

Bringing public health to the table at COP30: A guide for researchers and practitioners

How does a Climate COP work?

What role does public health research play in this space?

How can researchers engage with the COP process?

What is a United Nations Climate COP?

A **Conference of the Parties (COP)** refers to a meeting (conference) of the countries, or governments, (parties) who have signed an international agreement, convention, or treaty. COPs take place within the context of agreements surrounding many topics.

The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** holds annual COPs to negotiate global actions to address climate change. The 30th annual Conference of the Parties ("COP30") will take place in November 2025, hosted by Brazil.



What happens before and during a Climate COP?

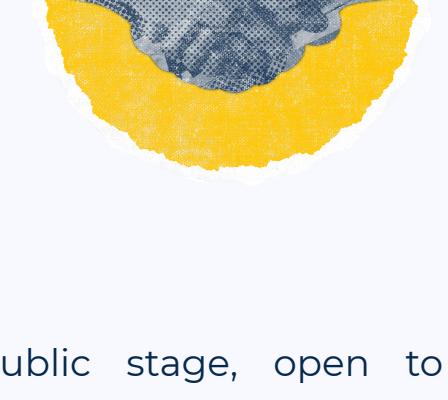


COP agendas are developed during preparatory meetings hosted by the COP Presidency (host country), and convene official country representatives, content experts, and other actors over the year or two before each Conference.

Pre-COPs are less formal meetings that traditionally take place in the month or so before each COP to set the stage for formal negotiations.

Blue Zone

Core negotiation: During each COP, delegates of the Parties participate in official sessions of the governing bodies, and in open and closed negotiating meetings. Delegates can include government officials from relevant ministries, experts and scientists, and civil society organization representatives. Sometimes, this negotiation results in a binding agreement (e.g., Kyoto Protocol, Paris Agreement), which must then be ratified by individual governments. More often, the Parties agree to some form of public declaration.



Blue Zone

High-level COP: This public stage, open to delegates and observers, includes speeches by heads of state, announcements of coalitions, public denunciations, or calls to action. Observers can include intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, United Nations and related agencies, as well as media representatives.

Green Zone

"Third COP": Additional activities include side events, pavilions, panel talks, presentations, and protests, where participants can include researchers and scientists, NGOs, private sector representatives, and activists.



COPs are traditionally divided into Green and Blue Zones. The **Blue Zone** is the core of the COP and includes both direct negotiations and a public stage for high-level participants. The **Green Zone** takes place at the periphery and allows for more direct participation by non-government actors.

"Blue zone" activities: access to the Blue Zone is restricted to accredited delegates only. Formal negotiations, country pavilions, and official side events take place here and are managed by the UNFCCC.

"Green zone" activities: open to the public, managed by the host country, and includes additional events, workshops, and exhibitions hosted by private sector and NGO representatives.

A brief history of Climate COPs

- 1997 COP3 KYOTO**
- Setting the stage for global climate action:
 - The **Kyoto Protocol** was negotiated during COP3 and entered into force during COP11 in 2005, setting mitigation targets for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and mandating regular progress reviews.

- 2015 COP21 PARIS**
- Expanding global climate commitments: **COP21 (2015)**
 - COP21 resulted in the landmark **Paris Agreement** (195 parties), which replaced the Kyoto Protocol and seeks to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius.

Where does health fit in?



Since 2014, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** has hosted regular Global Conferences on Health and Climate Change. Historically, **these events have taken place on the sidelines of the UNFCCC COPs**. In recent years, the connections between climate change and health have received increased attention.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by UN Member States in 2015. Agenda 2030 established the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for achieving peace and prosperity for people and the planet. Many of the SDGs address the shared challenges connecting climate change and health across the globe, including:

- SDG 3: Good health and well-being
- SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities
- SDG 13: Climate action



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE ACTION

- 2017 COP23 FIJI**

At the **2017 COP23** hosted by Fiji and held in Germany, WHO launched a **Special Initiative on Climate Change and Health in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**.

- 2021 COP26 GLASGOW**

The **COP26 Special Report on Climate Change and Health** was developed in the lead up to the **2021 COP26** in Glasgow, where WHO also hosted the first Health Pavilion.

- 2023 COP28 DUBAI**

The **2023 COP28** in Dubai also featured a **Health Pavilion**, hosted by WHO and the Wellcome Trust, as well as the first-ever **Health Day**, which culminated in the endorsement of the **Declaration on Climate and Health**. COP28 elevated the role of health in the climate change agenda and secured a global commitment to addressing climate-related health impacts.

- 2024 COP29 BAKU**

At the **2024 COP29 in Baku**, delegates committed to the **Baku COP Presidencies Continuity Coalition for Climate and Health**, securing a permanent space for health within future COP agendas.

The road to COP30: Brazil in 2025

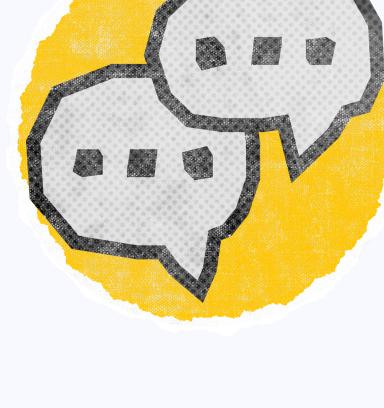
The COP presidency rotates each year on a regional basis. **COP30** is scheduled to take place in Latin America, in Belém, Brazil, from November 10-21, 2025. COP30 will mark 20 years since the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, and 10 years since the adoption of the Paris Agreement.

Health-focused plans for COP30 are constantly evolving and include the **2025 Global Conference on Climate and Health** (29-31 July 2025) and presentation of the **COP 30 Climate & Health Action Plan**, led by Brazil, which aims to strengthen health system resilience to climate change impacts and support countries in implementing equitable adaptation strategies.



Public health researchers can engage in the UNFCCC process by:

Developing user-friendly research products to support advocacy surrounding the health impacts of climate change and the impacts of mitigation and adaptation action.



Connecting with COP delegates and observers to provide input and expertise throughout COP preparatory sessions.



Advocating for the inclusion of health impacts and health arguments within NDCs and other climate policy and planning documents.



Hosting and participating in health-focused green zone activities (pavilions, panels, presentations).

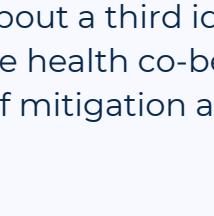


Forming partnerships with municipal governments and urban practitioners. Local governments worldwide are leading climate action through mitigation and adaptation measures. Many are also leveraging the health co-benefits of these efforts. Researchers can support them by supplying and discussing localized data and evidence.

How are national and local governments committing to climate and health?

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are national climate action plans that outline each country's commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. As part of the 2015 Paris Agreement, countries committed to submitting an updated NDCs every five years.

90%



1
10

In 2023, almost all (90%) NDCs to the Paris Agreement include health considerations.

About a third identify the health co-benefits of mitigation action.

Only about one in ten quantify and/or monitor these benefits. ([WHO 2023 Review of Health in NDCs](#))

The Global Climate and Health Alliance's [Healthy NDCs Scorecards](#) ranks countries' Nationally Determined Contributions based on how well they address the health threats of climate change and minimize future harm.

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