



CLIMATE PLANS FOR THE PEOPLE

Assessing and Promoting Civil Society Participation in the Preparation of Nationally Determined Contributions in the MENA region

Abstract

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are national climate plans that serve as the cornerstone of the Paris Agreement's framework for global climate action. The NDC process pushes countries to contribute to the global goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Although some submissions have taken place, most of the current cycle of NDC revisions are now expected to be submitted by September 2025, in advance of COP30 in Brazil, the annual climate conference.

This report specifically examines progress in the preparation of NDC 3.0 across the MENA region, including two deep dive case studies in Jordan and Lebanon. The report concludes that (a) governments have taken some steps to open participation but gaps in accessibility and transparency persist; (b) there is a strong willingness among stakeholders to improve inclusivity in NDC 3.0; (c) inclusive NDCs are seen as a tool to better respond to local climate vulnerabilities; and (d) moving forward, inclusive participation must be embedded in NDC governance structures, not treated as optional.

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Cover photo: Local farmer in agricultural land in Lebanon surrounded by wheat crops. Jean Hatem/Oxfam.

Summary

This report specifically examines progress in the preparation of NDC 3.0 across the MENA region, including two deep dive case studies in Jordan and Lebanon. Wider conversations however have been held in several other countries in the region. The research focuses on the level of civil society engagement in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 3.0 cycle as of March 2025, and the perspectives of a sample of non-state actors, including civil society organisations (CSO), on the NDC process in each country. It aims to understand their familiarity with the NDC process, their views on the role of CSOs in NDC development, and their level of engagement and interest in the process.

While the research showcases that there are limitations in the inclusivity of NDC processes across the four case study countries, it equally points to the opportunities in each country to engage with broad representatives of civil society in NDC 3.0.

Key Conclusions:

- Governments have taken some steps to open participation but gaps in accessibility and transparency persist.
- There is a strong willingness among stakeholders to improve inclusivity in NDC 3.0.
- Inclusive NDCs are seen as a tool to better respond to local climate vulnerabilities, having the potential to serve as mechanisms for addressing the climate challenges faced by marginalised communities.
- Moving forward, inclusive participation must be embedded in NDC governance structures in an ongoing manner and not treated as optional. Doing so is essential to transform NDCs from static documents into living commitments that reflect and respond to national realities.

Recommendations:

The below recommendations for civil society, UN agencies and technical bodies, and governments in the MENA region, provide ideas on how different stakeholders can ensure that the NDC processes take a whole of society approach in limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C. The recommendations also seek to ensure that the adaptation to the impacts of climate change reduces inequality, improves people's lives, and gets the community behind its nation's climate plans.

Recommendations for civil society

- **Foster Collaboration:** Form coalitions and platforms to facilitate the sharing of ideas and collective representation in national forums for climate planning.
- **Proactive Communication with Government:** Actively seek partnerships and opportunities to engage with national and sub-national governments that focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly with ministry focal points.

- **Build the Capacities of Communities:** CSOs can leverage their strong ties to communities and specific demographic groups to improve capacity, disseminate information, and collect data on the local impacts of climate change, and communicate this to governments.

Recommendations for UN agencies and technical bodies

- **Provide sustainable funding and capacity-support:** Organisations, such as UN agencies and donors, should provide longer-term and more flexible funding to allow civil society organisations to build their capacity and incentivise engagement in the NDC process.
- **Support decentralised platforms:** Fund and support the establishment of independent climate networks throughout the MENA region. These networks would facilitate knowledge exchange between CSOs and other non-state actors without interference from government or private-sector influences.
- **Promote the local relevance of NDC 3.0:** Investing in awareness campaigns that present information about the NDC in simple terms and its relevance to every-day life will help civil society see the value in contributing.
- **Strengthen women participation:** Support Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) in gathering independent data on the gender-specific impacts of climate change, facilitate inclusive workshops that enable women to participate actively in national climate planning and advocate for dedicated channels that allow WROs to communicate their insights to the government during the NDC process.

Recommendations for governments

- **Transparency in Participation Opportunities and NDC Development:** Governments should provide easily accessible real-time updates on the status of the NDC and disclose whether the consultation process is open to everyone or selective. If selective, they should specify who is invited to participate and the rationale for the selection. The outcomes of the consultations or submissions from non-governmental stakeholders should be made public (e.g. by publishing them in an annex of the NDC).
- **Mapping and Knowledge-Retention:** Governments should regularly conduct a comprehensive mapping of key actors and organisations linked to the climate adaptation and mitigation space in the country and assess these stakeholders' capabilities to inform the selection of representative organisations for NDC consultation processes and ensure the organisations have the capacity and resources needed to effectively contribute. Additionally, governments should establish internal knowledge retention systems that will facilitate the effective transfer of pertinent information related to the NDC.
- **Strengthen local governance for climate action:** Governments should establish and support climate focal points or coordination units at the sub-national level (e.g. municipalities or governorates) to facilitate the localisation of national climate commitments and reflect the realities of different communities within countries. However, these local entities should operate within clearly defined mechanisms, such as formalised reporting and coordination structures.

1. Introduction

What are NDCs?

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are essentially national climate plans that serve as the cornerstone of the Paris Agreement's framework for global climate action. Since its adoption in 2015, the Paris Agreement requires all Parties to submit an NDC every five years, which should reflect increasing levels of ambition in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change. The NDC process pushes countries to contribute to the global goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C¹.

Each NDC cycle offers countries new opportunities to refine their climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, incorporate new data, and respond to changing national and global contexts. For the NDCs to be effective, Oxfam recommends that they should include sector-wide commitments, align with socio-economic priorities, and take a whole-of-society approach involving input from diverse groups, particularly the most vulnerable to climate change².

The first global assessment of progress in limiting climate change through NDCs, known as the first Global Stocktake (GST), was conducted in 2023. The GST emphasised the urgent need for countries to enhance the ambition of their commitments in the third cycle of NDCs (NDC 3.0). This is crucial, as the GST highlighted that the ambition of NDC targets announced at COP27 (not accounting for the significant implementation gap) would only limit the global temperature rise to between 2.4°C and 2.6°C. This increase would have devastating impacts, especially in countries in the Global South, who often have less capacity to adapt³. So-called Annex I and Annex II Countries, as defined by the Paris Agreement, have higher capacity and responsibility in (historic and current) global emissions and so should lead in higher ambition in targets and fair financial support to countries with lower capacity in this NDC cycle. Countries with limited capacity or responsibility should strive for the highest achievable ambition based on their circumstances. For all Parties, mobilising contributions from all stakeholders, including civil society, and local communities, can lead to more ambitious and actionable NDCs.

The third cycle of NDCs was initially due in February 2025, however, only 13 out of 195 parties adhered to the deadline⁴. Most countries are now expected to submit their NDC revisions by September 2025 to ensure the NDCs inform the UN assessment of planned emissions reductions ahead of COP30. As countries prepare their NDC 3.0 for the revised deadline, they should consider the lessons learned from the GST and develop NDCs with inclusivity at their core. Inclusive NDCs should elevate the voices of marginalised groups, such as women, youth, migrants, and workers. Their perspectives are crucial in shaping effective, just, and resilient climate policies.

Why should NDCs be inclusive?

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region faces significant climate change impacts which will affect everyone in the region, but the impacts will not be felt equally.

Key factors such as geographical location (e.g., rural versus urban), gender, age, and socio-economic standing determine how and the extent to which individuals and communities experience climate change impacts. Incorporating perspectives from civil society into the preparation of NDC 3.0 ensures that the plans are relevant and feasible within the country's social, environmental, and economic contexts. It also builds legitimacy and accountability around climate commitments, enabling countries in the MENA region to implement effective policies that address specific climate challenges and vulnerabilities faced by different populations.

Non-state actors such as women's rights groups, youth advocacy groups, and grassroots movements can bridge the knowledge gaps between policymakers and communities to ensure climate planning accurately reflects the needs of climate-affected communities. In previous NDC revisions, civil society engagement in the NDC process was not always optimally implemented, and in some cases non-existent or limited⁵, leaving communities and groups feeling excluded and disengaged. Understanding how and the extent to which CSOs are engaged in the NDC development process is key to assessing the inclusivity and therefore effectiveness of the NDC. Participatory and inclusive NDC processes are those that facilitate engagement and participation, either directly or through civil society. They identify barriers to participation related to gender norms, disability, language, economic, cultural, poverty, age, conflict, and other factors, and make adjustments to overcome them. Finally, they show how civil society and community inputs were considered in the process⁶.

Report Objectives

This report builds on Oxfam's 2024 publication, 'Climate Plans for the People,' which examined the involvement of non-state actors in NDCs across eleven countries, including the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), in the MENA region. This report specifically examines progress in the preparation of NDC 3.0 across the MENA region, including two deep dive case studies in Jordan and Lebanon. Wider conversations however have been held in several other countries in the region. The research focuses on the level of civil society engagement in the NDC 3.0 cycle (as of March 2025) and the perspectives of a sample of non-state actors, including CSOs, on the NDC process in each country. It aims to understand their familiarity with the NDC process, their views on the role of CSOs in NDC development, and their level of engagement and interest in the process. For a detailed methodology, please see the Annex of this report. The report provides key insights and recommendations for governments, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), international NGOs, and CSOs to strengthen civil society participation in NDC development processes.

2. Inclusivity in NDC Development

Who should be included in the NDC process?

The Katowice Climate Package, adopted at COP 28, requires NDCs to include details about public participation and engagement with local communities and Indigenous Peoples. This requirement aims to enhance non-Party stakeholder engagement in the NDC process⁷. The NDC Partnership, a global coalition supporting countries in the preparation and implementation of NDCs, also provides specific guidance in expanding non-state actors in participating in NDCs. This guidance recommends that NDC preparation should actively involve various stakeholders, including subnational governments, the private sector, academic and research institutions, labour unions, CSOs, and community representatives, especially from those communities most vulnerable to climate change⁸.

In the MENA region, many communities are highly vulnerable to climate change due to ongoing conflicts and socioeconomic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and increasing inequalities. These factors limit many countries' ability to adapt to climate change, increasing the vulnerability of their populations. Special attention should be given to groups that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and are likely to be most affected by mitigation and adaptation strategies, including⁹:

- Women
- Young people
- Elderly people
- People with disabilities
- People living in rural areas
- Asylum seekers, displaced peoples, refugees, and migrants
- Farmers and workers in sectors impacted by climate change and the transition to green economies (e.g. energy, waste management, and agriculture)

Why should gender be considered in the NDC process?

Systemic gender inequality and social norms exacerbate climate impacts on women, girls, and gender non-conforming people. Some of the gendered impacts include:

- **Livelihoods:** In the Global South, women are frequently responsible for food production and farming activities, typically working on small-scale farms and relying on natural resources for their livelihoods¹⁰. This reliance makes them highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as climate change induced extreme weather events can negatively affect crop yields, decrease income, and lead to food insecurity for women and their families.
- **Education and Nutrition:** Girls are more likely to leave school to support their families, encounter food and water scarcity, and face inadequate sanitation, especially in the

face of worsening climatic conditions¹¹.

- **Gender-Based Violence:** Natural disasters can heighten displacement risks for vulnerable communities, with women and girls facing greater threats of gender-based violence and human trafficking¹².
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights:** Climate-induced stressors, such as food and water insecurities, can negatively impact reproductive outcomes, increase the risk of early marriage, and restrict access to SRHR services¹³. Women and girls facing multiple vulnerabilities, such as those living in conflict zones, refugee camps, or rural areas, are at an increased risk regarding their SRHR.

Despite these vulnerabilities, women tend to be underrepresented in climate decision-making in the region, and gender is overlooked in climate planning. There is an increasing global commitment to incorporate gender considerations into NDCs. The UNFCCC reported that 85% of second-generation NDCs referenced gender, a significant rise from just 29% in the first round¹⁴. The NDC Partnership is supporting countries to integrate gender into NDC 3.0, which relies on improving the availability of comprehensive data and mechanisms to track gendered climate impacts, which varies across countries in the region. Gender-responsive NDCs can promote social equity, reduce vulnerability, and empower women in climate mitigation and adaptation. Critical to mainstreaming gender into NDCs is for governments to include women (and women's rights organisations) from diverse communities and areas of the country in their NDC preparation processes.

How can NDC preparation be inclusive? Best practices

Inclusivity in NDC preparation requires active and meaningful participation from non-government stakeholders. Governments should design well-resourced engagement processes that genuinely value local community contributions, tailored to the country's unique context. As part of this effort, governments must identify and address barriers to participation from the outset, particularly for marginalised and historically under-represented communities.

Oxfam's 'Climate Plans for the People' report found that in many countries the NDC 2.0 process excluded certain stakeholders' groups, including community-based organisations, women's rights organisations, local communities, agricultural collectives, workers' rights groups, people with disabilities, youth, and human rights organisations.¹⁵ This exclusion highlights the need for governments to adopt more deliberate and inclusive engagement strategies in developing their NDC 3.0.

Participation as an unconditional right

A good way to increase participation is for governments to create formal frameworks that mandate public participation in climate policy, including the drafting of NDCs.¹⁶ These legal frameworks would require successive governments to allocate resources and processes for consultation, making public participation a formal obligation by governments rather than an optional process contingent on governmental or national circumstances. This legal framework would build on the right to participate recognised in

international and regional treaties, as well as political commitments, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ratified by many MENA states.

While establishing legal frameworks should be a long-term objective, creating legislation can take time and resources that may not be immediately available. Before implementing new laws, governments can review and clarify existing institutional arrangements, ensuring there are clear points of contact and defined responsibilities among government agencies related to the NDC. Clarity and transparency in the institutional arrangements for the NDC development can help non-government stakeholders better understand the NDC process. This understanding can empower these stakeholders to proactively submit evidence or perspectives to these government focal points ahead of the NDC development.

Governments can also create more informal platforms for participation.¹⁷ The UAE, for example, launched the National Dialogue for Climate Ambition (NDCA) to facilitate collaboration across all sectors of the economy, which involves both government and non-government stakeholders, including NGOs and private sector representatives. Participants include sectoral representatives from the private sector and NGOs, including manufacturing, waste management, finance, transportation, and energy. The NDCA hosts monthly assemblies dedicated to a different sector to discuss sectoral requirements and priorities in the UAE's national climate strategy.¹⁸

Civil Society Capacity Building

In many countries, civil society has a limited awareness or understanding of NDCs and their relevance to everyday life. Strengthening the capacity of non-government stakeholders to understand the NDC process and acquire the knowledge to provide valuable input is equally important to ensuring meaningful and inclusive participation. Inclusive participation enhances the overall quality and effectiveness of NDCs; when the perspectives and knowledge of different stakeholders and local actors are included, context-specific insights are integrated into national planning. This makes NDCs more grounded, realistic, and implementable.

Broad stakeholder mapping and inclusive engagement strategies

Ideally, governments collaborate with sub-national authorities, local offices, and various non-state actors, including CSOs, to map stakeholders and develop effective engagement strategies. This mapping should include marginalised groups, women, youth, and people with disabilities. Regional networks, such as the Arab Climate Action Network, and Women's Rights Organisations such as MENAFEM, can support this mapping process by bringing together local organisations from across the MENA region, playing a key role in facilitating more coordinated and inclusive engagement. After mapping, governments should tailor strategies to promote consultation opportunities, ensuring vulnerable groups know how to participate and understand the impact of their contributions. CSOs can enhance these efforts by engaging with their communities and networks.

Creation of enabling conditions for meaningful input

Public participation methods in preparing the NDC should be as inclusive and accessible

as possible. Participation opportunities should enable participation across regions and rural areas. In Morocco, the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) and the UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre developed a Measurement, Reporting, and Verification system in the Souss-Massa region¹⁹ This process involved local and sub-national institutions in capacity-building workshops, stakeholder mapping, and the creation of an institutional and legal framework that supports data collection.²⁰ While this process is technical in nature, the project exemplifies how decentralised engagement can strengthen national climate systems, as locally grounded sub-national data from Souss-Massa feeds into Morocco's broader national climate strategy, including its NDC.

Participation methods should be tailored to the capacity and culture of the engaged community, especially local communities. This includes holding consultation sessions outside of capital cities to reach communities that may not have the means to travel. It also means using local languages and providing accessible information and resources to ensure effective participation. For participation to be truly meaningful, it should go beyond validation of pre-drafted policies and encourage collaborative dialogue to ensure the NDC reflects the needs and concerns of local communities and those most impacted. This level of engagement is not only essential during the drafting phase, as it also plays a pivotal role in the successful implementation of NDCs, helping to ensure that climate strategies are localised, grounded in real contexts, and owned at both national and sub-national levels by a diverse range of stakeholders.

Transparency and responsiveness to public feedback

Governments should establish mechanisms for accountability and transparency, ensuring that decisions related to the NDC are communicated to the public in a timely, accessible, and clear manner. Additionally, it is important for governments to explain how the public's comments, analyses, and proposals have influenced those decisions.²¹

3. MENA overview

Climate Impacts

The MENA region is severely affected by climate change, facing increasing temperatures, extreme variability in precipitation, and rising sea levels. These changes pose ongoing, complex, and life-threatening challenges, which disproportionately impact already vulnerable communities.

The region is the most water-stressed in the world, with less than 10% of the global average water availability per person.²² This water stress is worsened by climate change, which increases drought, especially for surface water systems. Due to warming temperatures and reduced precipitation, the flow of rivers like the Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, and Jordan are severely reduced, jeopardising many countries' water security.²³ Water management is a key feature in most MENA countries' NDCs and adaptation plans.

Certain areas of the MENA region are also at extreme risk of rising sea levels. The Maghreb is among the fastest-eroding regions in the world.²⁴ By 2080, Tunisia's capital city, Tunis, could experience a 1.2 m sea-level rise. Rising sea levels increase the vulnerability of coastal communities to flooding. Additionally, saltwater intrusion into groundwater contributes to arable land loss and has detrimental impacts on countries' agricultural sectors.²⁵ This profoundly impacts vulnerable communities, particularly farmers, who work informally in precarious conditions; in Tunisia's Cape Bon saltwater intrusion has severely contaminated aquifers, forcing many farmers to abandon their lands and wells due to the unsuitability of saline water for irrigation.²⁶

UNFCCC submissions: a regional track record

The MENA region has a relatively low regional GHG footprint; however, there is significant variation across countries, with members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) among the world's top 10 per-capita carbon emitters in the world.²⁷ Countries in North Africa and the Levant, however, tend to have significantly lower emissions. Data from 2021 shows that MENA countries Jordan contributed 0.08%, Lebanon 0.05%, Egypt 0.68%, and Tunisia 0.09% of global GHG emissions in that year.²⁸ Despite their low contributions to global emissions, these countries remain among the most vulnerable to climate impacts.

Most countries in the MENA region, including Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, frequently report to the UNFCCC through National Communications (NCs) and, more recently, Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), which outline the countries' emissions and progress in mitigating them.²⁹ Most countries in the MENA region submitted their BTR at the end of 2024, a notable achievement given only 90 Parties to the Paris Agreement had submitted their first BTR, less than half of the total parties obligated to submit BTRs.³⁰ This suggests that there is strong regional political support, established institutional frameworks, and a willingness to use financial resources for reporting from the UNFCCC's financial mechanism, the Global Environment Facility, among these countries.³¹ Both case study countries are also receiving technical

assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Governments in the region are also taking an increasing interest in hosting international climate conferences. Egypt held the 27th COP on Climate Change (COP27) in 2022 and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) held COP28 in 2023.³²

All countries in the MENA region, except Libya and Yemen, have submitted their first and second NDCs, as required under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.³³ From these submissions, there appears to be increasing regional awareness of the urgency of climate change among regional governments. The second cycle of the NDC demonstrated increased ambition in mitigation and adaptation targets throughout the majority of the region. The second-generation NDCs of Jordan and Lebanon, the two case studies presented in this report, received support through the UNDP's Climate Promise, which aimed to enhance ambition. In its NDC 2.0, Jordan pledged a total 31% emissions reduction (26% conditional and 5% unconditional) from 2012 levels by 2030, a significant increase from its 14% reduction target by 2030 in 2016.³⁴ Lebanon committed to a conditional 31% reduction (or 20% unconditional) compared to business-as-usual (BAU) scenarios by 2030 in its NDC 2.0, an increase from 15% to 20% in unconditional increases, and a conditional increase from 30% to 31%.³⁵

Despite these efforts, most MENA countries have yet to design national plans that will effectively mitigate and improve adaptation to the intensifying climate change impacts. Various factors, including limited technical capacity, poor and weakened governance, and competing priorities, hinder efforts to design and implement comprehensive national climate adaptation and mitigation plans.³⁶ Marginalised groups and frontline communities, though among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, are also typically left out of the deliberation and design of national adaptation and mitigation plans.

4. Country case studies

This section analyses the preparation of NDC 3.0 thus far in two country case studies: Jordan, and Lebanon. Each case study provides a general overview of the climate risks in the country and increased vulnerability of these risks in certain communities. It then provides information on the institutional arrangement of NDC and other UNFCCC submission and the general culture and capacity of the government to respond to climate change. It then describes what our research has found related to progress on NDC 3.0 and the level of familiarity, engagement, and interest among a sample of civil society representatives.

4.1. Jordan

Findings in this case study are derived from a desk-based review and KIIs with one ministry official, one technical assistance agency, three local organisations that reflect perspectives of women, youth, and workers, and a FGD with five climate youth activists.

How does climate change impact Jordan?

Climate change compounds an already strained socioeconomic situation in Jordan that affects all of Jordan's society. The country is home to approximately 11.5 million people,³⁷ of which nearly 30% of the population is non-Jordanian, comprised of a high proportion of refugees, primarily from Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Yemen, many of which are among the most climate-vulnerable.³⁸ With 63% of its population below the age of 30,³⁹ Jordan's young society grapples with one of the highest youth unemployment percentages in the region.⁴⁰ This economic challenge is worsened by Jordan's exposure to severe climate change impacts.

Jordan faces rising temperatures, declining precipitation, and increasing extreme weather events, including droughts, flash floods, and landslides, all driven by an increasingly changing climate.⁴¹ These changes are straining Jordan's already limited water supplies and adversely impacting key sectors of the Jordanian economy, particularly water, agriculture, food, and health. Some regions, particularly the northwest, are disproportionately affected by climate risks.⁴²

Jordan's economy is significantly impacted by global climatic changes given its reliance on imports of fuel, food, metals, and building materials due to the country's scarcity of natural resources. Essential supply chains are impacted by regional conflict, geopolitical tensions, mass migration, and natural disasters, all of which are exacerbated by climate change. Jordan's Ministry of Environment highlighted how issues like cross-boundary politics and emissions from neighbouring conflicts and war reconstruction impact the country in ways that are not fully captured within its NDC.

Climate change is amplifying hardships faced by vulnerable communities in Jordan, particularly farmers, refugees, and those living in poverty pockets.⁴³ Women agricultural workers are amongst the most affected, as they form a significant portion of the agricultural workforce and depend on the sector for their livelihoods.⁴⁴ Women living in poverty and female-headed households face increased climate vulnerabilities due to a lack of resources and support networks to cope with climate-related shocks and food insecurity.⁴⁵ Jordan's diverse socioeconomic fabric of society stresses the need to reflect the voices of the most susceptible to climate change within its global climate commitments.

"From a climate justice perspective, there are many cross-boundary issues that are geopolitical that are hard to be captured in the NDC context – For example, when we talk about the issue of water basins. It will be mentioned, but not in detail."

Director of Climate Change
Directorate, Ministry of
Environment

How is Jordan's climate policy made?

Institutional arrangements for climate policymaking and consultation

Jordan has made significant progress in mainstreaming the national climate change agenda across sectors. Jordan's climate policy is governed by the Climate Change Bylaw (No. 79, 2019), which established a regulatory framework for addressing climate change. Under the law, the Ministry of Environment is the central authority in climate change policies and is the main focal point for the UNFCCC. As the focal point, the Ministry of Environment's Climate Change Directorate is responsible for developing and tracking UNFCCC submissions and NDCs. The Climate Change Directorate consists of two sections responsible for developing and coordinating climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, in alignment with the country's national priorities.

The Bylaw defines the structure of the Jordanian National Climate Change Committee (JNCCC), which was established by decree issued by the Prime Minister in 2001 and re-activated in 2019, to oversee the coordination, formulation, and monitoring of adaptation and mitigation targets and strategies. Comprised of secretary generals from sixteen relevant ministries and chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Environment, the JNCCC facilitates stakeholder engagement through convening thematic working groups. These taskforces include representatives from sector unions, the private sector, civil society organisations, environmental unions, and academia. Stakeholders are engaged with based on their expertise and climate mandate. For instance, any environmental organisation with climate change enlisted within their registered priorities is enrolled in the Ministry's roster of stakeholders to be engaged with in climate consultations.⁴⁶ Such engagement channels are formalised in annex (1) and (2) of the Climate Change Bylaw, requiring an assigned stakeholder representative for each group. Such formal and evolving channels are one of the main forms of the government's engagement with CSOs and representatives of climate vulnerable groups.

National Climate Change Institutional Framework in Jordan

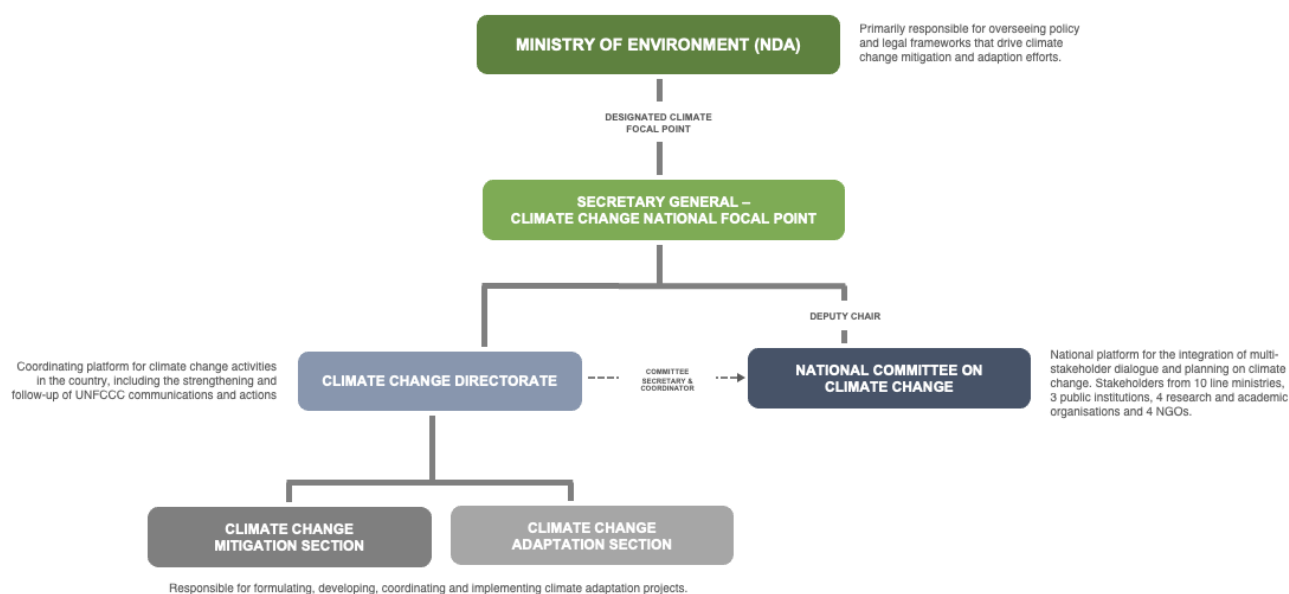


Figure 1: National Climate Change Institutional Framework in Jordan

Jordan's capacity for climate planning and policy

The Director of the Climate Change Directorate identified three key challenges that constrain the Ministry of Environment's enforcement capabilities and stakeholder consultation during the NDC development process.

First, the Ministry's limited financial and human resources restrict the extent of consultation activities carried out as part of the NDC process. The preparation of Jordan's previous NDCs relied on foreign funding: Jordan's NDC 1.0 was developed with funding from UNDP, while NDC 2.0 was implemented with support from the German development agency GIZ. The Ministry of Environment stated that this reliance on external funding causes volatility in ministries' operations and compromises their long-term operational capacity.⁴⁷

Second, the authority of the Ministry of Environment is limited to coordinating and aligning climate commitments and is thus restricted by its overlapping jurisdiction with other implementing and supporting ministries. This, coupled by the absence of executive power, stymies the level of participation the Ministry can uphold.

Third, the cross-cutting nature of climate change makes it challenging to fully understand its effects, complicating the process of identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders in climate policy development.⁴⁸ The challenge of technical knowledge was echoed by technical support agencies, affirming that it is not only a matter of gaining knowledge, but sustaining it.⁴⁹

Where is Jordan at in its NDC 3.0 process?

As per the UNFCCC timeline, Jordan's NDC 3.0 deadline was set for February 2025. However, the director of the Climate Change Directorate at the Ministry of Environment indicated that the NDC will likely be submitted towards the end of the year to allow adequate time for the development and consultation process.⁵⁰ Currently, the Ministry of Environment is focused on compiling climate data, reviewing the progress made on previous NDCs, and collecting learnings from national climate projects, all of which will be published in Jordan's national Stocktake report due in 2025.

At time of the publication of this report, the Ministry of Environment confirmed that no consultations for NDC 3.0 had commenced yet.⁵¹ With an increased focus on participatory consultation processes, the Ministry has expressed their focus on enhancing such engagement efforts in the upcoming NDC 3.0 revision cycle. Typically, the development of NDCs and other climate commitment documents follows a public tender or call for technical agencies and firms issued by the Ministry of Environment to support the NDC preparation. While the particular scope of this technical assistance agency will vary, it serves to compile the targets and strategies determined by the JNCCC and write up the NDC document.⁵² UNDP indicated they had submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Environment to support the NDC 3.0 preparation, stating that their approach outlines an NDC revision process that would go beyond updating content and figures to include consultations, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building efforts.⁵³

"The second challenge is knowing how to identify the right stakeholders and knowing how to do your job within climate change perspective. So, when we tackle poverty, gender equality, women participation, youth, these groups have many challenges that require the work of not one, but many ministries."

Director of Climate Change
Directorate, Ministry of
Environment

What does civil society think?

Familiarity with the NDC process

Familiarity with NDCs varied in depth and nature among civil society representatives engaged with in this study. A civil society representative, operating at a research institute, expressed an in-depth understanding of NDCs and their preparation process. This familiarity stems from their experience supporting the Ministry of Environment in the development of NDC 2.0, and serving technical and advisory roles within the JNCCC working groups.⁵⁴ Youth CSOs and climate youth activists expressed a moderate to high understanding of the NDC process through their participation in UNFCCC youth engagement initiatives and previous COP cycles.⁵⁵

One civil society organisation, specialised in legal aid, reported limited familiarity with the NDC development process. However, the organisation was highly knowledgeable in the implementation of climate policies and the impacts of climate change on local communities, particularly female agricultural workers, migrants, and refugees, through their research on the gendered impacts of climate change in Jordan.⁵⁶

Engagement in and perceptions of the NDC process

Only one organisation expressed their direct engagement in the previous NDC development cycle. Their involvement in this process was perceived to be due to their extensive experience working on climate issues with the government, suggesting that organisations that are not closely integrated in public climate spaces are a question of “out of sight, out of mind.”⁵⁷ Other civil society representatives that had less direct focus on climate change were not engaged in the NDC process and generally did not participate in climate policymaking circles. For example, one civil society representative expressed that, despite extensive experience on the social and legal rights of women, migrants, and refugees, their limited exposure to climate-specialised work may have resulted in their absence from national climate dialogues.⁵⁸ This raises concerns over the space provided to organisations that, while not directly environmentally-focused, are working on issues that intersect with and are impacted by climate change. Other insights suggest that such exclusion is rather unintentional and indicative of the government’s evolving learning process to addressing the intersecting nature of climate change.⁵⁹

““Sometimes I find that people will say that the government doesn’t invite us or involve us. But it is not like that, in my opinion. The government will not always know all aspects of the climate issue. The climate change portfolio is difficult, we are all learning, so exclusion is never intentional. When gender is not involved, they may not be the only one not considered. Bottom line it is a learning process to reach to the best practice and our learning curve is good in my opinion.”

Manager of Climate Change Studies Division, Civil Society Research Organisation

Climate youth activists shared their indirect engagement in previous NDC cycles, noting the increasing efforts of the government in supporting and seeking out diverse perspectives, particularly those of youth, in climate dialogues. Youth’s involvement included developing climate-related policy papers and position papers,⁶⁰ that can potentially inform the development of Jordan’s NDC 3.0.⁶¹ Several activists pointed to their participation in previous COP cycles and youth climate dialogues, such as the UNFCCC Regional Conferences and Local Conferences of Youth (LCOY), as an effective way to engage with the government.^{62,63} One youth-led organisation reflected on their positive participation in national consultations to develop Jordan’s National Adaptation Plan (NAP) that feeds into the adaptation component of the NDC.

Given Jordan’s young population, the Ministry of Environment underscored how such global and national platforms allow the government to understand youth perspectives on the climate agenda.⁶⁵ The presence of youth in Jordan’s delegations in international dialogues, such as COP, reflect the priority and support provided by the government in facilitating the approvals and recommendations necessary to partake in global climate dialogues. Furthermore, the Ministry of Environment plans to establish a youth technical group within the JNCCC which, when established, would create a mechanism for young people to formally contribute to the NDC preparation process.

Beyond youth engagement, UNDP acknowledged the absence of systematic processes for integrating diverse perspectives of climate vulnerable groups

“When we were invited, it was real engagement. This is what encouraged us as an organisation to focus our work on equipping youth with the technical knowledge and assistance needed to make their participation more informed and productive.”⁶⁴

Executive Programs Lead for youth-led climate organisation

in previous NDC cycles.⁶⁶ This was echoed by observations from civil society. One civil society representative noted that vulnerable groups, including gender and youth, were mentioned in Jordan's NDC 2.0, "but they were just terms that were included in the documents [and that] they didn't reflect the real engagement and participation of different stakeholders" in the preparation process."⁶⁷ Several CSOs attributed this lack of truly participatory processes, which do not deeply engage a diverse range of stakeholders, to the time constraints imposed by foreign agencies in developing NDCs. As one representative suggests, "the time constraint that was imposed from donors and the UNFCCC process shaped the depth and nature of participation."⁶⁸ The time constraints for NDC 3.0 are also likely to limit wider consultation with civil society, especially since no consultations have yet taken place in Jordan and the deadline is set for later this year.

That said, experiences from civil society suggest tangible progress made on climate adaptation projects that target the awareness of local communities. Notably, several civil society representatives shared how their awareness raising and capacity building activities for local community groups, informal workers, female farmers, and young girls have equipped these groups with the climate knowledge necessary to adapt to climate change and effectively engage in future NDC cycles and national climate dialogues.⁶⁹ This notion of empowerment reflects Oxfam in Jordan's recent engagement with civil society that targeted local communities across six governorates in Jordan by equipping them with the necessary technical, advocacy and communication skills to effectively engage in NDC processes and foster meaningful conversations around critical climate issues.⁷⁰

When asked whether the Ministry of Environment perceives the government's engagement with civil society to be representative, the Director of the Climate Change Directorate expressed that, "In reality, there is no accurate answer to that at all."⁷¹ The statement indicates that, despite a seemingly systematic way of engaging with CSOs as described previously, the vast number of environmental CSOs and their varying scales and activities obstruct the ministry's ability to identify the most representative organisations within civil society. UNDP elaborated on how the competitive nature of the sector, driven by limited funding and resources, can lead to CSO's overlapping efforts and confusion when engaging with the government.⁷² The lack of a unified civil society representative for the climate agenda, who could serve as a focal point in engaging with the government, further weakens the sector's organised engagement. This was stressed by a climate youth organisation, who stated, "Even if the government wanted to engage and communicate with the civil society, they will also ask, 'With which organisation should we talk to?'"⁷³

A question raised by civil society groups pertained to *who* has access to climate consultation sessions in the country or internationally. Climate youth activists and CSOs noted that climate policy consultations are often organised by technical assistance agencies who invite organisations and individuals they have engaged with previously.⁷⁴ This echoes a common frustration amongst civil society and the government regarding the saturation of the same individuals across different climate dialogue opportunities offered by international organisations – a notion informally termed as "conference tourism."⁷⁵ This redundant participation risks the absence of essential perspectives from youth across the country that have not had the same access nor privilege. Additionally, language barriers can further exclude youth, women, and climate vulnerable groups in these dialogues.⁷⁶ Here, language meant dual both the technical jargon used in climate policy settings and the requirement for English proficiency to actively engage in climate discussions that are predominantly in English.

Interest in engaging in climate planning and dialogue

Interviewed CSOs unanimously expressed their interest in participating in the upcoming NDC 3.0 consultation process, emphasising the importance of civil society inclusion in climate policymaking both within and beyond the NDCs.⁷⁷ NGOs and CSOs are the closest link to local communities, as noted by one CSO, reflecting on their work with female agricultural workers: “Every time we went on the field, we learned so much from them.”⁷⁸ In other words, it is important to gain insights from the ground, shifting the focus from national-level dialogues that prioritise aggregate macro-level issues, to the lived realities and experiences of communities.

Engaging local communities in drafting NDCs, as underscored by youth climate activists, would also increase their sense of ownership in achieving the country’s climate commitments. In advising against grouping local communities as one homogeneous group in UNFCCC documents,⁷⁹ NDC 3.0 consultations should prioritise engaging diverse perspectives to develop a holistic understanding of the varying impacts of climate change on gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. Youth climate activists also shared that community engagement and civic leadership can empower grassroots movements and encourage research to address the specific vulnerabilities of different groups across regions in Jordan.⁸⁰

Recommendations for civil society

- **Identify and empower collective organisations that represent diverse viewpoints in civil society:** Unified representative organizations for specific interest groups of environmental and social issues within civil society, such as sector-wide unions and environmental umbrella organizations, can facilitate broad civil society access to the government and improve the influence of civil society. These representative bodies can simultaneously serve as a reference point for smaller civil society organisations while capturing these organisations’ diverse perspectives in the NDC 3.0 consultations.⁸¹ Empowering these organisations can involve collaborating with relevant implementing ministries under the JNCCC.
- **Equip local communities and vulnerable groups with technical climate knowledge and raise awareness of local climate impacts:** As the closest link to local communities, CSOs can channel their efforts on awareness raising while collecting and representing local insights in NDC consultation activities. One organisation proposed non-traditional knowledge dissemination tools to spread awareness of the impacts of climate change and the need for NDCs to different members of society (examples include podcasts, reels, art, storytelling, role play models such as Model United Nations, and competitions for farmers).⁸²
- **Conduct regular needs assessments for youth across Jordan:** Before capacity building efforts, youth activists recommended conducting a needs assessment for youth in rural and urban areas to identify the varying capacities, backgrounds, and interests to inform capacity-building and awareness raising activities accordingly.⁸³

Recommendations for UN agencies and technical bodies

- **Redefine success factors for climate initiatives to prioritise sustainability:** Different civil society representatives emphasised the need for sustainability measures in donor-funded climate initiatives. This is especially critical for any planned stakeholder engagement activities introduced under the upcoming NDC 3.0 revision process. For instance, technical and financial support provided to the JNCCC should target long-term engagement measures with civil society as a metric for success to guarantee consistent participatory processes in future NDC versions.⁸⁴
- **Leverage diverse CSOs and cooperatives to access hard to reach climate vulnerable groups during NDC consultations:** Coalitions and cooperatives are an important, yet often neglected, representative channel for fostering relationships between the government and the local communities, particularly for women, agricultural workers, migrants, and refugees.⁸⁵
- **Increase investment in NDC consultations:** UNDP recommended that international organisations allocate further resources to support the government in NDC consultation efforts. This additional support can include activities such as capacity building on climate policies, raising awareness on NDCs and UNFCCC processes, and supporting CSOs in developing position papers.⁸⁶

Recommendations for government

- **Conduct an ecosystem mapping and needs assessment:** Understanding the climate ecosystem requires a mapping of its main drivers, actors, and influencers. This mapping can enable informed and effective forms of engagement with civil society. For example, a periodic assessment survey could evaluate the environmental CSO ecosystem to understand the capabilities, willingness, and capacities of CSOs. Through this exercise, governments can identify organisations to include in the NDC consultation processes, ensuring organisations that are most active, effective, and representative.⁸⁷
- **Establish an implementing arm for the JNCCC:** Civil society interviews suggest that the governance structure of the JNCCC – consisting of secretary generals from implementing ministries – renders the committee inoperative due to the lagging priority of the climate agenda amongst the country's pressing social, economic, humanitarian, and political issues.⁸⁸ This, coupled by resource constraints of the Ministry of Environment, calls for an implementing arm to support the Ministry of Environment's coordination role. A proposal put forward was to establish a permanent government entity that serves as the implementing arm for JNCCC. This body, referred to as a 'Centre of Excellence', can serve the multifaceted role of: (1) climate data collection and monitoring; (2) knowledge production and management; (3) awareness raising; and (4) community engagement.⁸⁹
- **Set up long-term plans to retain governmental climate knowledge:** The government should establish internal knowledge systems to facilitate the effective transfer of technical information amongst ministerial officials, improving the efficiency and comprehensiveness of each NDC cycle.⁹⁰

- **Leverage existing legislative frameworks to formalise engagement processes with climate vulnerable groups** Insights from civil society implied that social justice considerations, such as gender equality, within climate projects are driven by the UNFCCC requirements and donor priorities. It is worth noting that Jordan's Climate Change Bylaw (No. 79, 2019) alludes to engagement with civil society organisations, yet falls short on specifying which climate vulnerable groups should be represented, leaving engagement with CSO unregulated. This underscores the need for leveraging such frameworks to integrate the participation of climate vulnerable groups within Jordan's climate mandate, ensuring participatory consistency in upcoming national climate policy dialogues beyond the NDCs. This integration can also help mitigate external time constraints, such as the UNFCCC deadline, or changing donor priorities and agendas.⁹¹

4.2. Lebanon

Findings in this case study are derived from a desk-based review and KIs with one representative from UNDP that is working with the Ministry of Environment Climate Change Unit and seven local organisations in Lebanon.⁹² These organisations represent a range of issues and reflect perspectives of communities vulnerable to climate change, including agricultural workers predominantly in the South of Lebanon, young people, refugees and displaced peoples, and women.

How does climate change impact Lebanon?

Since 2019, Lebanon has faced several crises: a financial crisis, the Beirut port explosion, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Israel's recent military invasion in the south. As a result, the government has limited capacity to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement.⁹³ Climate change is exacerbating the country's myriad socio-economic challenges, as Lebanon is becoming increasingly vulnerable to heat waves, inconsistent precipitation, droughts, wildfires, all of which threaten access to safe drinking water, food security, and human health.

The majority of the Lebanese population (89%) lives in urban areas,⁹⁴ mainly along the coastline, which is vulnerable to floods. Rural residents also face significant climate threats, particularly wildfires that are common in woodlands and forests in rural and mountain areas.⁹⁵ Women and girls in Lebanon are especially vulnerable to climate change due to existing inequalities in the home, workforce, and political institutions.

Lebanon's population also includes a significant number of refugees and displaced populations from neighbouring conflicts.⁹⁶ This includes around 222,000 displaced Palestinians⁹⁷ and 1.5 million displaced Syrians.⁹⁸ Many of these displaced populations live in informal settlements and areas facing severe climate-related challenges, like flood-prone or agriculturally poor land.⁹⁹ Interviews with organisations working with refugees and displaced peoples highlighted the severe impact climate change can have on these communities, citing cold and damp conditions in winter, and risks from flash floods.¹⁰⁰ These communities are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts and should not be left out of the climate planning processes, including the development of NDCs.¹⁰¹

How is Lebanon's climate policy made?

Institutional arrangements for climate policy making and consultation

The Lebanese Ministry of Environment acts as the official coordinator for the NDC and other submissions to the UNFCCC.¹⁰² UNDP Lebanon supports the Ministry of Environment in fulfilling Lebanon's obligations under the Paris Agreement, which includes assisting the government with national reporting, climate negotiations, and the development of policies, including updates to the NDC. The Ministry of Environment also

chairs the NDC committee, which includes representatives from various ministries, such as Energy and Water, Public Works, Agriculture, and Foreign Affairs, as well as Electricité du Liban and the Lebanese Petroleum Administration. Notably, it also includes a representative from the National Commission for Lebanese Women, a government body that promotes women's rights in Lebanese society and enhances gender mainstreaming in public institutions to ensure that the development and implementation of NDC targets is gender responsive.¹⁰³

Currently, there are no formalised or legal frameworks for public consultation in the NDC process. A UNDP Climate Change programme representative, collaborating with the Ministry of Environment, stated that the government intends to create future legislation that creates a national mandate to address climate change. The absence of a mandate currently poses a challenge for both government and non-government stakeholders to fully commit to engaging in the NDC development process and other national climate planning and policy efforts.

Lebanon's capacity for climate planning and policy

Lebanon's Ministry of Environment is facing significant capacity challenges that make the NDC preparation process difficult. The preparation of UNFCCC submissions is handled by a very small team at the Ministry of Environment. This team is primarily funded through international projects and receives support from UNDP members who are seconded to the ministry.

For the past 15 years, the Ministry of Environment has aimed to improve data quality and establish sustainable data collection processes for NDC preparation and implementation. This includes enhancing data availability, providing training, and promoting awareness among stakeholders. These efforts have struggled in the long term due to resource scarcity, frequent staff turnover, and political challenges that have impeded the normalisation of these processes.¹⁰⁴ The interview with a representative from UNDP highlighted some challenges in efforts to build capacity during previous NDC cycles within the government, largely due to competing demands and issues with retaining talent in the Ministry. The representative noted, however, that the newly elected government has demonstrated genuine engagement in validating the NDCs and emphasised the government's ownership of these priorities.¹⁰⁵

Where is Lebanon at in its NDC 3.0 process?

Lebanon has not submitted its NDC 3.0 but is currently in the preparation process. The Ministry of Environment, with UNDP support, is progressing in developing its NDC 3.0 adaptation targets and in the earlier stages of developing specific mitigation targets.

As of February 2025, UNDP indicated that it is conducting consultations with all relevant ministries to identify priorities and assess the relevance of previously established adaptation targets to inform NDC 3.0 content. Most strategies in previous NDCs were designed before Israel's invasion in 2024, so UNDP is working with the ministries to evaluate any changes in priorities and integrating a recovery component into the new NDC adaptation targets. NDC 3.0 mitigation targets are being shaped through existing mitigation strategies, like the Long-term Low-Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS).

Several consultations are planned, which will take place in two phases: data collection

for setting targets and a validation process. The first phase involves gathering data to establish targets and determine NDC priorities, which typically includes interviews with experts from the NDC committee and focal points within the ministry. During the target-setting stage, consultations include youth negotiators from COP (to ensure that targets are aligned with the agreements made at previous COPs) and a gender expert to integrate gender considerations into all targets.¹⁰⁶

In the second phase, which is expected to take place in the third quarter of 2025, validation sessions will be conducted with a broader range of stakeholders, including representatives from civil society and NGOs and youth that participated in LCOYs.¹⁰⁷ UNDP is currently mapping these stakeholders, mainly through existing relationships with UN agencies and the ministry. The purpose of these sessions will be for the government to present the agreed targets and priorities identified in the first stage. CSOs and NGOs, who will likely be implementing the target strategies, will assess their feasibility and establish measurement criteria. It is unclear how feedback will be integrated into the NDC. However, once the NDC is finalised it is subject to approval from the NDC Committee and the Council of Ministries and submitted to the UNFCCC.

What does civil society think?

Familiarity with the NDC process

The majority of civil society representatives interviewed were not familiar or had very limited familiarity with the NDC process. Youth climate activists were most familiar with climate action plans. Their familiarity stemmed from participation in UN-led regional and international climate conferences and initiatives, including LCOY, which brought together 100 youth from 28 organisations, and participation in youth delegations in COP28 and COP29.

Larger NGOs operating regionally generally had a better understanding of the NDCs, though their knowledge was basic. They made the association of NDCs to COPs and the Paris Agreement. In contrast, smaller organisations working in rural areas, such as the three involved in agricultural reform, lacked any knowledge of the NDC.

Engagement in and perceptions of the NDC process

Most of the interviewed CSO representatives have not been engaged in the NDC 3.0 preparation thus far. The exception was the interviewed youth climate organisation, though even their engagement has been limited. The youth climate activist indicated that they participated in a post-COP29 session with the Ministry of Environment, where they discussed priorities for NDC 3.0. These priorities included integrating post-war rehabilitation into the plans and developing innovative funding mechanisms to unlock private sector financing for NDC implementation.

The youth climate activist acknowledged that involvement in climate conferences like COP typically stems from the privilege of having the time to engage in climate planning processes without being paid, access to higher education from reputable universities in Lebanon, proficiency in English, and connections to UNDP and the Ministry of Environment. One UNDP representative validated this insight, noting that CSOs invited to participate in the NDC development process tend to have existing relations with the Ministry of Environment, UNDP, and other UN and technical agencies. The UNDP

representative indicated that while the process to feed into the NDC is open to everyone at the validation phase, UNDP tends to target engagement with people and organisations “who they know will give political weight and buy-in to the process.”¹⁰⁸

“While we believe it is important to have a strong state with local authorities that represent the people, over the last 5 to 6 years, we feel we cannot rely on state representatives”

Co-founder, Environmental Justice NGO

Similarly, the UNDP representative acknowledged that the climate space is a small community in Lebanon and more senior team members in the Climate Change Unit at the Ministry of Environment will leverage their interpersonal relationships to invite targeted stakeholders to participate in the process. An interview with a different organisation working with refugees confirmed this observation. They mentioned that their involvement in a workshop focused on reducing emissions from electricity generators was based on a personal invitation. Additionally, they noted a trend in participation linked to connections with government officials.

Civil society representatives emphasised the multiple crises and political instability that Lebanon is experiencing. This situation has led to limited faith and reliance on the government among civil society. Several organisations pointed to government corruption and clientelism, which have eroded trust and fostered disillusionment with public policy participation, including in national climate policy like the NDCs.

Civil society representatives working in agriculture reform and food sovereignty shared how their work on the ground is often not reflected in national policy. These sentiments highlight a broader issue regarding the perception that NDCs are irrelevant to, or not aligned with, the realities faced by communities and civil society. The interviews suggest that there is a lack of communication between governments, IGOs, NGOs, and CSOs, particularly smaller ones.

A UNDP Lebanon representative pointed out that governments often rely on NGOs and CSOs to gather community perspectives, given the high-level, national focus of the NDCs. However, a lack of communication between the government and civil society leads to isolated efforts in monitoring local climate impacts and addressing climate change. Consequently, the government and UNDP miss out on valuable on-the-ground insights from the community, hindering the creation of NDCs that accurately reflect national circumstances and impede the effective monitoring of NDC progress.

“We are the ones on the ground that are actually doing something about [climate change] and experiencing it.”

President, Non-Profit Agricultural Organisation

Interest in engaging in national climate planning and dialogue

All the organisation representatives interviewed expressed interest in engaging in NDC 3.0 preparation and future NDC cycles, though the level of interest varied across organisations and was contingent upon the need for political stability in Lebanon and addressing capacity limitations.

An interviewee from a women’s rights organisation appeared less interested since they did not perceive climate change as linked to their work and viewed the humanitarian crises in Lebanon as a separate and more urgent issue.¹⁰⁹ They expressed that their priority is to integrate human rights and gender issues into the general political discourse and policy, and while addressing climate change is important, it is not a current priority.

Organisations focused on agriculture and development showed a greater interest in

participating in the NDC 3.0 process, perhaps in part because they had a better understanding of the connection between addressing climate risks and their work. Their interest mainly stemmed from a desire to better understand the national climate planning process and to enhance climate mainstreaming in their own projects. They also emphasised that the communities they serve have valuable insights into the impacts of climate change and can help develop actionable and equitable strategies that do not impose additional burdens on already vulnerable groups. An organisation working with farmers and cooperatives emphasised the importance of engaging these groups, as climate issues are central to their lives and work. Farmers and cooperatives often have traditional agricultural practices that support sustainable land management and possess acute knowledge of local environmental changes. This knowledge can strengthen crafting NDC adaptation and mitigation strategies. The interview emphasised that farmers prefer not to be dictated to and should have the freedom to decide how to adapt to climate change. By participating in the NDC process, farmers can gain ownership and a sense of control over the outcomes.¹¹⁰

Recommendations for civil society

- **Proactively communicate climate change projects and knowledge to government:** Many CSOs are actively engaged in climate change initiatives, mainly focusing on agriculture and water. However, their efforts are often unknown to the government and UNDP Lebanon. UNDP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, is conducting mapping exercises to better understand the adaptation activities taking place on the ground. Civil society can play a crucial role in this process by proactively communicating with UNDP and Ministry of Environment about the work they are doing related to climate change. This collaboration will help to streamline efforts among international organisations, national governments, and local communities, ensuring that initiatives are not duplicated, and that no valuable knowledge is overlooked in NDC preparation and implementation.¹¹¹
- **Improve collaboration and trust within civil society:** Some interviews indicated that the civil society sector in Lebanon can be highly competitive, particularly when it comes to securing funding. This competition often leads to a lack of sharing of ideas and data, leaving little room for cooperation and space to collectively input into the national climate planning process. One organisation we interviewed is trying to combat this by forming a coalition focused on agroecology, which currently includes 15 members. They expressed that the coalition consists of smaller organisations, as larger ones tend to be more competitive and less inclined to collaborate. This coalition allows them to present collective recommendations related to sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty to the government and potentially have a greater impact on government policy.¹¹²

Recommendations for UN agencies and technical bodies

- **Prioritise building the capacity of national institutions:** International organisations should focus on enhancing the capabilities of national institutions in preparing national (and local) climate plans. The Lebanese Ministry of Environment faces

significant limitations in its operational capacity, compounded by a high turnover rate among its staff. This instability hinders the Ministry's ability to carry out its responsibilities under the Paris Agreement. International organisations can support the establishment of robust institutional knowledge and strengthen the overall capacity of the Ministry of Environment . By doing so, the government can take the lead in preparing and reporting on its NDCs in-house and facilitating inclusive consultation processes.¹¹³

- **Promote the local relevance of Lebanon's NDC 3.0:** UNDP recognises that civil society may feel disconnected from the NDC process, seeing it as irrelevant to their everyday lives. However, UNDP acknowledged that the NDC is a tool that brings together national climate policies into one coherent policy document. While the 1.5°C target is global, the NDC establishes specific national targets that apply to Lebanon. Organisations like UNDP and Oxfam can raise awareness that the NDC is significant for local communities, as it reflects the country's priorities by sector. Targets are set by ministries, meaning that by engaging in the process, civil society has a chance to influence these priorities.¹¹⁴
- **Sustainable funding and capacity support for civil society engagement:** Some of the civil society organisations we interviewed highlighted the need for support in building capacity and incentivising civil society to participate in NDC preparation and broader climate planning. For example, the youth climate activists interviewed emphasised that their involvement in climate planning and projects is entirely on a voluntary basis. This demands a significant amount of time and effort without pay, which not all young people can or are willing to commit. Most CSOs and NGOs also have limited resources and are funded on a project basis that requires grant applications restricting their mandate and capacities to contribute. Organisations, such as UN agencies and donors, should prioritise longer-term and more flexible funding. This approach will allow civil society organisations to gradually enhance their understanding of climate vulnerabilities and contribute to crafting climate mitigation and adaptation targets and strategies.

Recommendations for government

- **Establish a national climate law that ensures and formalises public participation in NDC preparation:** Without a legal mandate, public engagement in the NDC process is conditional on national circumstance. Local civil society organisations, particularly those with limited capacity, may not feel incentivised to participate, viewing it as optional. A legal obligation for public participation from the government, along with organised mechanisms, will encourage civil society involvement and enable these organisations to plan and prioritise their participation in future NDC cycles.
- **Transparent and open opportunities for engagement:** The research indicated that personal connections to the Ministry of Environment can influence awareness and participation in opportunities to input into climate planning. Ministries with limited resources will likely need to be selective in their engagements. However, they should aim to gather a representative cross-section of views to understand the diverse perspectives of the communities most affected. For instance, individuals working in specific sectors, such as agriculture, should be fed into sectoral targets. It is important to have a clear and transparent rationale for who is invited to participate, and the results of the consultations should be made public.

- **Collaborate with grassroots organisations, not just formal civil society groups:**
Grassroot organisations provide valuable insight into the most marginalised populations, including people with disabilities, farmers and other marginalised groups, who are often excluded from discussions. It is essential to have the capacity to actively seek out these individuals and specifically invite them rather than sending out a general invitation.

5. Conclusions

With its regional focus, particularly through the two case studies presented, this paper examines the progress made in developing NDC 3.0 in these country contexts and assesses the familiarity, engagement, and interest of civil society in these processes. The research findings indicate that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for developing inclusive NDC processes. Governments often face extremely limited capacities, tight deadlines, and competing priorities. This challenge is particularly evident in the MENA region, which is grappling with socio-economic difficulties and ongoing conflicts. Governments, technical bodies, and civil society are interconnected, and each group can contribute to the creation of ambitious, actionable, and inclusive NDC 3.0.

While the research showcases that there are limitations in the inclusivity of NDC processes across the four case study countries, it equally points to the opportunities in each country to engage with broad representatives of civil society in NDC 3.0. Almost all of the interviewed stakeholders, whether government, technical agents, or CSOs, expressed interest in making the process more inclusive. This willingness reflects an understanding that NDCs, and more broadly national climate strategies, can serve as a key mechanism for addressing the climate vulnerabilities of marginalised communities when developed through inclusive and representative approaches. This necessitates that governments and those involved in drafting NDCs engage a multitude of stakeholders from across civil society, encourage meaningful participation, integrate their considerations and insights, communicate the impact of civil society's contributions, and maintain open and transparent feedback loops. Doing so would ensure that NDCs remain static commitments but are active commitment to mitigating and adapting to climate change that genuinely reflects and responds to the needs of all communities.

Key Conclusions:

- **Governments have taken some steps to open participation but gaps in accessibility and transparency persist:** Efforts such as stakeholder consultations and climate workshops have been organised, but these often lack inclusive design and timely communication.
- **There is a strong willingness among stakeholders to improve inclusivity in NDC 3.0:** Almost all interviewed stakeholders, across government, technical agencies, and CSOs, expressed interest in making NDC processes more inclusive, recognising that broader participation can enhance national climate commitments.
- **Inclusive NDCs are seen as a tool to better respond to local climate vulnerabilities:** Stakeholders across the region acknowledged that NDCs, when developed through inclusive and representative approaches, have the potential to serve as mechanisms for addressing the climate challenges faced by marginalised communities.
- **Moving forward, inclusive participation must be embedded in NDC governance structures, not treated as optional:** Governments and technical actors involved in drafting NDCs must proactively engage a wide range of civil society stakeholders, communicate the impact of their contributions, and establish transparent, ongoing feedback loops. Doing so is essential to transform NDCs from static documents into living commitments that reflect and respond to national realities.

6. General Recommendations

Climate change will affect everyone in the MENA region, but especially the communities at the forefront of the crisis, those with the least means and resources, will be the ones who will be suffering the most. The below recommendations for civil society, UN agencies and technical bodies, and governments in the MENA region, provide ideas on how different stakeholders can ensure that the NDC processes take a whole of society approach in limiting global temperature increases to 1.5°C. The recommendations also seek to ensure that the adaptation to the impacts of climate change reduces inequality, improves people's lives, and gets the community behind its nation's climate plans.

Recommendations for civil society

- **Foster Collaboration:** Form coalitions and platforms to facilitate the sharing of ideas and collective representation in national forums for climate planning. These bodies will enhance access to government channels and improve civil society's overall influence in national climate planning, particularly smaller organisations.
- **Proactive Communication with Government:** Actively seek partnerships and opportunities to engage with national and sub-national governments that focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly with ministry focal points. Communicate climate change projects and findings to these bodies to ensure they are informed during the preparation and implementation of NDCs.
- **Build the Capacities of Communities:** CSOs can leverage their strong ties to communities and specific demographic groups to improve capacity, disseminate information, and collect data on the local impacts of climate change. By communicating this localised information to governments, CSOs can help ensure that national adaptation and mitigation targets are inclusive, reflecting community-level concerns and knowledge at the national stage. In turn, CSOs can enhance community knowledge of NDCs and highlight their significance at the local level.

Recommendations for UN agencies and technical bodies

- **Provide sustainable funding and capacity-support:** Most CSOs and NGO have limited resources and are funded on a project basis that requires grant applications restricting their mandate and capacities to contribute to NDCs. Organisations, such as UN agencies and donors, should provide longer-term and more flexible funding to allow civil society organisations to build their capacity and incentivise engagement in the NDC process.
- **Support decentralised platforms:** Fund and support the establishment of independent climate networks throughout the MENA region. These networks would facilitate

knowledge exchange between CSOs and other non-state actors without interference from government or private-sector influences. The platforms should hold regular meetings to share insights on climate issues, promote partnerships, and support peer learning. This initiative would improve CSOs' knowledge and capacity to participate in national climate policy consultations, including the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) processes.

- **Promote the local relevance of NDC 3.0:** UN agencies and other international organisations can reframe NDC 3.0 to highlight its local significance. Investing in awareness campaigns that present information about the NDC in simple terms and its relevance to every-day life will help civil society see the value in contributing.
- **Strengthen women participation:** Support Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) in gathering independent data on the gender-specific impacts of climate change, facilitate inclusive workshops that enable women to participate actively in national climate planning and advocate for dedicated channels that allow WROs to communicate their insights to the government during the NDC process.

Recommendations for governments

- **Transparency in Participation Opportunities and NDC Development:** The availability of online public information regarding the progress of NDC 3.0 and opportunities for public engagement was very limited across the countries examined in this study. Governments should provide real-time updates on the status of the NDC, including details about workshops, expert consultations, and review processes. These updates should be easily accessible to the public. Governments should also disclose whether the consultation process is open to everyone or selective, and if it is selective, they should specify who is invited to participate and the rationale for the selection. The outcomes of the consultations or submissions from non-governmental stakeholders should be made public (e.g. by publishing them in an annexe of the NDC).
- **Mapping and Knowledge-Retention:** Governments should regularly conduct a comprehensive mapping of key actors and organisations linked to the climate adaptation and mitigation space in the country and assess these stakeholders' capabilities to inform the selection of representative organisations for NDC consultation processes and ensure the organisations have the capacity and resources needed to effectively contribute. Additionally, governments should establish internal knowledge retention systems that will facilitate the effective transfer of pertinent information related to the NDC, including relevant non-government stakeholders, among officials, improving the efficiency and comprehensiveness of each NDC cycle.
- **Strengthen local governance for climate action:** Governments should establish and support climate focal points or coordination units at the sub-national level (e.g. municipalities or governorates) to facilitate the localisation of national climate commitments and reflect the realities of different communities within countries. However, these local entities should operate within clearly defined mechanisms, such as formalised reporting and coordination structures, that feed into the central bodies that are responsible for NDC development. This approach ensures alignment, coherence, and continuity across governance levels. It also adapts to existing institutional structures instead of disrupting them, aiming to create functional, two-way channels in between national planners and local actors.

Appendix

Methodology

Overview

Using a structured methodology, this report provides insights on actionable and evidence-based conclusions and recommendations for key stakeholders, namely, governments, civil society, technical bodies, and donors. This report uses a whole-of-society approach to underpin each stage of the research process, including the literature review, documentary analysis, and stakeholder engagement.

Approach

First, a systematic review of each country's submissions to the UNFCCC was conducted by examining select keywords (see footnote) aligned with research objectives.¹¹⁵ Documents included each country's latest NDC, National Communications (NCs), Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), Stocktake Reports, Biennial Update Reports (BURs), Communication Plans, National Climate Action Plans (CAPs), and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), where available. Additional relevant documents from technical assistance bodies such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO), UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), NDC Partnership Alliance, and development banks were also evaluated.

Next, a scoping evaluation was conducted to evaluate literature on, but not limited to, inclusive climate governance literature, best practices for participatory climate action, and the importance of civil society in climate planning. This approach provides greater understanding on the broader processes that countries undergo in developing their UNFCCC submissions by providing comparative insights into how NDC processes differ from practical recommendations provided in the field.

Subsequently, key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to complement findings from the documentary analysis and literature review. Diversity among participants allowed this report to capture a wide range of viewpoints and achieve deeper evaluation of inclusivity in NDC processes. Based on consultations with Oxfam country offices in the MENA region, two key stakeholder groups were identified:

- **Government representatives and technical assistance bodies**, who were interviewed to help further understand each country's NDC development process; and
- **CSOs and representatives of climate-vulnerable groups**, such as women, refugees and migrants, workers, rural residents, and youth, who were interviewed to better understand the role of CSOs in national climate planning.

KIIs were conducted with 28 stakeholders across the target countries. KIIs followed a semi-structured format, with guiding questions on topics related to the NDCs, such as perceptions of civil society involvement, representation, and inclusion, the impact of national climate strategies, and general sentiment towards climate action. KIIs differed in format, depending on stakeholder preference, with some consultations taking place

individually and others as focus groups. This engagement involved close collaboration with Oxfam and country offices to identify risks and create sensitive, context-specific strategies for different groups in each country.

Analysis of data involved cross-evaluating stakeholder insights with insights from best practice literature and NDC case studies that follow a whole-of-society approach in their design. However, in recognising the principle of CBDR-RC, governments may vary in their implementation of a whole-of-society approach. This nuance is factored in our methodology through a data evaluation framework that considers the contextual components derived from each country's unique cultural, political, and socioeconomic structure. The framework reflected the following considerations:

- **Climate policy context:** What are sociocultural, political and historical factors that shape the nature of decision making in each country? How are UNFCCC submissions organised and managed? Which key sectors and stakeholders are typically involved in climate policy negotiations and dialogues and why?
- **NDC development processes:** How is the NDC development process described? Does the country explicitly reference participatory processes in its NDC submission and draft? How does the content of such documents reflect the realities of the process?
- **Civil society engagement and representation:** Is there evidence of the inclusion of representatives from diverse civil society groups, including women, young people, refugees, and other groups typically underrepresented in climate decision-making spaces? Is this evidence of participatory processes shared with the public? What contextual factors shape which stakeholders are engaged within each country?
- **Perceptions of inclusion:** How do CSOs and government stakeholders perceive the inclusive nature of these processes? What does inclusion mean in the context of each country and from the perspective of climate vulnerable groups?

Research Limitations

There were several challenges that limit the insights of this report. First, this research relies heavily on the willingness of those involved in the NDC process, as well as those who have not taken part or who may have been excluded from it, to engage with the researchers. While it was important to interview a wide range of stakeholders, the strength and depth of insights depends on informants' openness and willingness to share meaningful information. To mitigate low response rates and unengaged informants, this research actively sought out additional representatives for KIIs and supplemented insights from published reports and external sources.

Second, gathering a truly representative sample of stakeholders across the target countries was made challenging by constraints such as accessibility, outreach, project duration, and safety concerns. While findings are reflective of a diverse range of stakeholders, this research does not make assumptions about all CSOs, governmental authorities, or technical bodies. It also recognises that representation does not always lead to meaningful inclusion.

Third, due to the technical and robust nature of NDC processes, a lack of awareness of NDCs amongst civil society impacts the data collected. While a consideration of climate change issues was present amongst many – if not all – informants, a focus on the implementation aspect of climate commitments, rather than the drafting process of NDCs, influenced the tenor of many KIIs. However, this presents interesting research

findings and opportunities for pathways forward, rather than compromises the integrity of the research. For example, a lack of awareness amongst informants about NDC processes provided insights into the lack of inclusion and education of CSOs on national climate action plans.

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- ⁵² JO_GOV1; JO_CS01
- ⁵³ JO_TA1
- ⁵⁴ JO_CS01
- ⁵⁵ JO_FGD1; JO_CS02
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- ⁶⁷ JO_CS01

- ⁶⁸ JO_CS01.
- ⁶⁹ JO_CS01; JO_FGD1; JO_CS03
- ⁷⁰ Reference to Oxfam's recent civil society engagement from November 2024 to March 2025 in collaboration with Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies.
- ⁷¹ JO_GOV1
- ⁷² JO_TA1
- ⁷³ JO_CS02
- ⁷⁴ JO_CS02; JO_FGD1; JO_CS03
- ⁷⁵ JO_CS02; JO_FGD1; JO_GOV1; JO_TA1
- ⁷⁶ JO_FGD1; JO_CS03; JO_CS01
- ⁷⁷ JO_CS02; JO_FGD1; JO_CS03; JO_CS01
- ⁷⁸ JO_CS03
- ⁷⁹ JO_FGD1; JO_CS02
- ⁸⁰ JO_FGD1
- ⁸¹ JO_CS02
- ⁸² JO_CS01; JO_CS03
- ⁸³ JO_FGD1
- ⁸⁴ JO_CS02
- ⁸⁵ JO_CS03
- ⁸⁶ JO_TA1
- ⁸⁷ JO_GOV1
- ⁸⁸ JO_CS02
- ⁸⁹ JO_CS01
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ JO_CS01
- ⁹² The names of the civil society organisations have been coded anonymously in this report.
- ⁹³ MoE/UNDP/GEF. (2024).
- ⁹⁴ World Bank. (2023).
- ⁹⁵ MoE/UNDP/GEF. (2024).
- ⁹⁶ MoE/UNDP/GEF. (2024).
- ⁹⁷ UNRWA. (2025).
- ⁹⁸ MoE/UNDP/GEF. (2024).
- ⁹⁹ Asfour, M., and Hovil, A. (2024).
- ¹⁰⁰ LEB_CS01
- ¹⁰¹ Climate Centre. (2024).
- ¹⁰² MoE/UNDP/GEF. (2024).
- ¹⁰³ UNDP. (2021).
- ¹⁰⁴ MoE/UNDP/GEF (2024).
- ¹⁰⁵ LEB_TA1
- ¹⁰⁶ LEB_TA1 emphasised the importance of incorporating gender mainstreaming from the outset, stating, "It's not just a requirement to consider gender in the NDCs; it's good policy."
- ¹⁰⁷ LEB_TA1
- ¹⁰⁸ LEB_TA1
- ¹⁰⁹ LEB_CS02
- ¹¹⁰ LEB_CS03
- ¹¹¹ LEB_TA1
- ¹¹² LEB_CS04
- ¹¹³ LEB_TA1
- ¹¹⁴ LEB_TA1
- ¹¹⁵ Keywords used in this analysis include: 'design,' 'development,' 'process,' 'consultation,' 'preparation,' 'inclusive,' 'participatory,' 'stakeholder consultation,' 'civil society,' 'local community,' 'woman/women,' 'girl(s),' 'gender,' 'female,' 'sex,' 'refugees,' 'migrant(s),' 'displaced,' 'workers,' 'youth/young people,' 'people with disabilities,' and 'older people.'

About Oxfam

Oxfam is a global movement of people who are fighting inequality to end poverty and injustice. We are working across regions in more than 70 countries, with thousands of partners, and allies, supporting communities to build better lives for themselves, grow resilience and protect lives and livelihoods also in times of crisis. Please write to any of the agencies for further information or visit www.oxfam.org.

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