

Meeting the Paris Agreement Ambition through Subnational Leadership

UN Secretary-General Climate Action Summit | 23 September 2019

DRAFT Concept Note

Message

Smart, coordinated state action is essential to raising global ambition and meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Role of Governors in Achieving the Paris Goals

Leadership by the world's governors and other regional elected officials is essential to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement - whether accelerating the implementation of ambitious national policies or filling a federal leadership void. States and provinces also serve as the laboratories for the next generation of policy and technological innovation, which will be key if we are to have any chance of staying within a 1.5 degree temperature increase. And by working across borders, states and provinces can not only replicate the success of early adopters, but leverage their collective economies to achieve transformational change. As one example, the 24 states and territories of the U.S. Climate Alliance have an \$11.7tn economy – the second largest in the world – and are the sixth largest global emitter if measured as a country. These 24 states are led by Governors from both the Democratic and Republic political parties – highlighting that climate leadership need not be a partisan issue in the U.S. Through smart, coordinated state action, these states are helping the U.S. meet its NDC and inspiring the Parties to the Paris Agreement to maintain progress towards their own commitments.

Supporting the SG's Priorities at the UN Climate Summit

In 2020, the world will look to Parties to announce more ambitious climate targets or submit long-term greenhouse gas reduction strategies. The SG has thus prioritized these announcements for the Summit to build momentum going into 2020.

We propose the SG invite a small group of Governors (including a Republican and Democrat from the United States) on stage to highlight the role states and provinces play in ratcheting up national ambition. They can inspire greater action at the summit by:

- Sharing the progress they have made towards their carbon neutrality goals, and the multiple benefits climate leadership has delivered for their communities;
- Announcing new mid-century carbon neutrality goals; or
- Releasing a roadmap for achieving carbon neutrality by mid-century.

The Governors would also commit to work with other Governors in their countries to share experiences and leverage their collective markets to make a transformational impact on national economies – accelerating the transition to the low-carbon economy of the future. This cooperation could be modeled on the U.S. Climate Alliance.

To emphasize that states and provinces from all countries can support the goals of the Paris Agreement, Governors would be selected from geographically and socio-economically diverse countries, such as the United States, China, Brazil, the EU, Australia, Japan [ideas on country from Africa?] and a small island developing state (e.g. RMI or Maldives).

Consistency with the SG's Criteria for Selecting Speakers

Announcements would be consistent with the five criteria for initiatives at the Summit:

- Transformational impact: Coordinated, multi-state approaches can reduce emissions at scales comparable to national governments. They can also create large demand signals to drive innovation in industry.
- Sustainable development co-benefits, addressing political and social issues: State action often delivers quantifiable benefits to local communities (e.g. improved health outcomes). Most states are also developing programs to ensure the transition to a low-carbon economy is equitable and benefits under-served communities.
- Replicable and scalable: By sharing best practices within national borders, and helping to stand up coalitions of states in other countries, states can help replicate the success of early movers to achieve outcomes at scale. As one example, Brazilian governors are considering launching their own version of the U.S. Climate Alliance to work together on climate policies and ensure Brazil maintains its international climate commitments.
- Measurable and implementable: The U.S. Climate Alliance publicly tracks and reports its progress, and would encourage other coalitions to do so. One vehicle is to register actions through the CDP platform, which is linked to NAZCA.
- Innovative and visible: Working across states within national border on coordinated policy approaches is an innovative approach for achieving emission reductions at scale, including by creating or supporting more ambitious national frameworks for climate action. As leaders with authority and access to budgets to implement solutions, Governors are a strong, visible voice on climate action.

Next Steps

If USCA is committed to pursuing stage time for one Democratic and one Republican U.S. governor:

- Agree on USCA's key message or goals if given stage time, and how they could convey the leadership of all Alliance states
 - Consider additional avenues for Governor placement, or as a fallback
- Identify one state to represent the U.S. Climate Alliance based on their proposed announcement.
- Advocacy should focus on: UN Deputy SG, SG Summit steering committee members, and partner countries
- Work with partners (national governments, foundations, ENGOs) to identify the best non-US governor candidates to propose a joint event.