



Briefing Note

Climate Change Laws of the World

Emergence & Current Examples

Prepared by:



GLOBE

The Global Legislators Organisation

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GLOBE Legislators was founded in 1991, ahead of the Rio Earth Summit (1992), to provide a platform for the world's parliamentarians to engage in the Summit process. Formally known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Rio Earth Summit would become the most significant event in environmental history, marking the dawn of the age of sustainable development.

Founded by the world's leading parliamentarians, including Al Gore and John Kerry, GLOBE was the first parliamentary organisation of its type and now serves as the UNFCCC Focal Point for the Parliamentary Group.¹ Since the Rio Earth Summit, GLOBE legislators have played a central role in creating the global architecture of laws on climate change and sustainable development.

GLOBE Climate Legislation Study

In 2010, GLOBE Legislators began to count the number of climate laws passed, often by GLOBE members themselves, around the world. This became an annual study called the [GLOBE Climate Legislation Study](#), produced in partnership with the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics.

The [2015 Global Climate Legislation Study](#), prepared ahead of the Paris Climate Summit, COP21, was a landmark report that reflected the work that legislators had done around the world to build an architecture of legal response to the climate challenge. It built on earlier editions and captured the work of legislators to create legal frameworks that could trigger investments that can lower emissions and drive down costs. The study allowed cross-country comparison so that governments can be held to account for their response to climate risks. The report recognised the importance of 2015 and the need to build momentum ahead of the UNFCCC climate negotiations in Paris in December, when a legally-binding global agreement was to be agreed.

¹ Within the UN system, parliamentarians are still regarded as non-state actors and given the same status as NGOs. This is a classification that GLOBE argues should be changed and a new constituency of parliamentarians created to acknowledge the vital role of parliamentarians in lawmaking, scrutiny, budget resources and securing a public mandate for climate action.

Key Findings from the 2015 Edition:

- Collectively, the countries covered in the 2015 study account for **93 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions**, and include 46 of the world's top 50 emitting nations. The countries surveyed include 33 developed and 66 developing countries. A key finding of the study is that 75% of these emissions are now covered by national targets.
- There were **804 climate laws** and policies at the end of 2014, **compared with 426 in 2009** at the time of the Copenhagen climate conference. In 1997, when the Kyoto Protocol was agreed, there were just 54 climate laws and policies – a doubling every five years.
- Forty-seven countries, including the 28 Member States of the EU, have introduced **carbon pricing** through either a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system.
- Seventy-five countries plus the EU now have frameworks for limiting greenhouse gas emissions and 64 countries have frameworks for adapting to the impacts of climate change. However, **only 37 countries have completed a fully comprehensive national climate change risk assessment**.
- 53 countries, including the 28 Member States of the European Union, have **national targets** that set either absolute or relative limits on annual emissions of greenhouse gases across their economies.
- There have been **legislative reversals in Australia and Spain in 2014**, with the former's repeal of its carbon tax and Clean Energy Package, and the latter's downward revision of subsidies for renewable energy.
- On the upside, Finland and Denmark joined the **small but growing club of countries**, such as the United Kingdom and Mexico, which have adopted ambitious legally binding emissions reductions with science-led, long-term targets to 2050.

In order for a successful outcome in Paris in 2015 there is now extreme urgency to **strengthen commitments**, and for countries that have not yet passed climate change laws and/or regulations to do so.

The 2015 Global Climate Laws Study found:

*"Since Copenhagen in 2009, climate laws and policies have doubled from 426 to 804 in 2014. This shows solid momentum in the emerging global legislative architecture on climate change. Coverage is widening and there is no turning back. That is an important message we can confidently communicate to business, investors, and those looking for certainty. It also provides a good basis for COP21 in Paris, but the ambition level needs to be raised to close the emissions gap as demanded by the science. The **national parliamentary reviews of the INDCs** championed by GLOBE International are one way of securing this."*

For legislators, Paris is not the end point, but the beginning. In 2016, when the Paris agreement comes before Parliaments, legislators will determine whether it is fit-for-purpose. As befits our role, we must serve as the most effective form of national monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) not only of the new international climate regime, but also the new frameworks to emerge from the overall 2015 agenda.

Since 2015 the GLOBE Climate Legislation Studies have been based at the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics and built on further as the **Climate Change Laws of the World database**.

Climate Change Laws of the World

The Paris Agreement of 2015 resulted in an extraordinary surge of lawmaking and the Climate Change Laws of the World directory estimates that there are currently over 5000 climate change laws and policies worldwide. This would be 100 times increase since GLOBE first estimated that there were approximately 54 such laws and policies at COP3 in Kyoto in 1997.

NDCs and Framework Climate Laws

At COP21 in Paris, GLOBE argued for the involvement of parliamentarians in the process of devising the INDCs (Intended Nationally Determined Contributions) or national climate plans in response to the Paris Agreement. GLOBE also called for

annual parliamentary reviews of the INDCs to ensure they were robust and anchored in national climate laws.

GLOBE has continued to advocate for parliamentary engagement, including in its role as the UNFCCC Focal Point for the Parliamentary Group since COP26 in 2021.

At [COP29, GLOBE launched a Joint Statement with Client Earth and WWF International](#) calling for robust NDCs to be anchored in national framework climate legislation, and held a webinar on this at the GLOBE COP29 Parliamentary Pavilion.

Most recently, GLOBE organised the first ever [Roundtable on NDCs and Parliamentary Engagement with NDC Partnership](#) and other partners, ahead of the annual Global Conference on NDCs in June 2025 in Berlin.

To provide context for these current efforts, here is an A-Z of a dozen climate change laws from around the world, selected for their range.

Many are framework climate change laws which are strategic and comprehensive in their scope, often modelled on the UK's Climate Change Act of 2008, which has been the gold standard for climate lawmaking.

An A-Z of Climate Change Laws from around the World

1. AUSTRALIA

[Australia](#) 2024

[The Treasury Laws Amendment \(Financial Market Infrastructure and Other Measures\) Act 2024](#)

The Treasury Laws Amendment (Financial Market Infrastructure and Other Measures) Act 2024 amends the Corporations Act 2001 to introduce a mandatory climate-related disclosure regime, set to take effect in Australia on January 1, 2025. Under this Act, specified entities must prepare annual sustainability reports as part of their financial reporting. These reports must outline climate-related risks and opportunities.

2. BRAZIL

[Brazil](#) 2024

[Federal Law 15.042/2024 on the Brazilian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading System \(SBCE\)](#)

This law establishes the Brazilian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading System (SBCE). It applies to activities, sources and facilities located in the national territory that emit or may emit greenhouse gases (GHG), under the responsibility of operators, individuals or legal entities, with the exception of primary agricultural production, as well as assets, improvements and infrastructure within rural properties directly associated with it, which are not subject to obligations imposed under the SBCE. Indirect emissions from the production of agricultural inputs or raw materials are also not considered.

3. CHILE

[Chile](#) 2022

[Chile Framework Law on Climate Change](#)

The purpose of this law is to face the challenges presented by climate change, move towards a low-carbon development, until reaching and maintaining carbon neutrality by 2050. It also aims to adapt to climate change, reduce vulnerability and increasing resilience to the adverse effects of climate change, and comply with the international commitments assumed by Chile.

4. ECUADOR

[Ecuador](#) 2024

[Organic Law to promote private initiative in energy generation, classified as urgent in economic matters](#)

This law establishes a framework to encourage private investment in renewable and transitional energy sources, aiming to address Ecuador's energy crisis while advancing the country's commitment to sustainable development. It promotes diversification of the energy matrix, transitioning to cleaner technologies, and enhancing energy efficiency across public and private sectors. The law aims to prioritise solutions aligned with environmental protection and the principles of sustainable growth, as outlined in the Ecuadorian Constitution.

5. EUROPEAN UNION

European Union 2021

The [European Climate Law](#) writes into law the goal set out in the [European Green Deal](#) for Europe's economy and society to become [climate-neutral by 2050](#). The law also sets the intermediate target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

6. GERMANY

[Germany](#) 2025

[Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany](#)

The amendment to add a new Article 143h of the Basic Law, Germany's constitution, allows for a special fund with its own credit authorisation for additional investments in infrastructure and for additional investments to achieve climate neutrality by 2045, with a volume of up to €500 billion. The amendment also sets aside €100 billion from this special fund for climate projects toward bringing emissions down to net zero, a goal already set down in Germany's Climate Action Act. Another €100 billion from the special fund shall be made available to states for investments by the states in their infrastructure

7. KENYA

[Kenya](#) 2016

[Climate Change Act](#)

Kenya passed its Climate Change Act in 2016. This Act was subsequently amended in September 2023 to, amongst other amendments, provide a legal framework for regulation of carbon markets. The Climate Change Council is entrusted to provide guidance and policy direction on carbon markets to national and county governments. The 2023 amendment places an obligation on proponents of carbon trading projects to specify the anticipated environmental, economic and social benefits of the project. All projects shall be implemented through a community development agreement, recorded in the National Carbon Registry.

8. SOUTH AFRICA

[South Africa](#) 2024

[Climate Change Act, 2024](#)

This Act sets out the strategic direction of travel for national climate change policy in South Africa and establishes the key institutional arrangements for climate governance at the national level. The recitals emphasise that responding to climate change raises unique challenges to effective governance and requires a nationally driven, coordinated and cooperative legal and administrative response

9. UGANDA

[Uganda](#) 2021

The National Climate Change Act governs Uganda's national response to climate change. One of the stated purposes of the Act is to give effect to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement and Section 4 gives these agreements the force of law in Uganda. The Act mandates the creation of a Framework Strategy on Climate Change, as well as a National Climate Action Plan and District Climate Action Plans. It also contains a series of provisions establishing a transparency framework and MRV system.

10. UNITED KINGDOM

The [Climate Change Act 2008](#) is a UK law that establishes a framework for the country to tackle climate change. It legally binds the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change, with the ultimate goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Act also establishes a system of carbon budgeting and an independent body, the [Climate Change Committee](#), to advise the government on climate policy

11. UNITED STATES

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

The President's [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\) of 2022](#) makes the single largest investment in climate and energy in American history, enabling America to tackle the climate crisis, advancing environmental [justice](#), securing America's position as a world leader in domestic clean energy manufacturing, and putting the United States on a [pathway](#) to achieving the Biden-Harris Administration's climate goals, including a net-zero economy by 2050

12. ZAMBIA

[Green Economy and Climate Change Act of 2024](#)

This Act provides for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction; provides for climate change mitigation, low emission development, green economy and related actions; regulates carbon markets; provides for environmental and social safeguards in climate change actions; and establishes the Climate Change Fund.



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