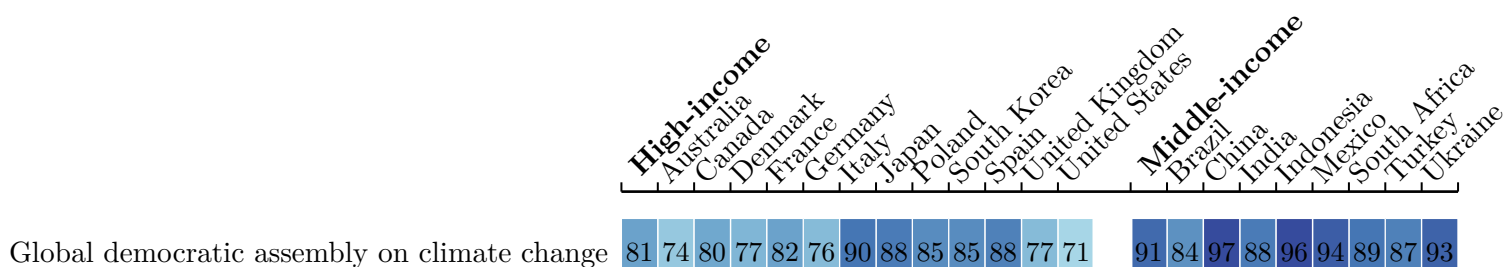




# The Global Climate Assembly – Policy Brief

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Figure 1: Support for the Global Climate Assembly around the World (in percent).



## 1 Summary

Fabre et al. (2023) survey attitudes toward global policies in 20 among the largest countries and find near consensus for “a global democratic assembly whose role would be to draft international treaties against climate change.” In this Global Climate Assembly (GCA), “Each adult across the world would have one vote to elect members of the assembly.”

In this policy brief, we defend a GCA with proportional representation: For the first time, a global election would be held, with world citizens making the same choice between different lists in a unique constituency. 20 lists would be eligible, those obtaining the largest endorsement in a pre-election petition, provided that they obtain more than 1 million signatures. No restriction would be placed on the composition of the lists, except that one person could only appear in one list.

The GCA would propose to the UNFCCC an international treaty on climate change and would represent the world citizens in the international climate negotiations. In the last year of its five-year mandate, reflecting on its experience, the GCA would deliberate on global governance and propose a governance framework to address climate change.

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## 2 Details

The GCA would be established by an alliance of countries covering at least half of the world's adult population.<sup>1</sup> The pre-election would last one year, during which lists would be deposited and endorsements gathered. For a list to be registered, it would need to contain as many members as there are seats (e.g. 400); each member would have a rank and could be member in a list already registered. Crucially, no restriction would be placed on the composition of the lists: for instance, the members from a list could all come from the same country.

Ideally, it would be located in a country that does not already host a major international organization, such as Ghana or India.

The GCA would entail the first intercontinental election with universal suffrage. As such, the GCA's experimental status should be assumed. The GCA would not have any enforcement capacity, to avoid the risks inherent to a first-of-its-kind experiment. However, its proposals could greatly enhance the international climate negotiations. Indeed, the GCA's deliberations might offer a forum where national interests can be overcome. Moreover, the electoral campaign could reveal wide agreement in favor of some specific form of climate action. The campaign could also yield intrinsic benefits, such as raising awareness on climate justice or facilitating the emergence of global media entertaining a global public debate.

## 3 Support

Since Kant (1795), who argued that world federalism was the necessary condition for perpetual peace, many have argued that we need stronger and more democratic global institutions, competent to address global challenges like extreme poverty, climate change, wars, pandemics, or financial stability. Before World War II, feminist and pacifist Maverick Lloyd & Schwimmer (1937) founded the *Campaign for World Government*, defending direct representation at the global scale. Einstein (1947) called for the subordination of the UN Security Council to the General Assembly and the direct election of UN delegates. Since 2007, individuals and institutions from more than 150 countries have endorsed the appeal for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA), including 1,800 members of parliament, heads of state, as well as the European Parliament, the Pan-African Parliament, and the Latin-American Parliament. The UNPA calls for a gradual implementation of a democratic assembly, starting with a consultative assembly composed of members of national parliaments, allowing for the direct election of its members in voluntary countries, and evolving toward a world parliament able to adopt binding regulations once all members are directly elected (Leinen & Bummel 2018). Besides the UNPA, various scholars have proposed different models of global democracy, ranging from deliberative spaces to

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<sup>1</sup>37% of the world population live in an authoritarian regime according to the Democracy Index by EIU (2022).

a world federation (Archibugi et al. 2011). While the most radical proposals are still out of sight, an assembly of random citizens representative of the world population has already been convened. It has produced a joint statement at the COP26 (Global Assembly 2022), and a similar *World Citizens' Assembly* should soon follow.

In surveys in Brazil, Germany, Japan, the UK and the U.S., Ghassim (2020) finds 55 to 74% of support for “a global democracy including both a global government and a global parliament, directly elected by the world population, to recommend and implement policies on global issues”. Using an experiment, he also finds that, in countries where the government stems from a coalition, voting shares would shift by 8 (Brazil) to 12 p.p. (Germany) from parties who are said to oppose global democracy to parties that supposedly support it. For example, the Greens and the Left gained respectively 9 and 3 p.p. in vote intentions while the SPD and the CDU-CSU each lost 6 p.p., when Germans respondents were told that (only) the former parties support global democracy. Ghassim (2020) also document survey results which show strong majorities support in each of 18 countries for the direct election of one’s country’s UN representative. Similarly, in each of 10 countries, there are clear majorities in favor of “a new supranational entity [taking] enforceable global decisions in order to solve global risks” (Global Challenges Foundation 2018). Actually, already in 1946, 54% of Americans agreed (and 24% disagreed) that “the UN should be strengthened to make it a world government with the power to control the armed forces of all nations” (Gallup 1946). In surveys in Argentina, China, India, Russia, Spain, and the U.S., Ghassim et al. (2022) find majority support for UN reforms that would make United Nations’ decisions binding, give veto powers at the Security Council to a few other major countries, or complement the highest body of the UN with a chamber of directly elected representatives.

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