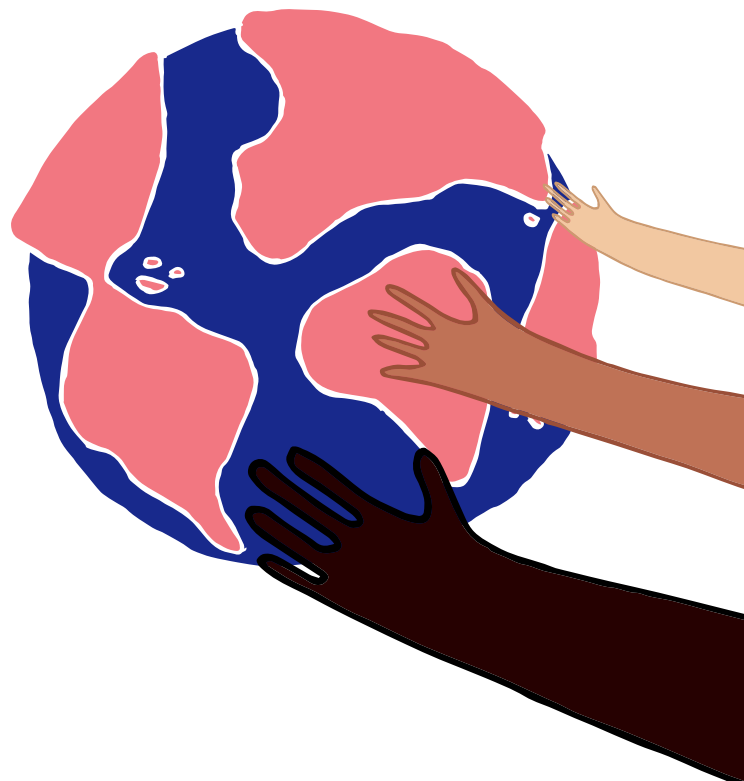
 The work then passes to the plenaries of the subsidiary bodies and to the formed working groups. Depending on the issues included in the agenda, informal groups may be convened to seek consensus among countries on those issues.

 The Chair of the negotiations decides when to start drafting a negotiating text, which may serve as a basis for the negotiations. This is done once they have received enough proposals from countries. The Chair may hold informal consultations with the negotiating blocs, with the aim of identifying issues of concern and finding common ground between the various positions. Similarly, the Chair may also make proposals when they consider countries ready to commit and agree to a text.

 When the informal groups reach an agreement on the text, they pass the document to the supporting bodies and working groups so that they can present it in the respective plenary. If the informal groups have not reached an agreement, they continue negotiating. The Chair may convene a small group of negotiators, such as the so-called “Friends of the Chair”, to reach a consensus. In the final plenary, the decisions agreed upon are adopted.



Activists are often involved in accountability for the functioning of the UNFCCC bodies and working groups and for the agreements adopted (such as the Paris Agreement).



Key issues in international climate change negotiations

Issues in international climate change negotiations relate to the structure and functioning of the UNFCCC and to the implementation of the agreements adopted by UNFCCC countries. Negotiations also take place on cross-cutting themes, such as inconsistent climate action among countries and the need to be more ambitious on climate action.

The main issues are:

Mitigation: negotiations focus on efforts to reduce GHG emissions and to enhance sinks or natural areas that capture GHGs.

Adaptation: climate change adaptation is discussed with a focus on how and how much the climate will change and adaptation needs and costs. Means of adapting, evaluating impact and vulnerabilities, and funding issues are also included in this issue.

Loss and damage: no official definition has been established for loss and damage, but it is commonly described as the adverse effects of climate change and variability that people have been unable to cope with or adapt to. Discussions concern disaster reduction strategies and the means or mechanisms that can be implemented to address loss and damage, but it is important to bear in mind that this issue has different approaches.

A controversial issue has been “compensation” for loss and damages. Despite efforts to establish different shares of responsibility for the impacts, industrialized countries claim that these shares are difficult to assign.

Financing: negotiations are based on financing mechanisms and on monitoring of financial support given and received. There is controversy over the definition of “particularly

vulnerable countries”, because these countries are to be given preference in the allocation of climate fund resources.

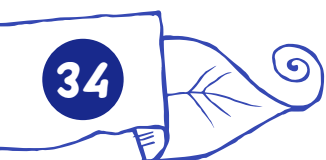
Transparency: transparency has been a cross-cutting issue in international climate change negotiations since they began (when the UNFCCC was created). Transparency is essential for the measuring, reporting and verification of actions. Without it, the implementation of climate actions cannot be monitored. The entire collective effort depends on robust transparency.

Technology development and transfer: countries discuss measures to promote, facilitate and finance the transfer of (or access to) technologies and appropriate practical knowledge to developing countries. They also discuss cooperation on developing and implementing technologies, practices and processes that may help to mitigate human-induced GHG emissions.

The issue of existing barriers to technology implementation, such as intellectual property rights, are also included in negotiations. To date, some low-carbon technologies have high costs and funding for new technologies is difficult to obtain.

Action for climate empowerment (ACE): education, training and public awareness issues are also discussed in the negotiations, which are priority areas for ACE. Other issues include access to information on climate change, and international cooperation to generate materials, information and action to promote climate empowerment.

Gender: countries have recognized the importance of involving women and men equally in UNFCCC processes and in the development and implementation of gender-sensitive national climate policies, which is why the Gender Plan of Action was adopted. Countries also review progress made on gender balance targets and the implementation of a gender-sensitive climate policy.



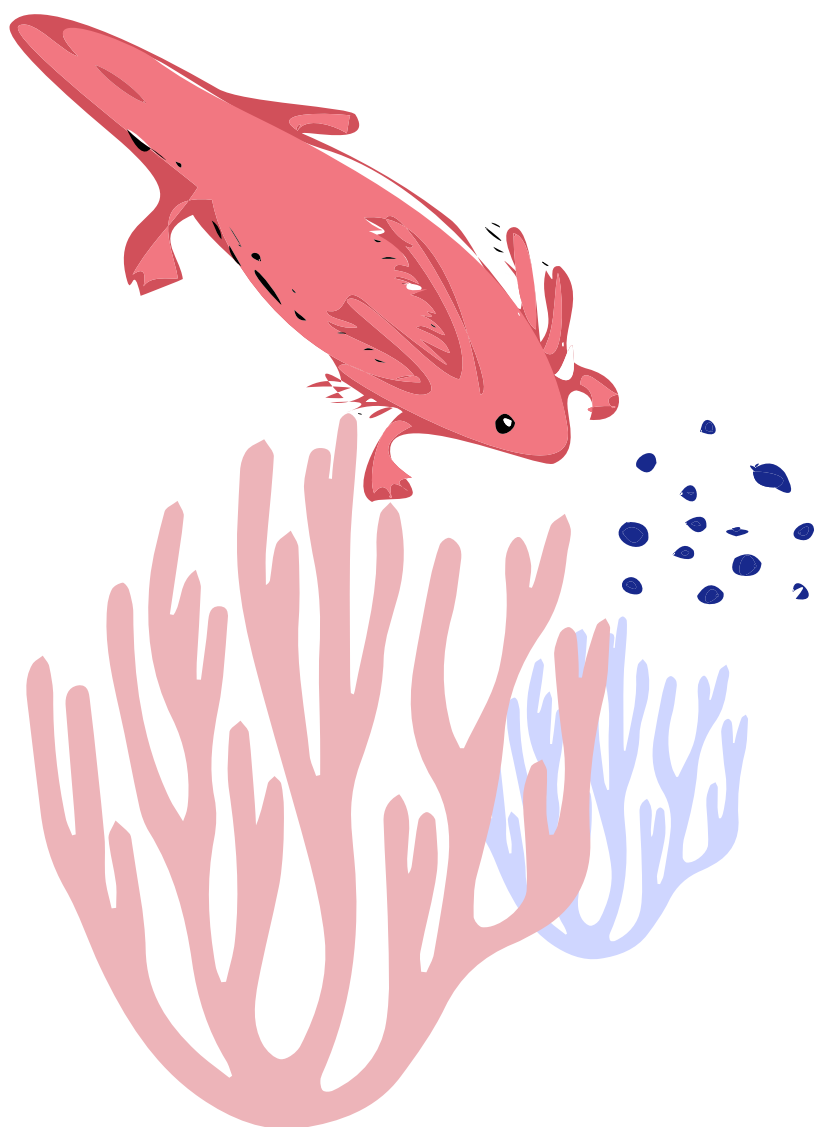
Indigenous peoples: issues negotiated include the need to strengthen the knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples regarding addressing and responding to climate change. The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform was established for the comprehensive exchange of experiences and good practices on mitigation and adaptation, as a way of supporting the negotiation process.

Agriculture: negotiations include agriculture-related issues through expert workshops and meetings and work with UNFCCC supporting bodies, which consider the vulnerabilities of agriculture to climate change and approaches to tackle food insecurity.

Cooperative implementation: countries may choose to cooperate voluntarily to support the implementation of NDCs, with the aim of making climate action more ambitious. Negotiations are based on cooperative approaches and mechanisms that countries can implement, which are included in the Paris Agreement (article 6).

Capacity-building: capacity-building is fundamental to achieve the objectives of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Countries discuss ways in which this capacity can be built in each country through international cooperation.

Science: effective interaction between climate science and policy is important for progress to be made in climate negotiations given that scientific observations, research and assessment continue to inform the international climate regime.



Be inspired!

Youth participation experiences at the international level

The official youth constituency at the UNFCCC

Young people are officially represented in UNFCCC climate change processes by YOUNGO. YOUNGO began as an organized initiative of young people who were attending the COPs, but could not find a space for representation in the 2009 climate negotiations. As a result, prior to COP11 in Montreal, young people met at the first COY and began the process of making an official space dedicated to young people at UNFCCC events. YOUNGO was officially recognized in 2011.

Action taken

- We hold the COY in the COP host country every year to empower children and young people around the world to take climate action.
- During the COP, YOUNGO takes part in plenary and negotiation sessions, organizes and participates in side events with countries and non-state actors, and advocates at negotiation meetings.
- Throughout the year, it participates in events and organizes webinars for capacity development.



Challenges faced

- The inclusive participation of young people from the Global South in the negotiations.
- The inclusion of young people's input in final decisions.
- Language and connectivity barriers.

Outcomes

- We have empowered nearly 30,000 young people since 2009 of over 130 nationalities.
- The Katowice Rulebook, which recognizes the key role that young people play in implementing ACE and YOUNGO's participation in the ACE Youth Forum.
- We were consulted in multiple decision-making processes on the youth agenda's position on issues related to climate change.

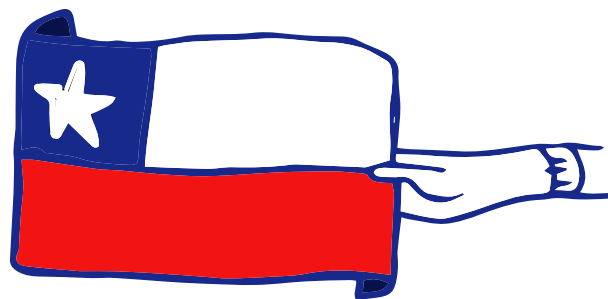
Youth Negotiators from Chile!

We are Juanjo and Bernardita, two young Chileans dedicated to climate action. We were selected to participate in COP25 as the first youth negotiators from Chile. The initiative was started to strengthen and formalize young people's participation in the climate negotiation processes, and was run by the Working Group for the Conference of Youth (COY15) on climate change, which we both helped coordinate. It was also supported by representatives of YOUNGO and the Chilean delegation, especially the COP25 Chair.



Action taken

- We held dialogues with young people and the COP25 Chair to raise concerns about participation.
- We worked on communications and proposals with United Nations organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), as well as with delegations and representatives, with special support from the EU.
- The COY15 Working Group actively participated in the events of the 2019 climate agenda, raising concerns in the different spaces.
- We set up synergies and collaborations to establish joint projects.
- We used everything we learned to institutionalize the figure of the youth negotiator in the youth delegation.
- We created a proposal for a youth negotiators course for the entire Latin American and Caribbean region and for a youth negotiators school in Chile.



Challenges faced

- Building trust and showing our capabilities and the scope of the work that young people are doing.
- Coordinating the different movements and opening formal spaces for their participation and decision-making in international climate negotiations.
- Our lack of previous participation, since it sometimes meant that we lacked knowledge of the processes. Yet, at the same time, it presented a unique opportunity to reverse this situation and empower young people.



Outcomes

- Two youth negotiators (one man and one woman) were included in the Chilean negotiation delegation.
- Young Chileans officially participated in COP25.
- A capacity-building and training process was created for youth negotiators from Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The youth negotiators school was established for the young people who will work in the Chilean delegation in the future.

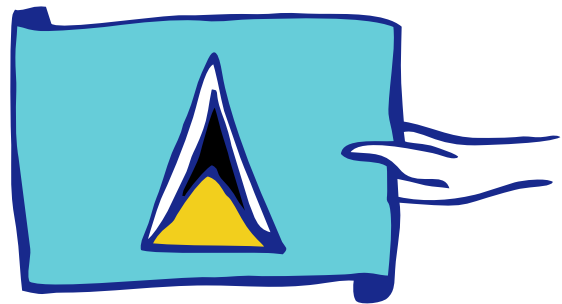
Participation of Caribbean Youth at UN Climate Summit

I am Jevanic Henry, a Special Envoy on Climate Change for the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) and member of the regional Youth Climate Change Activists (YCCA) movement which has been central in ensuring there is a sustained Caribbean Youth influence within the international climate change circles. YCCA was the primary youth organisation from the Caribbean at the UN Youth Climate Summit in September 2019. Our participation ensured the voices and concerns related to climate change of Caribbean young people were not excluded.



Action taken

- We built partnerships and alliances with other environmental NGOs and private sector organisations to support efforts leading up to the summit.
- We engaged in awareness raising activities including school debates, lectures, awareness information days, beach clean-ups, surveys and online campaigns, to get a holistic understanding of the Caribbean youth perspective which could properly inform our deliberations at the summit.
- We implemented an advocacy strategy for amplification of action for climate change messaging, which ensured the delivery of unified messaging from participants of the various regional member states. This allowed for greater attention to be placed on the often-diminished Caribbean Youth Voice.



Challenges faced

- Being able to effectively break down information on the urgent need for climate action for diverse stakeholders was a clear obstacle.
- At the summit there was a greater focus on the climate change impacts in other regions such as the Pacific, with the Caribbean often seen as a lesser priority.
- Pooling resources at the local level to support initiatives in the lead up to and post the summit was a challenge.



Outcomes

- We have established a platform for intra-regional exchange of climate change knowledge, ideas and solutions through virtual means.
- Through this summit we have built a global network and partnerships which have opened new opportunities for Caribbean Youth to engage in related areas such as gender and climate change, renewable energy, natural resource management etc, on a wider scale.
- The experience of this summit has also empowered many of us in being able to take up leadership positions in numerous environmental organisations.

Adolescents at COP25!

We are Guillermo Passeggi (Uruguay), María Esperanza de la Cruz (Ecuador) and Catalina Silva (Chile). We are the creators of "[1,000 actions for change](#)" campaign, which mobilized 10,000 adolescents from 20 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to help mitigate the climate crisis. This campaign gave us a space at COY15 and COP25, where we made the voices of thousands of adolescents from our region heard.



Action taken

- We created a web page where adolescents could look at a list of actions to take, and a map showing where those actions were being implemented and who by.
- We built a collective and decentralized governance model for those responsible for action on the continent.
- We produced a report on the results of the campaign and lessons learned in the process and presented them at COY15 and COP25, attended by the decision makers.



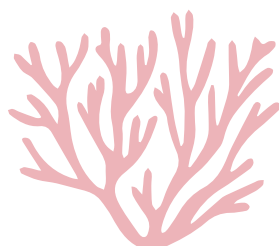
Challenges faced

- Difficulties in communicating with those responsible for the actions of rural populations, who had limited connectivity.
- Adapting to and introducing others to a horizontal governance model.
- Being heard by the decision makers at COP25, because of the low status of adolescents in these sorts of settings.



Outcomes

- Representing adolescents (13–19 years) at COY15 and COP25, where they are generally not represented.
- On a personal level, understanding the dynamics and processes of global climate negotiations and starting to train ourselves as future climate action leaders.
- Establishing links and networking with other youth organizations.
- Participating in panels and engaging in dialogue with the most important authorities at COP25.



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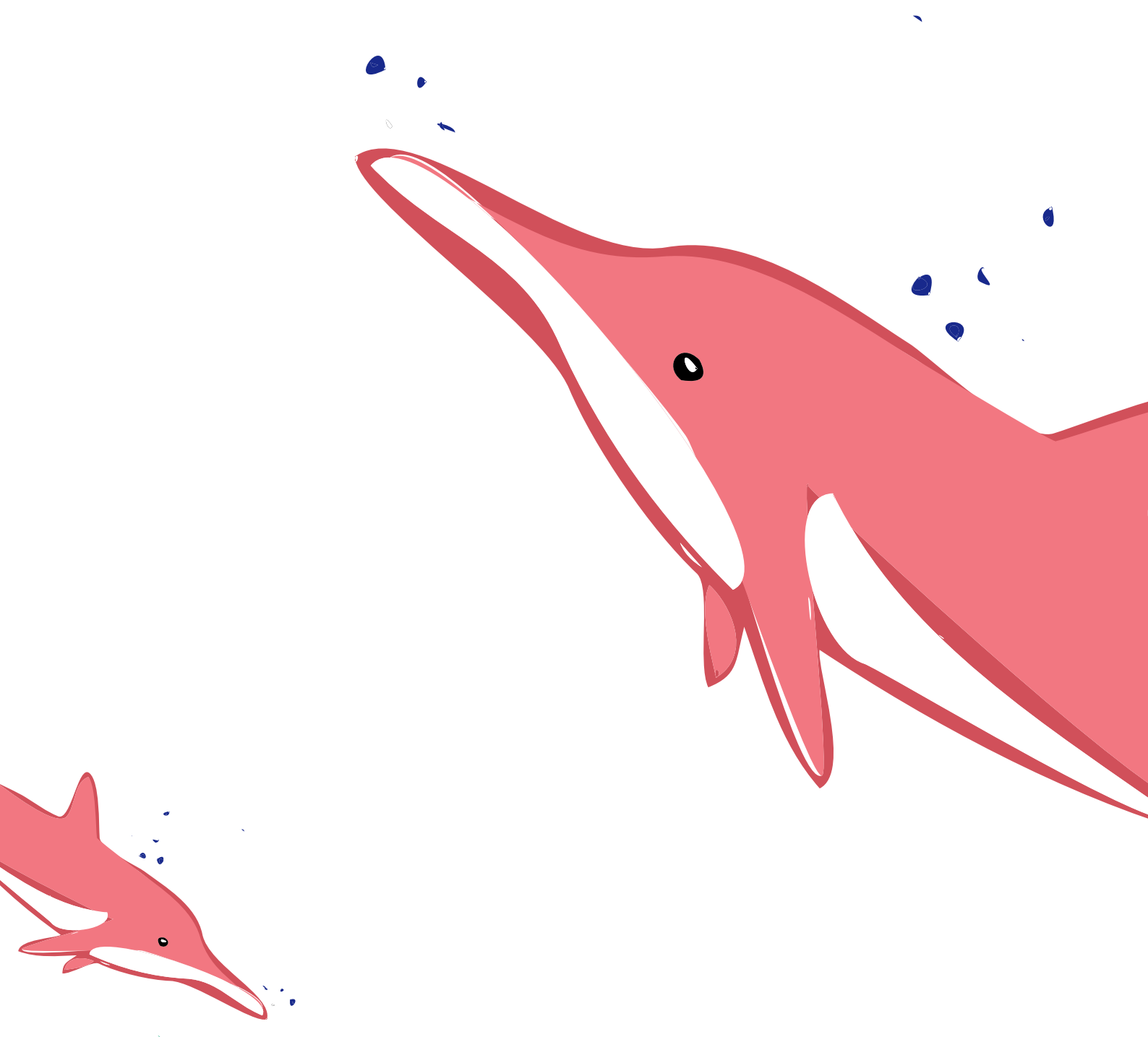
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Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office

Building 102, Alberto Tejada Street, City of Knowledge

Panama, Republic of Panama

PO Box: 0843-03045

Telephone: (+507) 301 7400

uniceflac@unicef.org

www.unicef.org/lac

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