Forum: GA4 Environmental Committee

Issue: Addressing ways to enhance transparency and compliance in countries' climate action plans

Student Officer: Erdinç ACAR

Position: President Chair

Introduction

The worldwide community's collective efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions and implement sustainable practices will shape how the globe responds to climate change. The critical need to promote compliance and transparency in national climate action plans is at the heart of these initiatives. Transparency fosters mutual trust and collaboration among international community members by allowing countries to freely communicate their approaches, accomplishments, and challenges in addressing climate change. On the other hand, compliance guarantees that these strategies are faithfully executed in accordance with the global commitment to mitigate environmental repercussions and limit temperature rise. These ideas combine to form the foundation for effective climate governance, enabling a logical and responsible approach to one of the most pressing crises of our time.

Transparency and compliance are commonly accepted as necessary, yet achieving them in a range of political, economic, and social circumstances can be challenging. Various countries face unique problems, ranging from financial and technological constraints to the need for foreign aid and capacity building. To tackle these challenges, cooperation is required, leveraging the assets and capacities of international organizations, civil society, and both developed and developing countries. Improving openness and compliance in climate action plans is critical as

the world progresses toward implementing the Paris Agreement and other international frameworks. It's more than just keeping your word; it's about building a sustainable future through shared duty and accountability.

Definition of Key Terms

Transparency:

This term refers to the clearness, openness, and accuracy of a state's climate policies, emissions, and the actions taken. It ensures that member states are accountable for their commitments and progress towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Compliance:

This refers to the extent to which countries adhere to the guidelines and commitments outlined in their climate action plans. This term involves following through on promises to cut emissions, and greenhouse gas, adopting sustainable practices, and shifting towards renewable energy sources, among other measures.

Capacity Building:

This term is about the development process of a state's capacities and the improvement of them, especially in less economically developed countries, to organize, carry out, oversee, and document climate change mitigation and adaptation plans.

Global Stocktake:

This term refers to the process where countries review their progress towards the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. It helps them see how well they are doing in addressing climate change and what improvements are needed.

Climate Justice:

This concept refers to the realization of the idea that some populations may face different negative consequences of climate change in terms of public health, the economy, and society. By addressing these differences within the world, it hopes

to ensure a fair distribution of the costs, benefits, and solutions connected with climate change.

Conference of the Parties (COP):

It is the highest decision-making authority of UNFCCC. Annually, this body gathers member states to discuss and enact measures to effectively combat climate change and assess the convention's progress. Their decisions span from adopting new strategies and technologies to improving financial and cooperative frameworks, all aimed at mitigating climate impacts efficiently.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are promises each country makes under the Paris Agreement to cut down their emissions and get ready for the impacts of climate change. Every five years, these plans need to be updated and improved, focusing more each time on reducing global warming. This regular update helps the world come together to tackle climate change more effectively.

Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs):

This term refers to the measures implemented by governments prior to the Paris Agreement to reduce global emissions. They were introduced in 2007. Designed to cut emissions without compromising food production and security, NAMAs aimed to align each country's specific challenges with global climate goals, ensuring sustainable development alongside environmental protection.

Background Information

The need for transparency and compliance in climate action:

Transparency builds trust among countries and their partners. When a country openly shares its strategies, progress, and challenges, it reassures others of its commitment to the global cause of mitigating climate change. These transparent systems allow member states and international organizations to identify areas where support is needed, whether it is financial aid, technological assistance, or

capacity-building programs. This kind of collaboration can lead to more effective and coordinated global climate action.

Compliance checks and transparent reporting help ensure that the actions taken are effectively contributing to the intended climate goals. They also allow for adjustments and improvements in strategies, which is crucial in adapting to an ever-changing global climate scenario. By complying with these measures cooperation amongst the states may be improved.

The collaboration of the member states is crucial for the resolution of this issue. Countries should work together and make agreements that bind them to certain transparency and compliance standards. This kind of teamwork can make it easier for countries to help each other out and hold each other accountable. It's also important to note that this can help less economically developed countries get the resources, technical, and financial support they need to meet these standards. This means providing financial aid and technology transfers to ensure that all countries, regardless of economic status, can participate fully in global climate efforts. This support is vital for building capacities in these states to meet their reporting obligations and implement their climate action plans effectively

When the public has access to information about their country's climate actions, they are better equipped to hold their leaders accountable, ensuring that promises are kept. This also helps in garnering public support for necessary but potentially unpopular policies like carbon taxes or phasing out fossil fuels.

The challenges in enhancing transparency, compliance, and accountability:

Different countries vary greatly in their technological, financial, and institutional capacities, which all affect their ability to effectively plan and act on climate change issues. Technologically, many developing nations struggle because they lack the proper tools to gather precise environmental data and the infrastructure for processing and storing that data, making it difficult to maintain transparency. Financially, the costs of setting up monitoring systems, like satellite imaging or blockchain for tracking carbon transactions, are very high. These

countries often depend on financial aid from wealthier nations or international organizations, which can be slow and bureaucratic. Additionally, political instability or corruption and a shortage of professionals knowledgeable in climate science and policy exacerbate these issues, leading to inefficient resource use and poorly implemented policies.

Political and economic factors also play a huge role in the effectiveness of climate action plans. Entrenched interests, especially from the fossil fuel sector, exert significant influence, resisting policies that could harm their profits. Politically, leaders might prioritize short-term economic gains over long-term environmental goals, particularly if the effects of climate change seem remote, leading to delays and less effective policies. Furthermore, climate policies often get caught in partisan politics, which can disrupt the consistent application of these policies. Diplomatic tensions also complicate matters, as countries might not commit to strict reporting or compliance if they believe that not all nations are being equally transparent or if geopolitical rivals are not doing their share.

Moreover, the complexity of climate science itself poses significant challenges. It requires sophisticated models and analyses that may be beyond the capabilities of under-resourced environmental departments. The continuous evolution of climate science means policies might be based on outdated data, complicating decision-making processes. Effective communication is crucial to bridge the gap between complex data and public understanding, prevent misinformation, and build support for necessary policies. Ensuring data accessibility and comprehensibility to non-experts, by simplifying scientific information and using modern dissemination tools, is essential for widespread support and effective climate governance. These multifaceted challenges highlight the urgent need for improved support and resources globally to enhance climate actions.

The review processes of the climate action plans:

The review process for states' climate action plans is essential in ensuring that each state's strategies are effective and in line with international goals such as those

outlined in the Paris Agreement. Initially, each state gathers important environmental data, such as current levels of greenhouse gas emissions and rates of deforestation. They engage with various local and national stakeholders—like government agencies, communities, and businesses—to set practical and measurable environmental targets. The plan is then drafted, outlining specific strategies to meet these targets through technological upgrades, conservation efforts, and more. This draft is refined through public feedback to ensure it addresses all concerns and encompasses a range of perspectives. Once complete, the plan is detailed further with methodologies and expected outcomes and submitted to international bodies like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

After submission, the plans undergo a thorough review by an international panel of climate experts. This panel checks if the plans are scientifically viable, ambitious enough, and in alignment with the state's international obligations under global agreements. This review process helps maintain a standard of accountability and ensures that environmental efforts are robust across the board. The plans may also be subjected to public and peer reviews, gathering broader feedback, which is crucial for further refining and improving them. Feedback from these reviews leads to necessary revisions in the climate action plans, integrating expert recommendations and possibly setting more stringent targets. This step is crucial as it ensures that the plans are not only compliant with international standards but are also effective in practical terms. If the revisions substantially change the plan's scope, it might be resubmitted for another review round, ensuring all changes meet the required standards and truly benefit environmental goals.

The final phase is implementing the approved plans, which starts with their ratification within state legislatures and is followed by the actual application of the outlined strategies. States monitor the effectiveness of their actions continuously and report their progress to international bodies periodically. These updates allow for ongoing adjustments to the strategies, ensuring they adapt to new research and technological advances and remain effective over time. This dynamic process highlights the need for constant evaluation and flexibility in climate action initiatives,

helping states respond better to the challenges of climate change and work towards a sustainable future.

The role of technology in the climate action plans:

Technology plays a crucial role in enhancing transparency and compliance within climate action plans globally. Advanced tools like satellite imaging are pivotal in monitoring environmental changes and greenhouse gas emissions effectively. Satellites provide comprehensive data from remote areas, making it possible to observe deforestation, urban expansion, and other changes that contribute to climate change. This accurate and timely data is essential for countries to assess their progress accurately towards meeting climate targets.

Data management technologies, including blockchain and big data analytics, streamline the reporting processes and enhance data transparency. Blockchain technology offers a secure and tamper-proof platform, ideal for recording emissions data and transactions related to carbon credits, which helps prevent fraud and ensures compliance with international climate agreements. Big data analytics allows for the efficient processing of large volumes of environmental data, helping to identify patterns, predict trends, and formulate strategies. These technologies together facilitate reliable and transparent reporting that is critical for the success of climate action plans.

Technology enhances public engagement and makes climate information more accessible to everyone. Mobile applications and online platforms offer tools for individuals to monitor real-time environmental data, understand policy impacts, and participate in sustainable practices. This not only educates the public but also encourages a collective response to climate challenges, ensuring broader support for governmental efforts in climate action.

Building strong legal and institutional foundations:

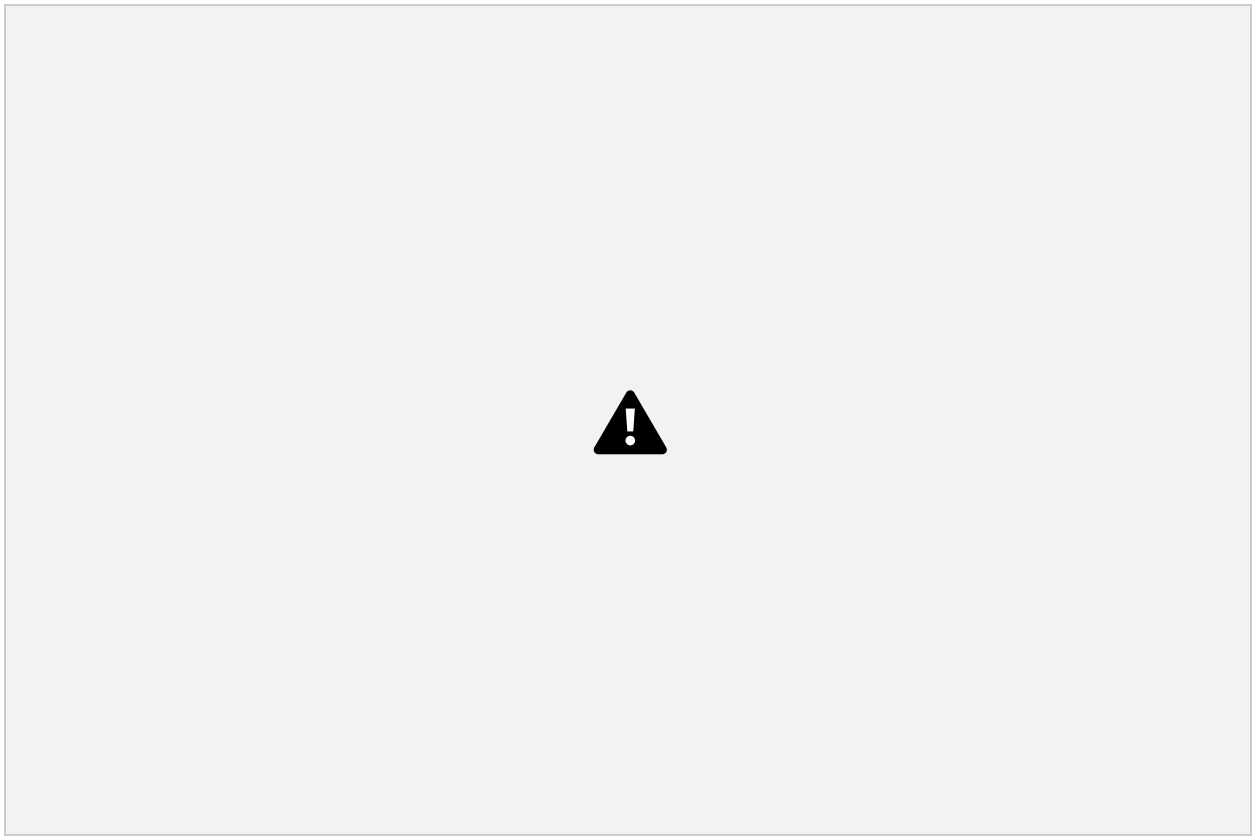
It's necessary to implement specific laws that clearly state what is expected of countries and their citizens in terms of their climate actions. The member states

should have laws which need to have strict penalties for the ones that don't follow the rules which will ensure that countries take their commitments seriously. These laws provide the necessary backbone for effective climate governance. Also having dedicated organizations and institutions also strengthens climate policies. Each country should have a specific organization or agency that ensures climate laws are followed and oversees them. This body would be in charge of organizing all the climate action efforts and making sure everything is going according to plan.

Increasing accountability through transparency:

Having climate-related information available to everyone and getting the citizens involved in the discussion helps increase the overall accountability of the states. Public engagement can include having forums, discussions, and accessible reports that everyone can understand. With implementing transparent policies on this issue; non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses, and local communities should also be involved in tracking and implementing climate actions. Their participation can bring in new ideas and more hands-on help while making sure governments stay honest.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved



(The graphic of countries with the most per capita CO2 emissions)

United States of America:

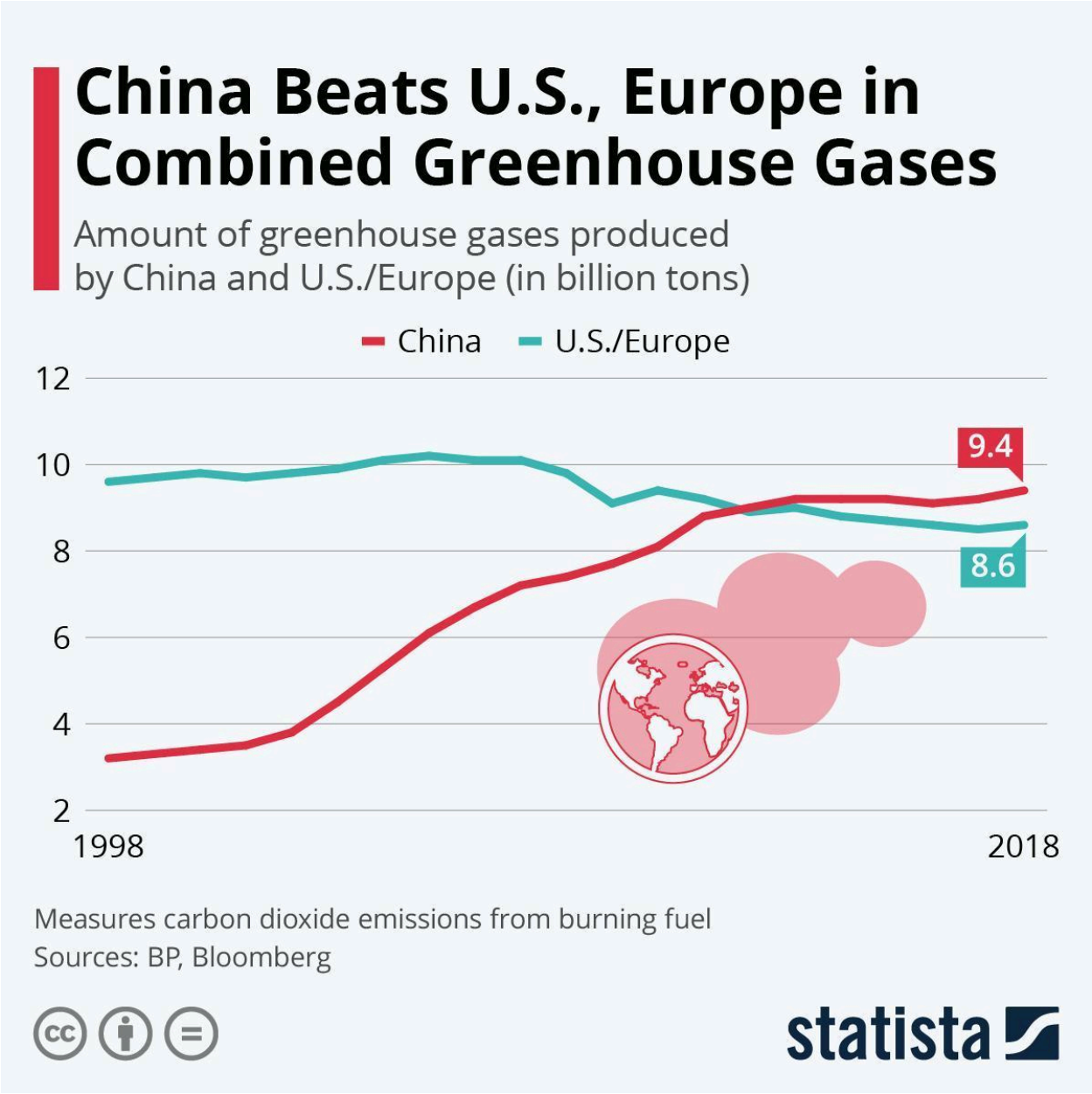
As a major actor in international climate negotiations, the United States of America has advanced global climate goals by utilizing its financial might and innovative technology. It is vital to the development and dissemination of green technologies, which are necessary to lower greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

Moreover, the United States plays a big part in global climate efforts by providing a lot of money to help out. This funding goes to special programs that assist developing countries in being more open about their climate actions and sticking to their plans. This support helps make sure that countries worldwide can do their part in fighting climate change.

People's Republic of China:

China, the world's largest greenhouse gas contributor, is an important player in international climate efforts, focusing on enhancing the efficacy and transparency of its national climate action initiatives. Setting aggressive goals for carbon neutrality, it has significantly reduced its dependency on coal and increased its capacity for renewable energy. In addition, China participates in South-South cooperation, offering assistance and exchanging best practices with other developing countries

to ease their shift to more transparent climate action and sustainable development.



(The graphic of China, USA, and Europe's Greenhouse Gases)

European Union (EU):

The European Union establishes rigorous regulatory frameworks that mandate transparency and compliance across its member states. With its general approach to climate change, the EU establishes ambitious emissions reduction

objectives and supports renewable energy utilization, which is supported by robust monitoring, reporting, and verification processes. Through its leadership in international climate discussions, the EU promotes for high transparency standards around the world, providing financial and technical aid to third-party governments in meeting their climate goals.

Republic of India:

India is making significant advances in renewable energy and climate change, highlighting the value of open reporting and international cooperation. Since it has a fast-rising economy, India combines expansion with long-term development projects, such as large-scale solar energy deployment under the International Solar Alliance. India's commitment to increase climate action transparency is critical to its strategy for meeting national and global climate targets, and it serves as a model for developing countries to adopt effective climate policy.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):

The UNFCCC plays a crucial role in tackling global climate change. It helps countries come together to set up agreements that ensure everyone is open about their actions and responsible for meeting their climate promises. This organization provides a space for nations to share updates on their emission levels and progress toward their climate goals. Through its efforts, the UNFCCC promotes a culture of cooperation and accountability, guiding the global fight against climate change.

Green Climate Fund (GCF):

The Green Climate Fund helps developing countries mobilize financial resources for climate action, with a focus on projects that improve transparency and compliance with international climate targets. The GCF funds mitigation and adaptation programs, allowing governments to accurately track and publicize their progress. The fund's role in promoting transparent and effective climate action is critical to achieving fair and sustainable global development.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):

The IPCC's reports are important for understanding climate change. They provide a critical foundation for global climate policy, offering detailed insights into the causes, impacts, and potential solutions to climate change. These reports help shape climate policies and the decisions made at big international meetings, especially about how countries should report their climate actions and check if they're actually following through. By pulling together the latest science, the IPCC makes sure countries have the facts they need to make their climate action plans clear and effective.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):

UNEP is important to improve governance and assist nations in their efforts to combat the effects of climate change. In order to comply with international accords, it provides technical support for the creation of national greenhouse gas inventories and reporting regimes. Through its programs, UNEP ensures that environmental policies are grounded in clear and reliable data, which promotes informed decision-making and international collaboration in the fight against climate change.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1988	The IPCC was established by the UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization.
1990 August	The IPCC First Assessment Report was completed.
1992	The UNFCCC was adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil which laid down the groundwork for global climate efforts.

1995 March	The first Conference of the Parties (COP) was held in Berlin.
1997	During COP3, the Kyoto Protocol which introduced the first binding emission reduction targets for developed countries and which established a framework for monitoring, reporting, and verification was adopted.
2001	The Marrakesh Accords were agreed upon. This detailed the procedures for reporting and transparency under the Kyoto Protocol.
2007	The Bali Road Map introduced the concept of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for developing countries.
2010	The Cancun Agreements were established. It detailed the transparency requirements for both developed and developing countries which also aimed to build trust among member states.
2011	The Durban Platform for Enhanced Action led the way for plans for a new universal climate agreement with a focus on transparency and accountability.

2015	During COP21, the Paris Agreement was adopted. It marked a landmark moment for global climate efforts. It includes an enhanced transparency framework (ETF) applicable to all member states and a mechanism to facilitate implementation and promote compliance.
2018	At COP24, the Katowice Climate Package was adopted. It provides detailed guidelines for implementing the transparency framework of the Paris Agreement.
2020-2021	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, COP26 was postponed.
2021	COP26 resulted in the Glasgow Climate Pact. It emphasizes the urgency of enhancing NDCs and improving transparency levels to track progress.

Relevant UN Resolutions and Other Documents

- Kyoto Protocol (1997):
    - It was the first major climate deal that set specific targets for countries to reduce their emissions and included ways to check if countries were actually following the rules.
- Marrakesh Accords (2001):

    - These accords set up detailed rules on how countries should report their emissions and track their progress, making the reporting process clearer and more uniform.
- Bali Action Plan (2007):
    - It encouraged developed countries to help developing ones by making their reporting processes better and more transparent.
- Cancun Agreements (2010)
    - These agreements improved how countries should report their climate efforts and the support they receive, which helps increase transparency.
- Doha Amendment (2012):
    - This amendment added new targets and updated rules for the Kyoto Protocol, pushing countries to cut down more on their emissions.
- Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (2013):
    - This mechanism helps countries report on and address losses from climate impacts, focusing especially on vulnerable areas.
- Paris Agreement (2015):
    - This agreement requires all countries to track and report their greenhouse gas emissions in a transparent way, which helps everyone know how much progress is being made.
- Sustainable Development Goals:
    - In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) set up 17 goals, often called a "blueprint for a better and more sustainable future." They aim to fix big world issues by 2030, like poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental damage, and make sure there is peace and justice for everyone. These goals are all about making the world a safer, fairer, and better place for all of humanity to live.

(The list of the SDGs and each of their objectives)

- Katowice Climate Package (2018):
    - This package lays out specific rules for how countries should follow the transparency framework of the Paris Agreement, ensuring all reports are consistent and comparable.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the groundwork in 1992 for the discussion of compliance and transparency in climate action. It marked the start of a systematic approach to environmental accountability by establishing a baseline for global collaboration and reporting on climate activities.

This endeavor was aided by the Kyoto Protocol, which was approved in 1997 and established a compliance process as well as legally binding emission targets for

wealthy nations. It was a major step forward in making sure nations were held responsible for their climate pledges.

Following recognition of the need for a more inclusive strategy, the Bali Action Plan (2007) and the Copenhagen Accord (2009) extended transparency standards to developing countries. These agreements expanded participation in climate accountability by introducing mechanisms for non-binding mitigation efforts and reporting for all nations.

A turning point in improving compliance and transparency was the 2015 Paris Agreement. It created the enhanced transparency framework (ETF) which is applicable to all nations and mandates consistent reporting on emissions and implementation activities. In order to assess progress and promote international confidence, this agreement consolidated global climate action under a uniform but distinct framework, highlighting the significance of transparent, thorough, and comparative reporting.

Ultimately, the 2018 Katowice Climate Package addressed the capacity issues faced by nations by offering the comprehensive regulations required to execute the Paris Agreement's transparency framework. It emphasized the dedication of nations to transparency, with programs such as the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) helping them to comply with the stricter, new reporting regulations.

Possible Solutions

Advanced technology like blockchain can secure emission data with an immutable record, increasing transparency. Artificial intelligence (AI) can further enhance accuracy by analyzing data trends efficiently. These tools ensure reliable and up-to-date reporting on climate actions.

Regular international audits and peer reviews help maintain accuracy in climate reporting. Third-party organizations can verify compliance, while peer

reviews between countries promote mutual accountability and continuous improvement in meeting climate targets.

Clear and stringent laws are crucial for enforcing transparency. Countries need to establish strict reporting requirements and penalties for non-compliance. Internationally, agreements should include specific transparency standards to unify and standardize global climate efforts.

Increasing public involvement and awareness is key. Community monitoring and accessible, understandable public reports can drive government accountability. Educating citizens about climate impacts and the importance of sustainability also garner community support, encouraging compliance with climate policies.

Bibliography

"Conference of the Parties (COP)." *UNDP*, www.undp.org/iran/conference-parties-cop.

Hub, IISD's Sdg Knowledge. *Doha Amendment to Enter into Force | News | SDG Knowledge Hub | IISD*. sdg.iisd.org/news/doha-amendment-enters-into-force/#:~:text=The%20Amendment%20sets%20a%20goal%20of%20reducing%20greenhouse%20gas%20.

Homepage | Green Climate Fund. www.greenclimate.fund.

Australian Government. "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change." *Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water*, www.dcceew.gov.au/climate-change/international-climate-action/intergovernmental-panel.

"Marrakesh Accords." *UNREDD Programme*, www.un-redd.org/glossary/marrakesh-accords.

Next Steps Under the Paris Agreement and the Katowice Climate Package – Partnership for Collaborative Climate Action. collaborative-climate-action.org/next-steps-under-the-paris-agreement-and-the-katowice-climate-package.

THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development. sdgs.un.org/goals.

United Nations Climate Change. "The Paris Agreement." *United Nations Climate Change*, unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement.

United Nations. "The Paris Agreement | United Nations." *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/climatechange/paris-agreement.

The Economist. "What Are 'Nationally Determined Contributions' to Curb Climate Change?" *The Economist*, 9 Nov. 2021, www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2021/04/22/what-are-nationally-determined-contributions-to-curb-climate-change?utm_medium=cpc.adword.pd&utm_source=google&ppccampaignID=18151738051&ppcadID=&utm_campaign=a.22brand_pmax&utm_content=conversion.direct-response.anonymous&gad_source=1&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIkqbtyKO7hQMV_ICDBx1KugEOEAAYASAAEgKm_vD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds.

"What Is Meant by 'Climate Justice'? - Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment." *Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment*, 15 Dec. 2023, www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-meant-by-climate-justice.

"What is the Kyoto Protocol?" *United Nations Climate Change*, unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol.

What is transparency? "What is transparency?" *United Nations Climate Change*, unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/about-transparency/what-is-transparency#:~:text=The%20reporting%2C%20review%20and%20consideration,and%20everything%20we%20do%20here.

https://www.statista.com/chart/22983/china-greenhouse-gas-emissions/

https://www.tskb.com.tr/en/services/sustainable-banking/the-impact-we-create/the-un-sustainable-development-goals

https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2021/dec/02/facebook-posts/china-and-indias-carbon-dioxide-emissions-context/