



T20 Policy Brief

Task Force 06

STRENGTHENING MULTILATERALISM AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Enhancing the Role of Non-State Actors in Strengthening Multilateral Governance for Accelerating Climate Action

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TF06



Abstract

The increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events over the past two decades, especially in the Global South countries, highlights the urgency of climate action in the region. The current capacities of state actors in the developing countries and the least developed countries are being challenged due to the increasing risks of climate change impacts. This highlights the need for non-state actors such as think tanks, non-governmental organisations, and intergovernmental organisations in bridging the existing gaps to strengthen multilateral governance for enhanced climate action. The Paris agreement is often referred to as the turning point in global governance, which invited the states to partner with the non-state actors (NSAs) to transition towards a low-carbon world. However, over the past decade there has been a very limited collaboration between the state and non-state actors for climate action. In addition, often the top-down approach of implementation by the state actors misses out on capturing the voice from the grassroots and local level. On the other hand, non-state actors can provide strong evidence from the local level through the bottom-up approach, which is crucial to enhance the inclusivity of the policies and processes. NSAs in the G20 countries can play a pivotal role in addressing the current challenges of multilateral governance by generating new knowledge on evolving trends of climate change, enhancing access to data & information, and building the momentum for scaling of the use-cases of climate change adaptation and sustainable development. Greater formal integration and empowerment of NSAs can drive transparency, boost international cooperation and address the existing challenges in global governance. This policy brief provides a four-point agenda that non-state actors in the G20 countries can mobilise to accelerate climate action and sustainable development at scale to reduce inequities in the Global South.

Keywords: Climate risk landscape, International cooperation, Climate Resilience, Institutional Recalibration, Global Climate Governance



Diagnosis of the Issue

Climate change poses unprecedented challenges to humankind as the long-term climatic variations are on the rise, which include increasing temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and multifold increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. According to the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the rise of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), and unsustainable land-use–land-cover practices confirmed that the global temperature is likely to breach the 1.5-degree mark in any of the next few years (IPCC WG-III, 2022). The recent analyses show that around 4.5 billion people, which is more than half of the world's population, are at risk due to climatic extremes. The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are currently facing four key challenges: a) soaring debt, b) export marginalisation, c) energy poverty, and d) climate vulnerability (Paul, 2022). In addition, the developing countries, small island developing states (SIDS) and LDCs are struggling to accelerate the efforts on adaptation due to a widening gap in adaptation finance. Therefore, climate change impacts and their inequitable outcomes need to be appropriately quantified and focussed analyses need to be conducted at granular scales to assess: a) the changes in the intensity and frequency of climate change impacts and b) the capacities of the Global South countries to effectively respond to these challenges. With the recent addition of the African Union to the G20, the voice of the global south countries is further strengthened in this global forum. Nonetheless, the Global South countries must overcome the following challenges in order to accelerate the efforts on climate action to move towards a resilient world.

1. Intensifying impacts of climate change due to erratic weather patterns Extreme weather events such as floods, extreme heat waves, droughts and associated wildfires hit



many parts of the world in 2023, leading to water & food insecurity, and threatening human welfare (WMO, 2024). Erratic weather patterns and increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events pose additional challenges on the decision makers from the global south countries by diverting the focus on disaster response and recovery rather than on strengthening the preparedness.

2. Lack of access to data and information and limited capacities of state actors for climate action

The challenges posed by climatic changes and their intensifying impacts further get exacerbated by the lack of data on past trends and future projections of climate change and their impacts on various sectors across different geographic scales and administrative levels. Such data is crucial to understand the recurring patterns in the climate induced disasters, which can help identify the “hotspots” of climatic extremes and hence enhance the preparedness for disaster risk reduction (DRR). Climate action is often focussed on climate change mitigation and there is a limited understanding of the state actors from the global south countries on what a contextualised adaptation means for the impacted sectors and geographies in their countries. In addition, climate change is a cross-cutting issue and its risks and impacts on the sectors vary according to the level of the resilience of state actors across various scales (Bhattacharya et al., 2023).

3. Developmental targets vis a vis climate action

At present, most of the global south countries are struggling to meet their basic development targets, which compels them to prioritise the focus on basic services compared to that on climate action. In addition, there is a lack of awareness on how to enhance the resilience of upcoming infrastructure. Further, researchers have highlighted

that the current goals and targets of SDGs are not sufficient to achieve sustainable development in the global south countries (Soergel et al., 2021). This calls for more inclusive and sustainable multilateral solutions to address these contemporary global challenges. In such a scenario, the role of NSAs becomes important, which can collaboratively work towards achieving the nationally determined contributions, adaptation targets, and sustainable development by working closely with the state actors.

The NSAs such as think-tanks, non-governmental organisations, and businesses can bring-in a diverse set of skills and technological innovations and a different perspective that can potentially support the state in addressing the current challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that the NSAs not only get a “seat at the table” but are also proactively involved in the decision making processes. Task force 6 of the Brazil G20 and its focus on global partnerships for sustainable development provides an excellent opportunity for strengthening the collaboration between the state and NSAs in the Global South countries. The G20 presidency of Brazil and the Global South-led Troika must prioritise on creating avenues for deepening the ties between the state and NSAs and also increase the visibility of the efforts of the NSAs by developing mechanisms to evaluate the contributions of the NSAs in climate action.



Recommendations

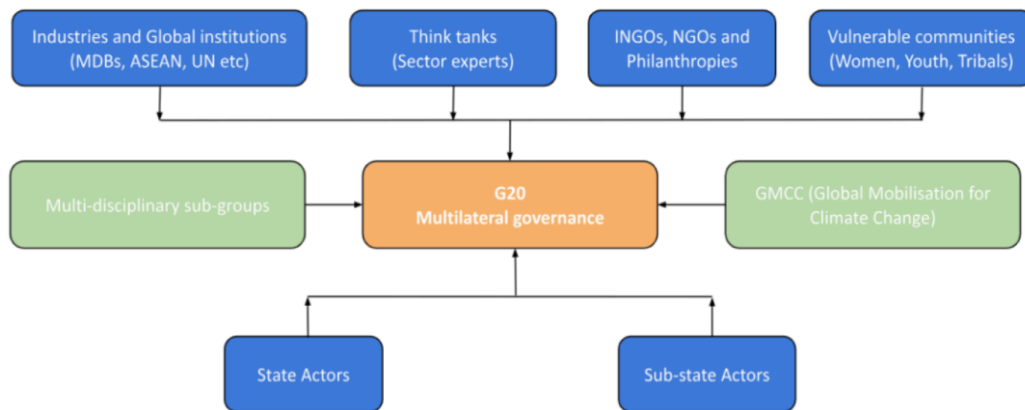
The collaboration between NSAs and state actors can substantiate the efforts on climate action and sustainable development, by bridging the gap in the existing capacities of the stakeholders thus emphasising on building resilience than only focusing on response and recovery after the impacts (Watkiss et al., 2023; Mukund and Kubra, 2023; Steven and Colunga, 2023). This policy brief provides a four-point agenda that the non-state actors can mobilise to accelerate climate action and sustainable development at scale to reduce inequities in the Global South.

Recommendation 1: Forming multidisciplinary working groups under GMCC for enhancing the engagement of non-state actors

Climate action is a cross-cutting issue; hence, it needs a multidisciplinary approach. The Brazilian Presidency recently formed the task force for the Global Mobilisation for Climate Change (GMCC) under the Sherpa track of cooperation. This can be further strengthened by forming sub-groups on thematic subjects and engaging with the NSAs more proactively through these sub-groups. Four broad strategic and befitting sub-groups under GMCC would strengthen and streamline the combined efforts of G20. These high-power groups with executive powers shall work to plan and implement with significant representations from: a) scientific researchers; b) advocates, implementers and enablers; c) policymakers; and d) the financial catalysts, including MDBs, philanthropies, conglomerates and other financing bodies, focusing on the vulnerable communities. The multidisciplinary sub-groups shall bring sector experts and focus on cross-cutting topics such as gender and social inclusion with a focus on women, the rights of indigenous and

marginalised communities, and youth. Studies have shown an increased participation of NSAs in policy interventions for the cross-cutting areas in the global south countries (Moschetti, et al., 2020).

Fig 1: Integration of non-state actors in multilateral governance for climate action



Source- Author's analysis

Recommendation 2: Promoting technological innovation for enhancing the transparency and accountability of the non-state actors

Over the past few decades, the role of NSAs such as cities, businesses, and investors etc. have become increasingly prominent in climate action. Currently, the global assessment and formulation of climate change scenarios and the process of setting the global targets of mitigation do not account for the contributions of non-state actors. A few studies have reported the enhanced contributions of NSAs in meeting the mitigation efforts in various countries (Hsu et al., 2018); however, these studies do not follow a uniform methodology and hence pose a challenge while comparing or aggregating these findings at the global scale. This highlights the need of a coherent framework that can



bring uniformity in the reporting standards and offer interoperability among the current systems to enhance the transparency and accountability of the NSAs. We propose technological innovation, based on the three key principles viz., a) interoperability, b) traceability, and c) trackability, which might provide an answer to this crucial issue (UNEP, 2023). Therefore, the Brazilian presidency must build a consensus among the G20 towards developing a technology-friendly unified framework for enhancing the transparency and accountability of efforts of non-state actors.

Recommendation 3: Enhancing the multilateral governance by strengthening the G20-COP connect

The G20 and Conference of Parties (COP) are the two key multilateral mechanisms that play a crucial role in building the global consensus for prioritising actions on the key issues of the present and future world. NSAs can be crucial in strengthening the cooperation between these two important global forums for achieving an inclusive climate action in the Global South. Potential priorities of collaboration between the G20 and COP could focus on: a) climate finance, b) energy, c) technology for climate, d) climate-health-gender nexus (Suri, 2023). The four high-power groups (suggested in Recommendation-1) could work as a catalyst and devise a common mechanism by involving the demands of the Global South under Brazil's presidency. The recent announcements from COP28 such as the global stocktake process and the UAE framework of global climate resilience have shown a ray of hope for the countries to report their progress on these national targets at global forums. Various NSAs already exhibit expertise in these fields and might be able to lead the multistakeholder processes to enhance the collaboration between the multilateral forums to prioritise the actions on

these issues.

Recommendation 4: Leveraging global climate policy clearinghouse for knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices among the non-state actors

The Global South countries depict similarities in: a) the climate-induced challenges, b) socioeconomic issues, and c) the current capacities of the state actors to respond to these challenges. The NSAs have a substantial footprint and experience of generating scientific evidence on how the patterns of these challenges are evolving and what contextual solutions are needed to address these challenges in the global south. The Climate Governance Commission highlighted the need for a Global Climate Policy Clearinghouse (Simeonova, 2021) on climate change policies and actions along with the means of implementation. The G20 must leverage this 'one-stop-shop' mechanism to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among the NSAs by collaborating with the G20 nations to develop a Global Climate Policy Clearinghouse under the ambit of Sherpa WG - Disaster Risk Reduction, Digital Economy and Environment and Climate Sustainability, in Brazil's presidency, which can truly support the "think-global-act-local" philosophy.



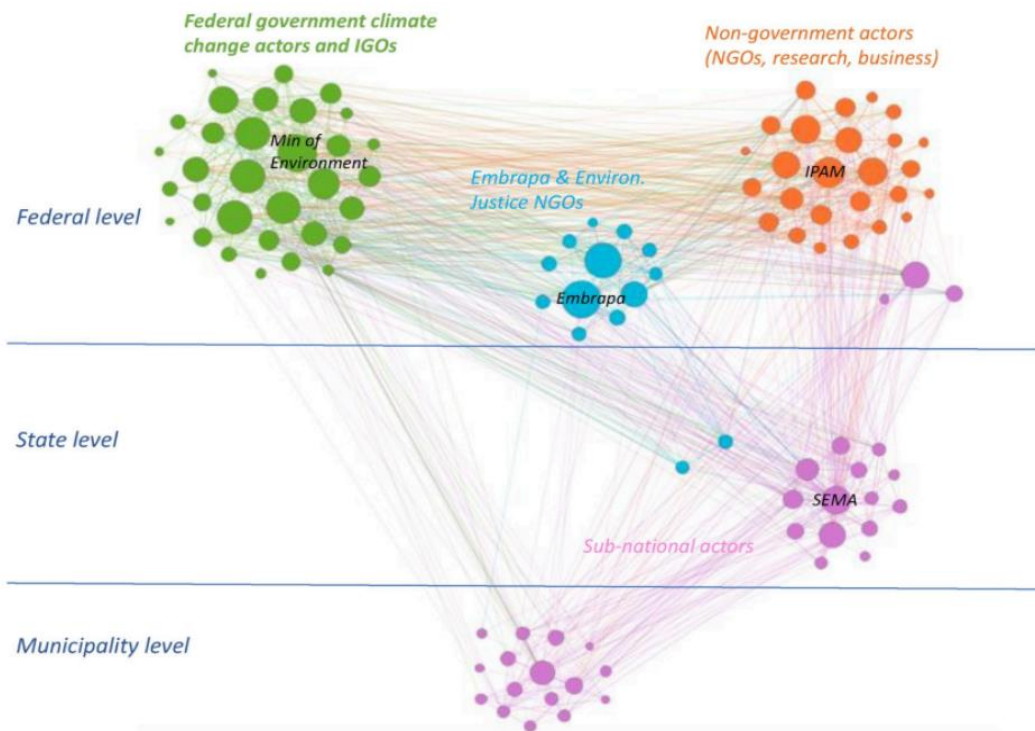
Scenario of Outcomes

While developing a nuanced understanding, NSAs must be empowered to augment global climate initiatives' with strong effectiveness and inclusivity by implementing the suggested recommendation to build resilience by encouraging multi-dimensional solutions. Tradeoffs would depend on the impacts of climate change, global paradigm, development of relevant policies, government will, nature of funding available with considerable debts, and many more.

1. Enhanced multi stakeholder cooperation for Climate Action in the Global South

Global South countries primarily face the impacts of the evolving climatic changes, and hence, global governance mechanisms such as G20 must facilitate collaboration among these countries. Moreover, NSAs can be integrated into decision-making processes by enabling the above recommendations and addressing realistic hurdles. Eventually, “work in silos” can be reduced to enhance the legitimacy and relevance of climate policies, ensuring they reflect the needs and priorities of LDCs, SIDS and developing nations by addressing UN SDG 13, 16, 17 and others. Gregorio et al., (2019) proposed an innovative framework that combines institutional and policy network approaches to reform the multi-level governance in Brazil and Indonesia. To measure the trade-offs of the policy, which is crucial and highly responsible by adopting workable frameworks, the Brazilian presidency could set an example and enhance the cooperation between the global south countries.

Fig 2: Cross-level climate change networking in Brazil



Source: Gregorio et al., (2019)

2. Reduced inequalities and improved financing for climate action

Ambiguity in the numerous scopes and prolonged periods of climate-related risks pose considerable obstacles to precisely modelling risks (Eren et al., 2022). G20 with its intervention to build capacities on enhancing the role of NSAs, can create an enabling environment for the global south countries by incorporating the voices, UN CoP, vulnerable communities and strong action with the G20 WGs under the Sherpa Track where; 15 WGs, 2 TFs, and one special initiative, along with the suggested four high power groups in recommendation 1. This can help reduce the inequitable impacts of climate change and might lead to evolution of innovative financial mechanisms for enhancing the access to finance for bridging the gap in adaptation finance (Khan et al.,

2020).

3. Strengthening the soft power of non-state actors in multilateral governance

A mature voice is required to intensify the multilateral role of NSAs in which the hegemony of the multipolar world order is in clouded dimensions. The ever-evolving social media and digital connectivity have given teeth to this information age, where opinions and news travel at the speed of light. This symbolises the factors strengthening and enhancing the blend of soft and hard power in global democracy towards “smart power” (Nye, 2005). The previous G20 showcased a similar move, where the group unanimously accepted the inclusion of the African Union as a G20 Member, recognising every voice is crucial in addressing critical global issues. T20, a strongly represented group, present strong voices backed by reports and data after deliberations. They support to build consensus between nations during the Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogues. Hence, a strong collaboration of NSAs is required to bring out multidimensional perspectives and data-driven solutions to the common challenges while strengthening climate action.



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