

Reporting on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties

The key players

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Pacific Media Mana
Kit Factsheet Series

Reporting on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COP) can be quite a challenge if you do not understand the different groups, their roles and how they work in the negotiations process. The following is intended to give you a brief introduction to some of these key players and how they coordinate during the COP process.

OVERVIEW:

[The Conference of the Parties \(COP\) is the group of nations that have signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#), at the Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. It commits them to act together to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations “at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system”. COP is the “supreme body” of the UNFCCC and it meets annually. UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994 and has near-universal membership. Hundred and ninety eight countries, including most Pacific countries, have ratified the Convention, they are called Parties to the Convention.

Each Party to the Convention is represented at sessions of the Convention bodies by a national delegation consisting of one or more officials empowered to represent and negotiate on behalf of their government. Based on the practices of the United Nations, Parties are organised into five regional groups, mainly for the purposes of electing the Bureau, namely: African States, Asia and the Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and the Caribbean States, and the Western European and Other States (the “Other States” include Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America, but not Japan, which is in the Asia and the Pacific Group). Developing countries generally work through the Group of 77 and China to establish common negotiating positions.

Group of 77 and China:

The [Group of 77](#) is the largest intergovernmental organisation of developing countries in the United Nations, which provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the United Nations system, and promote South-South cooperation for development. The G-77 was founded in 1964 in the context of the UN Conference on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD) and now functions throughout the UN system. As of 2021, there are 134 members in the Group.

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

[SIDS is a coalition of some 40 low-lying islands](#), most of which are members of the G-77 that are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise. SIDS countries are united by the threat that climate change poses to their survival and frequently adopt a common stance in negotiations.

Least Developed Countries (LDCs):

[The 48 countries defined as Least Developed Countries](#) by the UN regularly work together in the wider UN system. They have become increasingly active in the climate change process, often working together to defend their particular interests, for example with regard to vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

European Union:

The 27 members of the [European Union](#) meet in private to agree on common negotiating positions. The country that holds the EU Presidency – a position that rotates every six months – then speaks for the European Union and its 27 member states. As a regional economic integration organisation, the European Union itself can be, and is, a Party to the Convention. However, it does not have a separate vote from its members.

The Umbrella Group and the Environmental Integrity Group:

The [Umbrella Group](#) is a coalition of Parties which formed following the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol. The Group is made up of Australia, Belarus, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States.

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS):

The [Alliance of Small Island States \(AOSIS\)](#) is a coalition of small island and low-lying coastal countries that share similar development challenges and concerns about the environment, especially their vulnerability to the adverse effects of global climate change. It functions primarily as an ad hoc lobby and negotiating voice for small island developing States (SIDS) within the United Nations system. AOSIS has a membership of 39 Members and 5 observers, drawn from all oceans and regions of the world: Africa, Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Pacific and South China Sea. As of 2023, Samoa is the Chair.



AOSIS, Chair SPREP

High Ambition Coalition (HAC):

The [Republic of the Marshall Islands \(RMI\)](#) formed the High Ambition Coalition in run-up negotiations at the UNFCCC to the Paris Agreement in 2015, helping to secure key elements of the deal, including the 1.5C temperature goal, the net zero global emissions pathway by the second half of the century, and a five-year cycle for updating mitigation contributions.

OTHER GROUPS:

The Environmental Integrity Group (EIG), formed in 2000, comprises Mexico, Liechtenstein, Monaco, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland. The Arab Group is comprised of 22 member states namely Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen. Several other groups also work together in the climate change process, including countries from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova (CACAM), the Cartagena Dialogue, the Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), the BASIC Group (Brazil, South

Africa, China India), the Like Minded Group, the Coalition for Rainforest Nations and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA in Spanish).

GETTING THE RIGHT INFORMATION

The best way to source the most accurate, relevant and the latest information about the UNFCCC process is from its website, unfccc.int/essential-information. For the Pacific countries and specific needs, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme works closely with its members to provide support. Visit: www.sprep.org. The Pacific Climate Change Portal is the one stop location for accessing climate resources, news, events and more with regards to climate change in the Pacific Islands region. Visit: www.pacificclimatechange.net

GLOSSARY:

Earth Summit: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), byname Earth Summit, conference held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (June 3–14, 1992), to reconcile worldwide economic development with protection of the environment. The Earth Summit was the largest gathering of world leaders as of 1992, with 117 heads of state and representatives of 178 nations.

Kyoto Protocol: Also known as the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, it is an international treaty, named after the Japanese city in which it was adopted in December 1997, that aimed to reduce the emission of gases that contribute to global warming.

REFERENCES

[High Ambition Coalition](#)

The Group of 77 at the United Nations, [About the Group of 77](#), United Nations Climate Change, [Party Groupings](#), United Nations Climate Change, [What is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change?](#)



President of Palau, Surangel Whipps Jr