

Global Survey of Parliamentary Engagement in the First Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement



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Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

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Disclaimer

This work is by no means exhaustive. Data for it was drawn from survey responses and desktop review by the authors. It does not in any way represent the positions of GLOBE International and Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

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List of acronyms

ACE	Action for Climate Empowerment
BEIS	Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
COP	Conference of Parties
CVF	Climate Vulnerable Forum
EAC	East African Community
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicle
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GLOBE	Global Legislators Organisation for a Balanced Environment
GST	Global Stocktake
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
PLS	Post-Legislative Scrutiny
SB	Subsidiary Body
SPICe	Scottish Parliament Information Centre
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Executive summary

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change recognises the Global Stocktake (GST) as a critical tool in evaluating the extent of efforts by Parties in meeting the Paris goals. Projected to be carried out in a five-yearly cycle, the GST measures the extent of Parties' implementation of their commitments to the Paris Agreement with the aim of determining if actions are on track to meet the 1.5 degrees goal, and if there is need for increase in targets and efforts at implementation.

With the next set of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) due in February of 2025, the first GST which came to an end at the 28th Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in Dubai, sets the tone for the next set of NDCs.

There were three components of the first GST namely: Information Collection and Preparation, CMA3 (November 2021) - SB 58 (June 2023); Technical Assessment, SB56 (June 2022) - SB58 (June 2023); and Consideration of outputs - CMA5 (November 2023). While the first and second components entailed gathering of information and the assessment of the data by experts, the third component was political and entailed the discussion, at high-level events, of the technical assessments and making resolutions on pathways to meeting the Paris goal. Support for consultations and engagements for the third component were provided by Her Excellency Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa and His Excellency Dan Jørgensen, Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy of Denmark.

The GST ended with 17 key findings and recommendations in four areas namely climate change context; mitigation; adaptation; and implementation and financing of climate action.

As key players in climate action due to their unique position as representatives of the people and policymakers, legislators naturally had key roles to play in the GST process.

This study, carried out by GLOBE International for the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) looked at the extent of parliamentary participation in the GST by focusing on twenty-six parliaments drawn from different regions and continents. It also looked at the importance of Post-Legislative Scrutiny in the process, and interrogated the role of Members of Parliaments in the UNFCCC's ACE programme of their countries.

A simple methodology was employed in doing this. First, a survey was developed and administered to Members of Parliament, parliamentary staff, and staff of parliamentary networks. Then a detailed desktop review of information on engagements by the twenty-six parliaments was carried out. Data and information from the two processes were then reviewed, authenticated, and analysed.

In the end, some of the key challenges to parliamentary engagements were identified and recommendations made on how to bolster future engagements. The recommendations include:

- Fund media engagements on GST and NDCs
- Capacity Building and Education
- Facilitation of access to Expertise

- Enhanced Information Sharing
- Strengthening of Parliamentary Committees
- Engagement in International Fora
- Replication of legislative best practices
- Etc.

The work further identified examples of best practices across parliaments.

While this work is not exhaustive, it did trace bold lines that can be built on to increase parliamentary actions not just on the GST, but also on all matters related to climate change, sustainable development, and good governance across board.

Introduction

The Global Stocktake (GST) is conducted in a five-yearly cycle to measure the extent of Parties' implementation of their commitments to the Paris Agreement with the first one coming to an end during the 28th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in Dubai, November-December 2023.

A key tool of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the GST looks at "everything related to where the world stands on climate action and support, identifying the gaps, and working together to agree on solutions pathways (to 2030 and beyond)"¹ The GST consequently confirms whether or not Parties are doing enough to meet their commitment, if the commitments are enough to keep global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, if there is a need to set new targets or improve on efforts to meet targets, and generally set the tone for the next set of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) due in 2025.

There were three components of the first GST viz: Information Collection and Preparation, CMA3 (November 2021) - SB 58 (June 2023); Technical Assessment, SB56 (June 2022) - SB58 (June 2023); and Consideration of outputs - CMA5 (November 2023)². While the first and second components entailed gathering of information and the assessment of the data by experts, the third component was political and entailed the discussion, at high-level events, of the technical assessments and making resolutions on pathways to meeting the Paris goal. Support for consultations and engagements for the third component were provided by Her Excellency Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa and His Excellency Dan Jørgensen, Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy of Denmark.

At the end, the process detailed "17 key findings and related recommendations across four areas: climate change context; mitigation; adaptation; and the implementation and financing of climate action"³, with the results showing that current actions and commitments are not enough to achieve the Paris goal. Current commitments if fully implemented will take the world above the 2 degrees Celsius, hence there is need for improved commitments and actions going into the development and submission of NDCs 3.0 in 2025.

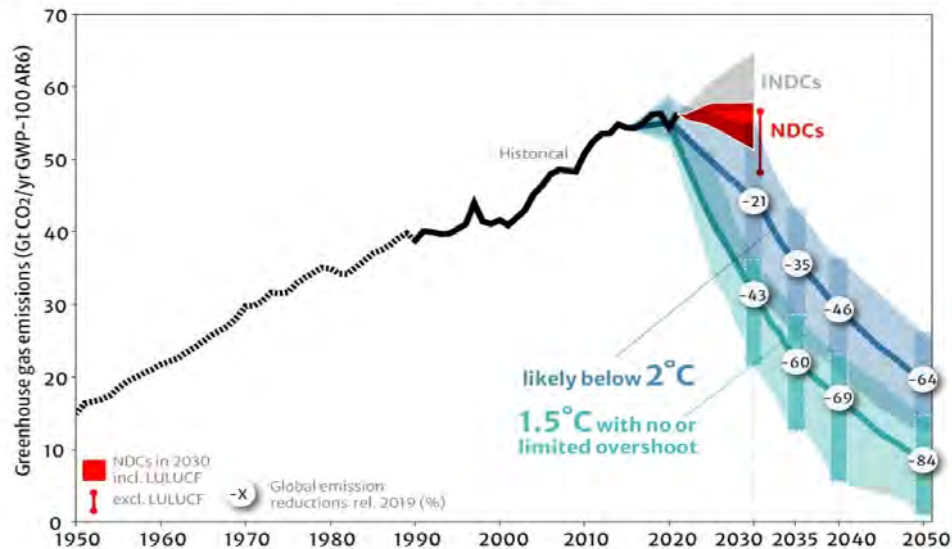
¹ "Global Stocktake." <https://unfccc.int/topics/global-stocktake>

² "Components of the Global Stocktake". <https://unfccc.int/topics/global-stocktake/components-of-the-global-stocktake>

³ Explainer: What is the world's first 'global stocktake' on climate change?"<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/11/global-stocktake-on-climate-action/>

Figure 1

Historical emissions from 1950, projected emissions in 2030 based on nationally determined contributions, and emission reductions required by the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



		Reductions from 2019 emission levels (%)			
		2030	2035	2040	2050
Limit warming to 1.5°C (>50%) with no or limited overshoot	GHG	43 [34-60]	60 [49-77]	69 [58-90]	84 [73-98]
	CO ₂	48 [36-69]	65 [50-96]	80 [61-109]	99 [79-119]
Limit warming to 2°C (>67%)	GHG	21 [1-42]	35 [22-55]	46 [34-63]	64 [53-77]
	CO ₂	22 [1-44]	37 [21-59]	51 [36-70]	73 [55-90]

Image credit: UNFCCC

Focus of the Study

With the first GST done and dusted, it is important to examine the extent to which Members of Parliament who are critical in the implementation of any policies, agreements, and even in the enactment of laws that will help their countries meet their climate obligations, participated in the GST. This will further be evaluated by examining how many of these parliaments carried out any Post-Legislative Scrutiny on the climate change legislations passed by them.

Parliamentary participation in the GST could take any of a number of forms including but not limited to holding debates during plenary, participation at COP28, review of laws or policies, enactment of new laws, holding of meetings/interactive sessions, scrutiny of actions of the Executive in terms of climate action, regional engagements, etc. We will see more of this as we review the extent of legislative actions of different parliaments during this critical period. A key tool used by parliaments in doing this is Post-Legislative Scrutiny. This can play a huge part in engendering accountability and review.

Post-Legislative Scrutiny: What is it about?

Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) is an integral part of the work of parliaments globally. It simply refers to the process in which Members of Parliament review enacted legislations to see to what extent the legislations are addressing the issues for which they were enacted; and secondly to monitor the implementation of legislation by the Executive arm of government.

For some Parliaments, the PLS is handled by a designated Standing Committee. Others set up ad hoc Committees to do this. De Vrieze⁴ identifies the overarching reasons why PLS is critical:

1. to ensure the requirements of democratic governance and the need to implement legislation in accordance with the principles of legality and legal certainty are being met;
2. to enable the adverse effects of new legislation to be apprehended more timely and readily;
3. to improve the focus on implementation and delivery of policy aims; and
4. to identify and disseminate good practice so that lessons may be drawn from the successes and failures revealed by this scrutiny work.

Accordingly, “as Parliament is responsible for enacting legislation, it has a role in monitoring implementation of legislation and evaluating whether the laws it has passed, have achieved their intended outcomes⁵.”

Hirst has developed an approach to advancing PLS of climate and environmental legislation, accounting for the special characteristics of these policy areas, including detailed guidance for climate and environmental legislation⁶.

It is therefore important that in looking at the engagement of legislators in the GST, attention must also be drawn to whether or not there has been any form of PLS of any legal instruments enshrining into domestic law the NDC objectives done by them.

Research Methodology

This study aims at evaluating the engagement of parliaments in the First Global Stocktake, in the run-up and the aftermath of COP28, with the aim of baselining current practices and helping to promote best accountability and oversight practices across the global parliamentary constituency. In order to achieve this, we shall utilise the following methodologies:

- a. Literature review of reports of engagements by legislators in their respective parliaments on the issue of climate action in general, and more specifically as it concerns scrutinising government

⁴De Vrieze, Franklin (2018). "Principles of Post-legislative scrutiny by Parliaments." <https://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/agora-documents/Principles%20of%20Post-Legislative%20Scrutiny.pdf>

⁵Research and Information Division of Lok Sabha Secretariat. "Post Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) – A Dimension of the Oversight Function of Parliament." https://loksabhadocs.nic.in/Refinput/Research_notes/English/04122019_174605_102120495.pdf.

⁶ Hirst, David (2021). "Post-legislative scrutiny of climate and environment legislation: Guide for parliamentary practice." <https://www.wfd.org/what-we-do/resources/post-legislative-scrutiny-climate-and-environment-legislation-guide>

actions in line with implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions, and proposed actions for the future.

- b. Administration and analysis of a survey. This survey was administered to members of parliamentary networks, parliamentary staff, and Members of Parliaments from different parliaments across the globe. Important to note that the survey was structured to also interrogate the extent of the participation of Members of Parliament in designing the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Work Plans under the UNFCCC - either stand-alone Work Plans or integrated into existing Climate strategies – promoting 1) education; 2) training; 3) public awareness; 4) public participation; 5) public access to information; and 6) international cooperation on these issues, in their countries.

Data derived from using both methods were then synthesised and analysed to provide a review of parliamentary engagement in the first GST.

It is important to point out that this study is not exhaustive. What we have done here was to review parliamentary engagements from a variety of Parliaments selected to be representative of different regions of the world. In some of the selected countries where there have been no clear evidence of parliamentary engagement in the GST, we have allowed them to be part of the study in order to highlight the gaps in robust parliamentary engagements which exist in Parliaments with the view of discussing towards the end of this study, how these gaps can be plugged to ensure a robust global parliamentary involvement in the GST as part of the functions of parliamentary oversight of climate action that is critically needed for the effectiveness of the Paris Agreement.

Review of Parliamentary Engagements in the First Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement

Parliaments across the world have played direct and indirect roles in the GST, and in ensuring that they hold their governments to account when it comes to climate action. In reviewing the extent of parliamentary engagements in the GST, we will not be limited to actual meetings or engagements earmarked specifically for GST, but the overall interventions by parliaments which fed into government's actions. For some parliaments, it came in the form of robust participation in COP28 and other regional engagements, for others, it was in the form of debates, committee meetings, amendments to laws, submission of new Bills, inter-parliamentary engagements and roundtables, etc.

For this study, we focused on the following parliaments:

Table 1: Surveyed Parliaments

Text	Text	Text
European Union Parliament	Swedish Parliament	East African Legislative Assembly
Scottish Parliament	Ugandan Parliament	Kenyan Parliament
UK Parliament	Nigerian Parliament	Mexican Parliament
Finnish Parliament	South African Parliament	Uruguayan Parliament
Brazilian Parliament	Maltese Parliament	Indian Parliament

Australian Parliament	Philippines Parliament	Estonian Parliament
Ghanaian Parliament	Argentine Parliament	Moroccan Parliament
New Zealand Parliament	Egyptian Parliament	Congress of Micronesia
Legislative Yuan (Taiwan)	Parliament of the USA (federal and States)	



Figure 2: Geographical delineation of Surveyed Parliaments

European Union Parliament

Interventions by the European Parliament are quite extensive. These include the Efforts Sharing Regulation adopted in 2023 which increased the European Union's GHG emissions reduction target to

40% by 2030⁷; the adoption of new rules on more alternative fuel stations for cars and trucks to further decarbonise the transport sector in line with the EU's commitments⁸; approval of new rules on "fluorinated gas emission reductions and ozone-depleting substances in January 2024 in line with the European Green Deal and global climate goals."⁹; broadening the scope of the Net-Zero industry Act to include the entire supply chain¹⁰.

As part of plans to ensure that the European Union meets its commitments in the Zero-Pollution Action Plan, the EU Parliament also adopted a position on reducing ground and surface water pollution by calling for the inclusion of other substances to the EU Watchlist¹¹. Prior to COP28, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety of the EU Parliament adopted its position on the GST, calling on all Parties to increase their ambitions. Part of the key resolutions passed by the committee include the call for an end to all direct and indirect fuel subsidies; tripling of renewable energy capacity, restoration of biodiversity, etc¹².

Scottish Parliament

The Scottish Parliament on its part, during plenary, raised questions on what efforts government is making to meet its climate change obligations in line with the Global Stocktake. This was on 14 September 2023, when MSPs interrogated the First Minister, Humza Yousaf. Questions revolved around offshore wind investments, renewables, net zero commitments, adaptation plans, restoration of natural environments, etc¹³. The Scottish Parliament Information centre (SPICe) post-COP28 published a detailed analysis of the UAE Consensus and how it intersects with Scotland's Climate Change policy¹⁴.

⁷ "Climate change: Parliament votes to reduce member states' emissions by 40%"

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230310IPR77227/climate-change-parliament-votes-to-reduce-member-states-emissions-by-40>

⁸ "MEPs adopt new rules for more charging stations and greener maritime fuels"

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230707IPR02419/meps-adopt-new-rules-for-more-charging-stations-and-greener-maritime-fuels>

⁹ "How the EU reduces greenhouse gases beyond CO2"

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20230322STO78109/how-the-eu-reduces-greenhouse-gases-beyond-co2>

¹⁰ "MEPs back plans to boost Europe's Net-Zero technology production"

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20231117IPR12205/meps-back-plans-to-boost-europe-s-net-zero-technology-production>

¹¹ "Reducing pollution in EU groundwater and surface waters" <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230911IPR04917/reducing-pollution-in-eu-groundwater-and-surface-waters>

¹² "COP28: MEPs want all countries to strengthen their climate commitments"

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20231031IPR08712/cop28-meps-want-all-countries-to-strengthen-their-climate-commitments>

¹³ "Meeting of the Parliament" <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-14-09-2023?meeting=15434&iob=131692#131692>

¹⁴ "COP28 climate change negotiations and how they connect to Scottish climate policy." <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2023/12/20/cop28-climate-change-negotiations-and-how-they-connect-to-scottish-climate-policy/>

It is important to note that the Scottish Parliament is a key enforcer of PLS and has done so severally, over the years¹⁵. Their engagements have continuously been tailored to ensure improved government action in addressing climate change by exploring all necessary legislative pathways.

United Kingdom Parliament

The commitment of the United Kingdom to climate action has been pioneering. From the enactment of the first standalone Climate Change Act in 2008, the UK has continued to champion climate action in various ways. In a sense, the UK has been a global leader in climate action.

The UK Parliament has been an integral part of this, especially in leading debates, providing resources materials to guide action and provide knowledge, and legislating for climate action. As part of its efforts to interrogate government's efforts and contribute to the GST, the UK House of Commons on the 16th of September, 2023, held a debate following a motion by the Rt. Hon. Graham Stuart MP, Minister of State, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, who would eventually lead the UK delegation to COP28¹⁶.

Post-COP28, the Environment and Climate Change Committee of the UK Parliament published its "EV Strategy: Rapid Recharge Needed" report on 6 February, 2024. The report looked at the contributions of Electric Vehicles (EV) to meeting the climate change goals of the UK¹⁷.

Finnish Parliament

As part of its preparation for the GST, the Finnish Ministry of Environment invited members of the Sámi Parliament to help in the nomination of members of the Sámi Climate Council in line with the country's new Climate Change Act¹⁸. The Sámi Climate Council is a critical addition to Finland's push for increased climate action as it is aimed at bringing local knowledge in the formulation of policies and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Finnish Parliament will go on to enact a new Building Act in March 2023 with the Act incorporating "measures to combat climate change comprehensively into the building legislation"¹⁹ in order to help with the emissions reductions targets of the country in line with the Paris Agreement.

¹⁵ "Post-legislative scrutiny" <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/post-legislative-scrutiny>

¹⁶ "Debate at the House of Commons." <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2023-11-16a.818.0>

¹⁷ "Environment and Climate Change Committee EV strategy: rapid recharge needed" <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5804/ldselect/ldenvcl/51/5102.htm>

¹⁸ "Members sought for Sámi Climate Council" <https://ym.fi/en/-/members-sought-for-sami-climate-council>

¹⁹ "Parliament adopted acts that will reduce emissions from building and promote digitalisation." <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/-/1410903/parliament-adopted-acts-that-will-reduce-emissions-from-building-and-promote-digitalisation>

Swedish Parliament

In June 2023, as Sweden made contributions to the GST and prepared for a new NDCs submission in 2025, the Swedish Parliament adopted a new energy target aimed at "100% fossil-free" electricity²⁰. This is in line with Sweden's climate obligations and push for a new zero society free of fossil fuels.

Ugandan Parliament

In Uganda, Members of Parliament took part in the GST by interrogating the implementation of the country's NDCs. They also carried out PLS by accompanying the Budget Framework Papers with the Climate Change Compliance Certificate.

Nigerian Parliament

MPs in Nigeria played key roles in interrogating the implementation of the country's NDCs mostly during budget defence sessions. While not formally recognised as a PLS exercise, Nigerian MPs have been consistent in PLS through oversight with the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of government and during budget defence sessions.

South African Parliament

South African MPs held briefing sessions on the state of implementation of the NDCs to know the legislative interventions needed to ensure that the commitments are met. They also ensured the passage of the Climate Change Bill as part of efforts to give the country a legal framework for climate action.

East African Legislative Assembly

The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) is the regional Assembly serving the East African Community (EAC). Members of the EALA participated in the GST process through webinars and briefings as panelists where they made their inputs. They further engaged the Community to ascertain progress and make their recommendations.

EALA MPs were also very active at COP28, engaging with other stakeholders and seeking collaborations and knowledge to increase the Assembly's climate change engagements.

Kenyan Parliament

Kenyan MPs followed the GST process as observers. They however were involved in evaluating the implementation of the country's NDCs. Accordingly, a Senator from the Climate Change Engagement caucus posed a question to the ministry responsible for implementing the country's

²⁰ "Swedish parliament passes new energy target, easing way for new nuclear power."

<https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/swedish-parliament-passes-new-energy-target-easing-way-new-nuclear-power-2023-06-20/>

first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). They did find the response unsatisfactory and intend to follow up. The Kenyan Parliament also amended the country's Climate Change Act during the GST process to make provisions for carbon market mechanisms in line with the country's new vision of finding the intersection between climate action and sustainable development.

Mexican Parliament

Mexican MPs participated in the GST process by holding an engagement with the Executive and making their recommendations. On NDCs, the MPs presented legislative questions to the Environment Ministry and also had several meetings with the Head of the Ministry and with the General Director of the Climate Change Institute in Mexico.

As regards PLS, Mexican MPs had a meeting to evaluate how the General Law on Climate Change has been working after 10 years of its publication. They invited speakers from several sectors and also the national authorities such as the Environment Ministry.

The Mexican Parliament therefore meticulously participated in the GST and showed proper awareness of its PLS responsibilities and role in attaining the country's NDCs.

Uruguyan Parliament

According to responses from MPs from Uruguay, their participation in the GST was mainly through the Parliamentarians for a Fossil Fuel Free Future. They however could not interrogate the country's NDCs as there was no "institutional way to do so". The Parliament of Uruguay has also not launched any PLS.

Brazilian Parliament

Brazilian MPs participated in the GST by interrogating the NDCs through public hearings in the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate with the participation of Ministers and representatives of the Federal Government. Post-COP28, the parliament has held seminars/workshops on the outcomes of the Conference, and also summoned stakeholders from the Executive. These are in line with meeting the climate change obligations of the country even as they prepare for the the pivotal COP30.

Maltese Parliament

Post-COP28, and in a bid to ramp up climate action, the Parliament of Malta on 6 February, 2024, began a debate on new legislation to help address climate action. The new legislation seeks to establish the Climate Action Authority, National Climate Action Council, and a Climate Action Fund, to coordinate national climate change strategies²¹. This is a key move towards providing legal backing to climate action.

²¹ "Parliament debates new climate change legislation."

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/127421/parliament_debates_new_climate_change_legislation

Indian Parliament

In its *Two Hundred Forty Ninth Report*, the Rajya Sabha (which is the Upper House of India's Parliament) discussed the need for increased action in Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) especially for cyclone mitigation²². Furthermore, in August, 2023, the Indian Parliament also enacted the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023, expanding its scope to cater for increasing need for forest conservation²³. During the P20 held in India in 2023, the Lok Sabha (Lower House) Speaker, Shri Om Birla, said that extensive discussions have been held in parliament, and laws enacted to drive climate action in the country²⁴.

India would also go ahead to enact the Electricity Amendment Act (2023) with emphasis on promoting the use of renewable energy sources. Despite these, there is still the need for a standalone climate change law with focus on emissions reductions. This is an evident gap in the activities of the Indian legislature which perhaps should have been focused on during the GST.

Australia

Australian MPs were active in the GST, engaging, debating, and proposing legislation to help the country meet its obligations. These engagements continue to provide robust conversations on how to scale up climate action. One key aspect of this is the Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023 which requires "decision makers to consider the wellbeing of current and future children when making certain decisions that are likely to contribute to climate change, including decisions that will increase scope one, two or three emissions."²⁵

Philippines

As part of its GST, the Congress of Philippines filed the Climate Accountability (CLIMA) Act on 22 November shortly before COP28. The "bill will provide the framework for limiting fossil fuel expansion and aligning their businesses with the Paris Agreement. It will also help facilitate the payment of climate reparations to impacted communities through the establishment of a loss and damage fund²⁶."

²²Two Hundred Forty Ninth Report of Rajya Sabha

https://sansad.in/getFile/rsnew/Committee_site/Committee_File/ReportFile/15/188/249_2023_12_12.pdf?source=rajyasabha

²³Kapoor & Bajaj. "Environmental Law 2023." <https://practiceguides.chambers.com/practice-guides/environmental-law-2023/india/trends-and-developments>

²⁴<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1967178>

²⁵Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill

2023.https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/DutyofCareBill?ref=snapshot.bcsda.org.au

²⁶ "Philippine congress files world's first climate accountability bill"

<https://www.greenpeace.org/philippines/press/63109/philippine-congress-files-worlds-first-climate-accountability-bill/>

Estonia

One key issue flagged by Estonian MPs was that there is barely any information available to legislators on the UNFCCC process. Accordingly, they see it as mostly about the Executive Arm of government. Consequently, Estonian MPs did not participate in their country's GST, nor did they interrogate their country's NDCs nor engage in any post-COP28 event or PLS. They did however express their support of education as part of the country's ACE programme.

Ghana

Ghana's position as the head of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) leading to the GST and COP28 significantly helped her to drive climate action but mostly from the angle of seeking international engagement and support. At home also, there were efforts to upscale actions to ensure that the country addresses climate change. Consequently, in March 2023, a Climate Change Bill was introduced by three MPs at the Ghanaian Parliament as private member Bill²⁷ to provide legal backing for the country's drive for increased climate action and sustainable growth.

Argentina

Argentine MPs say that they did not take part in either the GST, a PLS, or a review of the country's NDCs. According to them, the country is bedevilled by many other problems hence they are not prioritising climate action. However, a number of MPs have been working hard to provide awareness on the nexus between the country's other problems and climate action.

One must note that Argentina's efforts in 2023 to engage citizens on how to meet its climate obligations in line with the country's Escazú Agreement obligations was only possible because the Argentine Parliament had ratified the Agreement in 2020²⁸.

Morocco

Morocco operates a bicameral legislature comprising of the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives. Morocco's legislators interrogated their country's NDCs implementation, and have held post-COP28 engagements in the manner of debates in parliament and committee meetings.

Egypt

Egyptian MPs have been active in pushing for increased climate action. This naturally followed from the country hosting COP27. They consequently participated in the GST by proposing legislations towards climate neutrality and the use of other oversight tools. They have also held post-COP28 engagements through Committee meetings, and have actively been interrogating the implementation of the country's NDCs. The MPs have further contributed to their ACE workplan by focusing on all

²⁷ "3 MPs submit proposed Climate Change Bill to Parliament". <https://www.dennislawnews.com/article/3-mps-submit-proposed-climate-change-bill-to-parliament>

²⁸ "The Escazú Agreement: Enhancing public participation on environmental matters in Argentina" <https://www.ipu.org/news/case-studies/2024-02/escazu-agreement-enhancing-public-participation-environmental-matters-in-argentina>

six prongs of Education; Training; Public awareness; Public participation; Public access to information; International cooperation.

Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia

The 23rd Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia was inaugurated on 11 May 2023 just as the GST was ongoing. As a climate vulnerable country, climate change conversations are always at the centre of actions. For the Congress, its participation in the GST focused on international collaborations and building regional consensus for climate action.

Consequently, at the Pacific Island Form (PIF) Women Leaders Meeting held from August 31 thru September 1, 2023 in Suva, Fiji, [Hon Senator Merlynn Abello-Alfonso](#) who is the Chairwoman, Climate Change and Environmental Issues, Congress of Micronesia “...emphasized the recognition of the intersectionality of climate change as a regional security issue that cannot operate in a silo and must be a specified priority under the 2050 Strategy thematic pillar of ‘peace and security’”²⁹ of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Furthermore, the Congress sent a very strong delegation to COP28 to participate in negotiations, build alliances, learn from other MPs on how to legislate for climate change, and interrogate decisions.

New Zealand Parliament

On the opening day of the New Zealand Parliament in February 2023, with the country reeling from the impacts of cyclone Gabrielle, Members of Parliament focused their debate on climate change and the need to build back better.

MP James Shaw of the Green Party drew attention to how climate change is exacerbating extreme weather events in the country and urged colleagues to channel efforts to not only adaptation, but also on mitigation³⁰.

In August, the Parliament’s Environment Select Committee was tasked with developing a finding on how communities can best adapt to the impacts of climate change³¹.

These debates and hearings reflect efforts by the New Zealand Parliament to interrogate efforts being made to address the impacts of climate change in line with the country’s climate change legislations and commitments including the Zero Carbon Act and its 2030 commitments. Furthermore, Parliament

²⁹ “Congresswomen Konman and Abello-Alfonso join Women Leaders Meeting in Fiji” <https://www.c fsm.gov.fm/index.php/public-info/this-week-in-congress?start=12>

³⁰ “Parliament debates restart with focus on cyclone and climate” <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/484619/parliament-debates-restart-with-focus-on-cyclone-and-climate>

³¹ “Climate Change Minister James Shaw calls parliamentary inquiry into community adaptation.” <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/climate-change-minister-james-shaw-calls-parliamentary-inquiry-into-community-adaptation/6OK5Z4WUTJARRBS3GKLH6AOHNY/>

passed the 2023 budget which focused on building “momentum on the Government’s plan to address climate change with an array of transport, energy and resilience measures³²,” and consequently meet its climate obligations.

Legislative Yuan

The Legislative Yuan is the Parliament of the Republic of China, Taiwan. As the GST kickstarted, the Legislative Yuan, on 10 January, 2023, passed the amendment to the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Management Act*. The amendment, under the new title of *Climate Change Response Act*, provides for “...net-zero emission by 2050 with clearly defined responsibilities and responsible authorities³³ with targets set in five yearly manner in line with global practices for the GST and NDCs. The Bill was signed into law by the President on 15 February, 2023.

The new law also makes provisions for citizens’ active participation in climate action and decision making.

On 12 March, 2024, the Legislative Yuan would join other regional stakeholders in Tokyo, at the 52nd General Assembly of the Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians’ Union where they sought regional collaboration for climate action and confirmed the Assembly’s passage of three resolutions including one on the country’s UNFCCC engagements³⁴.

United States of America

The enactment of the Inflation Reduction Act and its provision for \$369 billion for clean energy unlocked a barrage of actions by State legislatures in the U.S, aiming at leveraging on this opportunity to attract federal funding for climate actions, and clean energy. The focus across board was on “...cleaning up the electricity sector — the backbone of the energy transition — while also boosting electric vehicles, restricting gas in new buildings, and building factories to manufacture batteries and other clean technology³⁵.” Consequently, Minnesota and Michigan lawmakers enacted clean electricity standard legislation (Aton:2023b), while in Oregon, State lawmakers “passed a package of bills to align state climate incentives with federal ones.” with focus on “heat pumps, building weatherization, zero-emission vehicles, solar energy and working lands³⁶.”

³² “Tackling the cost of living and climate change together” <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/tackling-cost-living-and-climate-change-together>

³³ “Toward Net Zero Climate Change Response Act Passed After 3 Readings” <https://www.moenv.gov.tw/ccan/B186407CED17E4A2/6dde4b7d-980f-4475-8e91-0d864c9575d4>

³⁴ “Taiwan attends APPU event, commits to combating Indo-Pacific climate change” https://www.taiwantoday.tw/news_amp.php?unit=2&post=249798&unitname=Politics-Top-News&postname=Taiwan-attends-APPU-event%2C-commits-to-combating-Indo-Pacific-climate-change

³⁵ Aton, Adam (2023b). “How 2023 changed the way states do climate policy.” <https://www.eenews.net/articles/how-2023-changed-the-way-states-do-climate-policy/>

³⁶ Aton, Adam(2023a). “Oregon lawmakers make a play for more federal climate money” <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2023/06/28/oregon-lawmakers-make-a-play-for-more-federal-climate-money-00103809>

There were further efforts by State Legislatures to ensure improved climate action. Washington State Legislature, within the period of the GST, passed a law requiring "local governments to consider climate change in their 20-year comprehensive plans beginning in 2025³⁷." While the legislation does not push for emissions cuts, it sought to prepare the counties for the impacts of climate change.

There were also efforts to set the tone for the UAE consensus and its call for the phasing out of fossil fuels. For instance, New York lawmakers "... passed a ban on fossil fuel infrastructure in most new buildings that will phase in between 2026 and 2029." (Aton:2023b). On 4th March, 2024, New Mexico would enact House Bill 41, **Clean Transportation Fuel Standards**, becoming one of four States (others are California, Washington State, and Oregon) in the US to do so³⁸.

As explained earlier, the whole mood for all these actions were put in motion by efforts at the federal level with the enactment of the Inflation Reduction Act with its expansive sectoral provisions. Apart from the efforts of State legislatures therefore, and of course the Inflation Reduction Act, the U.S Congress within the GST period also introduced the "Earth Bill" (Earth Act to Stop Climate Pollution by 2030). The Bill seeks to ensure that the U.S meets and exceeds its Paris Agreement obligations by simply ensuring that efforts are channeled towards "renewable energy, zero emission vehicles, regenerative agriculture, and tax incentives related to climate transition costs³⁹."

This review of the parliamentary involvement in the GST, in the United States of America is not exhaustive. What we have done is to take some examples from the State-level to substantiate the fact that while actions were also taken at the federal level, State-level parliamentary actions also took place in recognition of the country's status as a federating State.

Notes: Survey Analysis

Our survey on the number of parliaments which have held post-COP28 engagements, we find that as at 15 March, 2024, a large number of parliaments have not held post-COP28 engagements. This of course could be related to the minimal involvement of MPs in the COP process.

³⁷ Demkovich, Laurel. "New law pushes Washington cities and counties to plan for climate change." <https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2023/07/24/new-law-pushes-washington-cities-and-counties-to-plan-for-climate-change/>

³⁸ "New Mexico becomes fourth state to enact Clean Fuel Standards as governor signs legislation – Landmark legislation set to grow economy, reduce emissions." <https://www.governor.state.nm.us/2024/03/05/new-mexico-becomes-fourth-state-to-enact-clean-fuel-standards-as-governor-signs-legislation-landmark-legislation-set-to-grow-economy-reduce-emissions/>

³⁹ H.R.598 - Earth Act to Stop Climate Pollution by 2030. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/598>

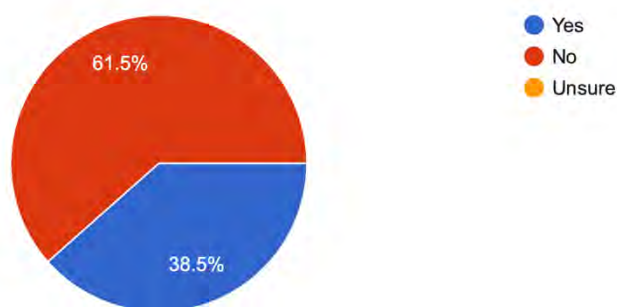
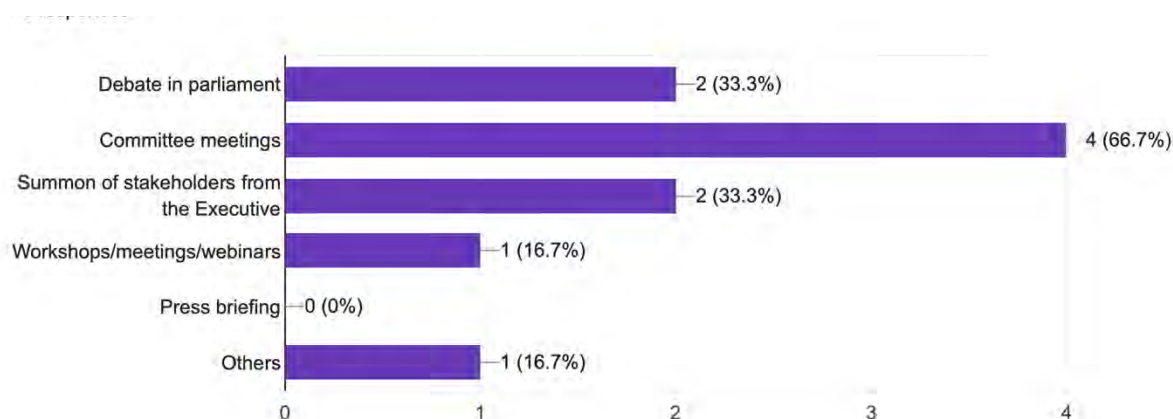


Fig 3: Has your Parliament held any post-COP28 engagement?

Those who have held engagements, the majority of such engagements have been through Committee Meetings:



Committee meetings are the easiest and most common ways in which parliaments discuss in details critical issues especially those that fall under their oversight functions.

Fig 4: Nature of post-COP28 Engagements in Parliaments

We also surveyed MPs to find out if they interrogated the implementation of their country's NDCs. 64.7% of them said they did, while 17.6% said they did not. 17.6% were unsure pointing to a knowledge gap.

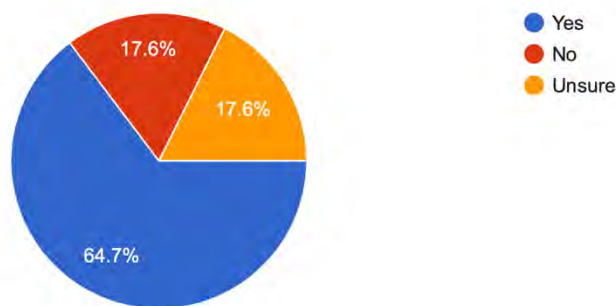


Fig 5: Did MPs from your country interrogate the implementation of your country's NDCs?

Enhancing Legislative Action on Climate Change: Examples of Best Practices

In 2008, the United Kingdom enacted the first Climate Change law in the world. This would become the basis for climate legislation by many other countries in the coming years. One key provision of the Act was the setting up of the Committee on Climate Change. Vastly different from what is obtainable in Nigeria where members of the National Council on Climate Change are government employees, the UK's Committee on Climate Change is an independent body and thus can objectively provide advice and reports on progresses being made to meet climate obligations, carbon budgets, seek professional and technical advice, etc. This is a good practice which can be replicated.

In addition to inspiring the climate change laws of many countries, another key best practice championed by the UK Parliament is collaboration amongst parliaments. A good example of this is the interaction between the Committee on Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) of the UK Parliament and Nigerian legislators in the build up to COP26, as Nigeria sought to push through the enactment of its own Climate Change Act. The Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) and GLOBE International had collaborated to convene first an engagement between MPs from the committee and the Nigerian Parliament, and then had the BEIS review the draft Climate Change Bill before final submission for passage.

This need for collaboration and exchange of ideas between MPs from different parliaments was replicated by Climate Parliament in series of engagements with African MPs where MPs from African countries (Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya) who have Climate Change Acts, briefed MPs from other countries desirous of enacting their own Climate Change Act on the processes and expected challenges⁴⁰. Another good example of this is the bringing together of MPs from Latin America and Caribbean countries by ParlAmericas and Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) to discuss how parliaments

⁴⁰ "MPs from Ghana discuss climate change legislation" <https://www.climateparl.net/post/mps-from-ghana-discuss-climate-change-legislation>

within the region can leverage on the [Escazú Agreement](#) to drive increased climate action that is inclusive and just⁴¹.

In essence, peer-to-peer exchange is a critical aspect of robust legislative practices which must be encouraged and scaled up.

This brings us to the SPICe (Scottish Parliament Information Centre) programme of the Scottish Parliament. A critical resource which "...provides impartial, factual, accurate information and analysis to Members in support of Scottish Parliament parliamentary business⁴²." Replicating this in other parliaments especially parliaments where the MPs need strong technical support to fully carry out their climate-related legislative duties will be a game-changer. Most respondents to our survey on what MPs need to be more effective in PLS and climate change oversight listed knowledge sharing and technical support as key. These responses resonate with the concerns raised by different MPs in many sessions of the Parliamentary Group's monthly Road to COP webinars over the past three years, and also with comments made at the Parliamentary Pavilion at COP28.

The SPICe example also links up with another important best practice which is information sharing. Parliaments need to do more about this, using reputable sources especially their websites. The Scottish Parliament, UK Parliament, European Union Parliament, Kenyan Parliament, are leaders in this.

Periodic debates either during plenary or at committee levels to address critical climate change issues, issue resolutions, or commence the process of enacting new laws that will further plug gaps obstructing the attainment of the climate goals and commitments of countries is a great practice which should be upscaled. The European Union Parliament is a great example of this as the Parliament is constantly holding debates to address such issues.

Global and regional climate change fora should not just be platforms for extracting commitments from Parties. They should serve a spurs to more actions. A number of parliaments have leveraged on the imminence of such fora to take action.

As earlier pointed out, in the build up to COP26, the Nigerian Parliament had worked hard to enact the country's Climate Change Act. Key elements of that Act— reflecting the vision of the COP26 Presidency— were the provisions for carbon budgets and net zero timeline. In the lead up to COP27, a Climate neutrality Bill was introduced at the Egyptian Parliament while the South African Parliament passed the country's Climate Change Bill in the build up to COP28.

At the regional level and with the GST in frame, the Kenyan Parliament amended its 2016 Climate Change Act. The amendment sought to "...bridge the loopholes in the initial [2016 Act](#) and establish a

⁴¹ "ParlAmericas and Parliamentarians for Global Action host 'Towards effective environmental governance: Access to information, participation, and justice'" <https://parlAmericas.org/new/parlAmericas-and-parliamentarians-for-global-action-hosted-towards-effective-environmental-governance-access-to-information-participation-and-justice/>

⁴² "SPICe Spotlight" <https://spice-spotlight.scot>

connection between [domestic climate policies](#) and worldwide climate agreements, with a particular focus on the [Paris Agreement](#)⁴³.”

This amendment sought to align Kenya’s sustainable development with the provisions of the Paris Agreement. In essence then, the mandate of the Climate Change Council in Section 6 was expanded to include carbon marketing.

This practice of global and regional climate change fora being leveraged on to ramp up parliamentary actions on climate change should be encouraged.

Parliaments and Action for Climate Empowerment

Action for Climate Empowerment is a voluntary work stream of the UNFCCC which refers to work under Article 6 of the Convention and Article 12 of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Accordingly, the overall aim of "ACE is to empower all members of society to engage in climate action, through the six ACE elements - climate change education and public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these issues⁴⁴.

The importance of the elements framed under the ACE work stream hinges on their role as indispensable political enablers of ambitious climate action at domestic level. Ahead of the adoption of the Glasgow Work Programme on ACE at COP26, MPs from several countries put out a statement elaborating how citizen empowerment is the political “*engine of the Paris Agreement*”⁴⁵.

Parliaments can help advance the principles of ACE in a variety of ways. This could be through the enactment of laws with specific provisions calling for the implementation of specific elements of ACE (the Nigerian Climate Change Act provides for climate change education and awareness, training, public participation, and public access to information); passage of ACE policies when presented before them for approval; carrying out aspects of ACE.

For the last example, GLOBE Legislators has over the years held Student-MP surgeries as a means of providing engagements between MPs and students. This engagement has helped create awareness, facilitated public participation, and granted access to information, while at the same time reassured MPs about their constituents’ expectations of ambitious climate action.

Our survey showed that in a number of countries, MPs participate in the design or integration of Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Work Plans in their countries. In Brazil, this comes in the form of public awareness, public participation, and international cooperation. In Uruguay, the focus is on

⁴³ Adwera, Loice (2023). “Kenya’s Climate Change Amendment Act: Striking a Balance with Carbon Markets” <https://www.jurist.org/commentary/2023/10/kenyas-climate-change-amendment-act-striking-a-balance-with-carbon-markets/#:~:text=The%20amendment%20serves%20as%20a,resilience%20to%20climate%20change%20impacts.>

⁴⁴ ”Action for Climate Empowerment” <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-youth/big-picture/ACE>

⁴⁵ Westminster Foundation for Democracy. "Why the empowerment agenda at COP26 matters for the success of the Paris Agreement." <https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/Climate-Empowerment-Agenda-Statement-1.pdf>

public participation and education, while in Mexico, public awareness and international cooperation is the focus. In the East African Legislative Assembly and Kenya, while MPs do not participate in the design of the ACE work plans, they participate in the process by focusing on education, training, public awareness, and public participation. MPs in South Africa participate in the design of the workplaces, with focus on training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation.

Our survey on which of the ACE areas MPs from our respondent countries participated in showed that public awareness was the area the MPs focused on mostly, with public participation and international cooperation coming second.

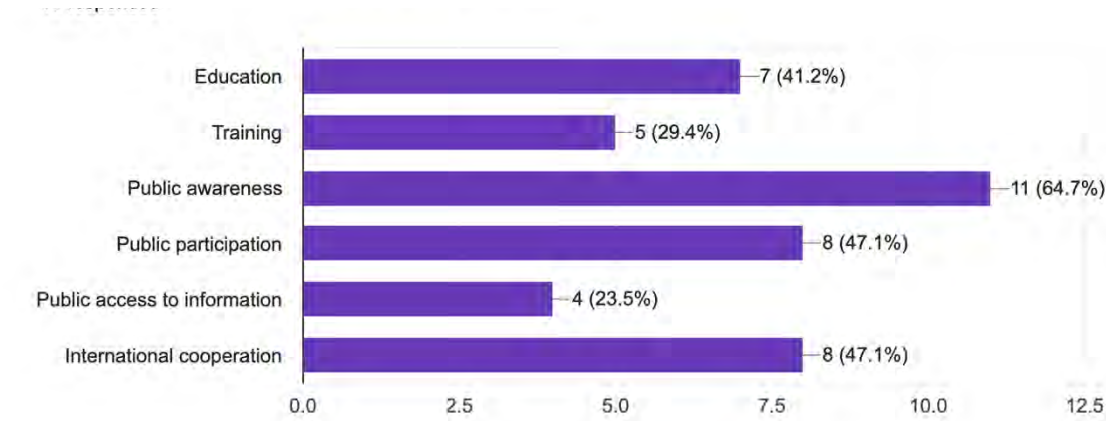


Fig 6: ACE Focus Areas of MPs

Furthermore, 41.2% of our respondents stated that MPs from their respective parliaments participated in the design and integration of ACE workplans in their countries, while 35.3% of them said MPs did not participate. The large percentatge (23.5%) who are unsure of whether or not MPs were part of the process again reveal the key problem of education, awareness of responsibility, and lack of information sharing which plagues most of our parliaments.

We had earlier flagged this and mentioned that this is a key challenge which needs to be addressed.

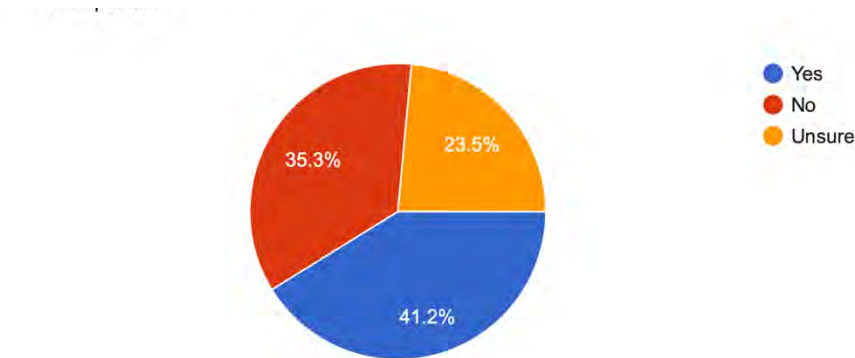


Fig 7: Participation of MPs in the design and integration of ACE workplans

ACE is a key plank of climate action especially as it pushes for the participation of all. Climate change is not just an environmental issue but intersects with every aspect of life—social, health, developmental, environmental, etc. It is therefore important that in addressing it, everyone plays a role. This demands participation from the community level, to the international.

Achieving this multilevel participation in climate action demands that all stakeholders are fully educated about what climate change is about, its impacts, and their respective roles in combating it. This demands education and awareness in their fullest extents. It also calls for access to information by the public and international cooperation considering that climate change is borderless and thus its impacts cannot be contained to a particular area.

The UNFCCC aptly captures why ACE is critical:

Implementation of all six ACE elements is crucial to the global response to climate change. Everyone, including and perhaps especially the young, must understand and participate in the transition to a low-emission, climate-resilient world. Sustainable lifestyles, sustainable patterns of consumption and production, are fundamental to reducing greenhouse emissions and enhancing resilience to the inevitable effects of climate change. Success will require broad collaboration between all levels of government and all sectors of society.⁴⁶

To be able to fully achieve this, everyone has a role to play, especially Members of Parliaments who have the unique role of not only representing the people, but also influencing government decisions.

Evidently, Parliaments have a key role to play in ensuring that ACE is fully mainstreamed in the climate change action plans of their respective countries, and implemented strategically to expand social ownership of ever greater climate ambition while ensuring climate justice⁴⁷. Where they do not have the opportunity of participating in the design, they can leverage on their positions to advance salient elements of ACE. The latter is what GLOBE has advocated and implemented through the Student-MP Climate Surgery which started in London, and expanded to parts of Africa in 2022.

Supporting Parliaments for Participation in GST, NDCs, and PLS

Parliaments clearly have important roles to play in driving climate action. This importance is visible in several ways and our analysis above has shown some of the ways in which Parliaments play critical roles in climate action.

Yet, also visible from our analysis above is the fact that while this important role of Parliaments is evident, in many Parliaments, MPs have been unable to exercise this responsibility due to a number of reasons. The reasons range from lack of capacity; being unaware of their roles; lack of the basic technical support to do this.

⁴⁶ "Why ACE matters?" <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-youth/big-picture/ACE>

⁴⁷ GLOBE, WFD, ParlAmericas. "The Role of Parliaments as Drivers of Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE). https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/WFD_ParlAmericas_GLOBE_ACE.pdf

We therefore asked MPs, and Parliamentary staff what they consider to be the ways in which they can be equipped to better deliver on their climate change mandates. The recommendations below are drawn from their responses:

- **Fund media engagements on GST and NDCs:** This will entail helping the MPs publicise their engagements and thus make them important to the populace thus making the government take it more seriously.
- **Capacity Building and Education:** Provide MPs with training and resources to understand the technicalities of climate change, the Paris Agreement, and the significance of NDCs and the GST. This could include workshops, seminars, and exposure to international best practices.
- **Access to Expertise:** Facilitate connections between MPs and climate experts, scientists, and policy analysts who can offer detailed insights and data. This could be achieved through the establishment of advisory panels or partnerships with academic institutions and think tanks.
- **Enhanced Information Sharing:** Develop platforms for the exchange of information between MPs, the government, and civil society organizations involved in climate action. Regular briefings, reports, and updates on climate policies and their impacts can enable MPs to make informed decisions.
- **Strengthening Parliamentary Committees:** Empower parliamentary committees focused on environment, climate change, and sustainable development. Providing these committees with more resources and authority can enhance their ability to scrutinize the government's actions regarding NDCs and climate policies.
- **Engagement in International Fora:** Support MPs' participation in international climate negotiations and fora such as the COP meetings. This exposure can provide valuable insights into global best practices and facilitate networking with their international counterparts. GLOBE was able to provide a platform for such sharing of insights, ideas, and networking during COP28 through the first ever Parliamentary Pavilion.
- **Legislative Support:** Offer legal and technical support to MPs for drafting and reviewing legislation related to climate action, ensuring that new laws are aligned with the country's NDCs and the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- **Replicate Best Practices:** This involves replicating best practices from other Parliaments in other Parliaments. A good example is the SPICe project of the Scottish Parliament.

Conclusion

Data and recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) continuously speak about the urgency of increased climate action globally. This is as advocacy continues for all stakeholders to do more in upscaling actions across all sectors, to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius in line with the Paris Agreement. This call to action demands an all-hands-on-deck approach—governments, civil society, private sector, international organisations, multilateral bodies, etc.

Parliamentarians by virtue of their unique positions have important roles to play in achieving this vision of a climate-resilient world. In essence, "parliaments have a key role in setting a country's wider development vision, and in developing sound environmental policies in support of this vision. This includes shaping a policy and regulatory framework that promotes mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, the development of renewable energy potential, and the provision of improved energy access and security, among others."⁴⁸ The roles of MPs can come in the form of lawmaking, oversight; and of course, in their role as representatives of the people.

Acknowledging the critical role of parliaments in driving climate action around the world, is pivotal in ensuring that governments meet their obligations, and even do more in driving this global vision. What this study has therefore done is to examine how parliaments are playing this important role, identify challenges, review best practices which can be replicated and/or scaled up, and to make recommendations on the way forward.

This seminal work focused on twenty-six parliaments from across the world.

⁴⁸ "Parliaments, the Environment and Climate Change" <https://agora-parl.org/resources/aoe/parliaments-environment-and-climate-change>

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Appendix


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