

COP30  
LOCAL LEADERS FORUM

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# From Rio to Belém:

Elevating subnational climate leadership at COP30

UNDER 2°

Secretariat

CLIMATE GROUP

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Champa Patel
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# Letter from Champa Patel

**A turning point for subnational climate leadership.**

**From Rio to Belém, it was clearer than ever before that the momentum for climate action is no longer confined to negotiation halls, it lives in the hands of governors, ministers, premiers, and regional leaders who are already delivering change on the ground.**

At COP30, states and regions stepped onto the global stage with unprecedented global presence and collaboration. The inaugural [Global States & Regions Summit](#) brought together nearly 50 political leaders to shape a new, implementation-driven chapter of climate action. For the first time, major networks and partners united behind one message: subnational leadership is indispensable to delivering the Paris Agreement. Your commitment signals a decisive shift in how the world understands climate ambition and accountability.

Across nature, resilience and sectoral transitions, subnational leaders shared real-world solutions improving lives today. The launch of the [Subnational Solutions Bank](#) showed how local action can scale globally, while discussions on finance made clear that unlocking capital for states and regions is essential to accelerating the next decade of delivery.

This year we're also celebrating a major milestone: the release of the [Under2 Coalition's 10th Anniversary Report](#). From a bold idea by a handful of leaders in 2015 to a Coalition of nearly 200 governments representing 2 billion people and over half the global economy, this report shows what's possible when states and regions collaborate on climate.

COP30 also underscored the urgency of our shared mission. Without a global pathway for transitioning away from fossil fuels, the role of subnational governments is even more important. When national progress slows, states and regions continue to advance, driving just transitions, electrifying key sectors, and building resilient economies that work for people and the planet.

[Our vision](#) for the next ten years requires us to keep the global *mutirão* spirit alive.



Thank you for your unwavering leadership. Together, we're proving that subnational action is not only vital, but the engine powering real climate progress.

## Champa Patel

Executive Director, Governments and Policy  
Under2 Secretariat, Climate Group

# Highlights from the Global States & Regions Summit

## A historic first for subnational leadership

The inaugural Global States & Regions Summit marked a milestone moment. For the first time, a COP hosted a dedicated platform showcasing the leadership of states and regions on a global stage. More than 70 senior leaders took part, setting a new standard for subnational engagement in global climate action. **Laurence Tubiana**, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and COP30 Special Envoy to Europe, underscored the significance of subnational actors: “You can hold the line when national politics are not delivering, keeping progress visible and trust intact.”



## A united call for a decisive decade of subnational delivery

The Summit opened with a clear and urgent message from Governor **Jay Inslee** of Washington: “We’re no longer in the age of vague promises. We’re in the age of implementation. We’re in the age of deployment. We’re in the age of immediate actions in our neighbourhoods, in our states and our cities.” Leaders emphasised that subnational governments are already protecting communities on the frontlines of climate impacts – and that their leadership is essential to achieving the Paris Agreement.



## Accelerating pathways to investment

A participatory Finance Solutions session convened political leaders, finance experts and global partners to explore how to unlock capital for subnational climate action. Through tabletop discussions, participants examined how to strengthen enabling environments, build investment-ready pipelines and accelerate access to finance, laying the groundwork for scalable, long-term climate investment.

**Selwin Hart**, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Action and Just Transition, urged subnational leaders to build unity at a moment of global fragmentation: “Amidst all of the geopolitical divisions, I encourage you to build bridges... reach across the developed–developing country divide, the rich and poor country divide. You are doers – you don’t get lost in geopolitical contestations.” His message highlighted how subnational governments are collaborating across geographies and political systems, creating space for progress even when national diplomacy stalls.



# Highlights from the Global States & Regions Summit



## Joining forces to elevate states and regions

We worked with key networks, including Regions4, the Green Brazil Consortium, ABEMA, the US Climate Alliance and LGMA, to amplify state and regional leadership. Strategic partners such as Bloomberg Philanthropies and the European Climate Foundation provided technical and financial support. **Serena McIlwain**, Secretary of Environment, Maryland, captured the value of collaboration: “We need to share our playbooks and stop reinventing the wheel.”

## Technical exchanges driving solutions across climate sectors

Roundtables on forestry, energy transitions, resilient territories and just transitions focused on practical implementation. Leaders shared policies, identified barriers and explored opportunities to collaborate across regions. **Dan Ioschpe**, COP30 High-Level Champion, distilled the message of the day: “Sharing, showcasing, and debottlenecking.” The sessions demonstrated that solutions already exist today – and that collaboration is the fastest way to scale them.



**Subnational governments are not just implementers of national climate plans – they’re the drivers of global ambition.**

**Champa Patel**, Executive Director,  
Governments and Policy, Climate Group



## Launch of the Subnational Solutions Bank

The Summit introduced the Subnational Solutions Bank, a global hub showcasing nearly 100 proven policies and projects. It highlights where climate action is already working and feeds directly into the COP30 granary of solutions. As **Nehmat Kaur**, Director of Under2 Coalition and Subnational Governments noted, “Much of the progress delivered locally remains invisible. The Solutions Bank is changing that.”

## A global call to action

Networks representing more than **14,000 cities, states and regions** issued a joint message to national governments ahead of COP30. They committed to:

- Partnering to deliver national climate goals
- Advancing a 2,500–project pipeline to help localise finance
- Strengthening multilevel action to make COPs a process of delivery

The Under2 Coalition co-chairs were among the signatories, reinforcing our leadership in shaping a just, resilient, net zero future.

# Breakout agenda highlights



## Protecting forests, oceans and food systems

Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of community wellbeing. Layla Saad from UNICEF Brazil highlighted how nature underpins human health, provides essential services, and is often undervalued in economic planning. Leaders stressed the importance of protecting forests, oceans, and food systems to safeguard livelihoods, strengthen governance, and align environmental protection with social outcomes.

## Resilient territories: Infrastructure, water and climate adaptation

Extreme weather events are already impacting communities worldwide, making adaptation an urgent priority. Co-hosted by Regions4, the discussion highlighted this urgency, with governors, premiers, and experts sharing how locally driven strategies are protecting lives and livelihoods. Examples included municipal risk assessments in Rio de Janeiro, mangrove restoration in Senegal, and community-led initiatives in California. The conversation highlighted that inclusive governance and collaboration with Indigenous peoples are essential to building effective and lasting resilience.



## Just and equitable transition

Fairness is central to sustainable climate strategies. Leaders highlighted how integrating gender equality, social inclusion, and worker protections into climate planning – from Ceará’s carbon market roadmap to Québec’s legal commitments and Querétaro’s use of carbon tax revenues – ensures that transitions benefit all communities. The discussions reinforced that equity-focused policies are both replicable and impactful in the real world.



## Powering climate transitions: Energy, industry and transport

Chaired by Climate Group CEO Helen Clarkson, the discussion highlighted the crucial role of subnational jurisdictions in driving the net zero transition. Leaders from Ucayali, Goiás, Marrakech-Safi, New York State, Querétaro, and Córdoba shared how local innovation, cross-regional learning, and public-private partnerships can accelerate climate solutions. The International Climate Initiative (IKI) emphasised the importance of insurance and linking the transition with financial planning. Participants underscored the need to balance urban and rural priorities, use regions as laboratories for national policy and apply these lessons in future climate strategies.

# Driving additional impact in Rio

## Global innovation and finance

Subnational governments need better access to funding to deliver resilient, locally tailored climate solutions. We convened governments and experts to unpack challenges, share lessons, and co-develop pathways for unlocking climate finance for transformational projects.

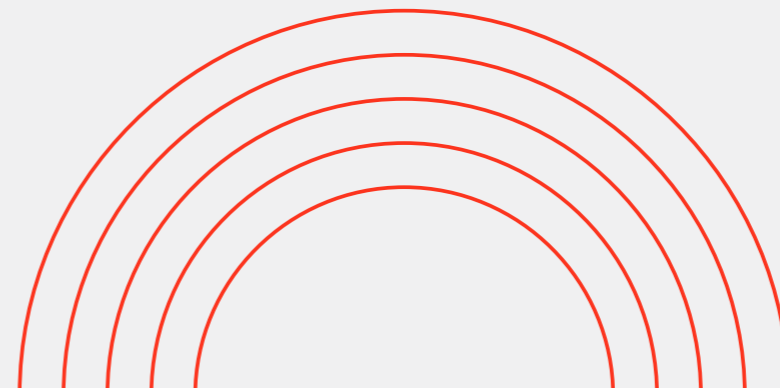
Governor **Renato Casagrande**, Espírito Santo, highlighted how the State Development Bank supports infrastructure that strengthens resilience, water security, and sustainable urban land use. Representatives from Acre, Western Cameroon, and California shared barriers to accessing finance and lessons from innovative mechanisms like California's cap-and-trade program.

Participants emphasised rethinking project assessment, improving the risk–return balance, strengthening multilevel governance, and using green budgeting to ensure consistent, long-term climate investment.

## Communicating climate change

In partnership with Québec, we convened a closed-door meeting with ten governments to discuss the growing communications challenges shaping today's political and public landscape. With short attention spans, social media-driven narratives, and rising climate misinformation, sustaining public support is essential for delivering ambitious climate plans.

This roundtable marked a first step in ensuring subnational governments can act with greater unity and impact, telling powerful stories of climate action. In response to member feedback, we recently added Strategic Communications as a new pillar of work to support governments in addressing these shared challenges and opportunities.



### Driving methane leadership

Rapid methane reductions are critical to avoiding climate tipping points. At COP30, the **first report** on progress toward the Global Methane Pledge was published, with 159 countries committed to cutting methane emissions by 30% by 2030. Subnational governments, with their key role in regulating energy, waste, and agriculture, are essential to achieving these targets and translating global commitments into measurable action.

On 6 November, we hosted a high-level **Subnational Methane Action Coalition** (SMAC) panel at the COP30 Local Leaders Forum in Rio, with leaders from Brazil, Mexico, and the US. The discussion highlighted Goiás closing open dumpsites and investing in biomethane, Maryland scaling up organic waste diversion, and Querétaro leveraging public-private partnerships with industry and universities to deploy methane reduction technologies.

The session also welcomed the State of Rio de Janeiro as SMAC's newest member, reinforcing the Coalition as a platform for peer learning, technical support, and rapid subnational action to cut methane emissions.



# Under2 Coalition at COP30

## Pushing for a fossil fuel phase-out

Fossil fuels remain the largest driver of climate change, yet COP30 fell short of securing concrete phase-out commitments.

We helped keep momentum alive, with all four **Under2 Coalition co-chairs endorsing a just, orderly, and equitable fossil fuel phase-out**. They joined more than 80 countries and over 130 companies calling for real change.

Initiatives such as the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty conference, the Belém Declaration led by Colombia, and convenings by the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance show how collaboration across national governments, subnational actors, and the private sector can create political space for action, even when multilateral outcomes lag.

## Scotland showcases subnational climate leadership

Scotland brought its **Climate Change Plan** to COP30 to demonstrate why subnational action matters: driving a just transition, advancing climate justice, and addressing loss and damage, all while delivering real-world solutions.

**Gillian Martin**, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy, emphasised the importance of recognition and collaboration: “What we’re doing in terms of action is significant, and we need to be recognised, particularly when it comes to attracting climate finance and contributing to the NDCs of states.” By showcasing its leadership as the Under2 Coalition’s European co-chair, Scotland reinforced the role of devolved governments in shaping global climate outcomes.

The plan underlines why urgent action is critical: achieving net zero by 2045, creating green jobs, and building a resilient economy that benefits communities, strengthens the economy, and safeguards the planet.



### Strengthening transatlantic collaboration

California and Baden-Württemberg – founding members of the Under2 Coalition and the largest economies in the US and EU, respectively – pledged to deepen their [partnership](#) on climate action and renewable energy.

By sharing best practices in energy, water, adaptation, and green technology, they set a model for ambitious, equitable climate action at the regional level.

Germany's Environment Ministry, **Thekla Walker**, emphasised the partnership signals America's ongoing commitment to international climate action, even as federal policy remains inconsistent, while California Governor **Gavin Newsom** underscored the state's determination to lead in the clean energy space.



**If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, we have to go together. We need to build partnerships, and we need to build on collaboration.**

Gavin Newsom,  
Governor of California, US

### Media highlights

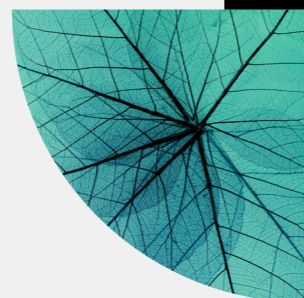
- Climate Group and the Under2 Coalition were mentioned over 800 times in the media in relation to COP30.
- Climate Group's Executive Director of Governments and Policy, **Champa Patel**, spoke with many media outlets throughout the period, ensuring multilevel governance and subnational leadership was brought to the fore of international climate discourse. Her commentary featured in leading national and international outlets including [Reuters](#), [Forbes](#), [Forbes Brazil](#), Agence France Presse, [France.24](#), [The Business Times Singapore](#), and [Barron's](#).
- **Champa Patel** was interviewed alongside **Laurence Tubiana**, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and COP30 Special Envoy to Europe, for a [live broadcast](#) of The COP30 Newsroom with Hi House; a daily live broadcast show recorded in Belém to discuss the biggest stories from COP with world leading climate journalists.
- Under2 Coalition members including California, New York, and South Australia met with media publications during the Global States & Regions Summit including the



[New York Times](#), [TIME Magazine](#), and [CNN \(Brazil\)](#), developing relationships with influential international outlets and raising awareness of subnational leadership to global audiences.

- The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Under2 Coalition was noted in [Newsweek](#) and [CarbonPulse](#).
- The Under2 Coalition participated strongly in calling for a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuels, releasing our own [statement](#) on the subnational call to action. Climate Group also signed the We Mean Business Coalition's [letter to the COP presidency](#) which was picked up by key climate media outlets including [edie](#) and [BusinessGreen](#).

Interested in becoming a member of the Under2 Coalition? [Learn more.](#)



# COP30 key outcomes

## Implementation takes centre stage

COP30 confirmed a [decisive shift in the global climate process](#). As the Presidency emphasised, this was the COP where momentum moved from negotiating text to implementing solutions. While UNFCCC negotiations continue to deliver incremental progress, COP30 underscored that the centre of gravity is moving towards real-economy delivery, where states, regions, cities and businesses are already driving change.

New global mechanisms – including the Global Implementation Accelerator and the Belém Mission to 1.5°C – aim to translate the Paris building blocks into practical action. They provide the beginnings of an architecture focused not on new promises but on accelerating the work already happening across diverse economies and political systems.

COP texts are always exercises in compromise, and nowhere is this clearer than in the [careful language on trade](#) in the final Global Mutirão outcome.

It reaffirms that climate measures – including unilateral ones – must not become disguised restrictions on international commerce. The outcome also established three annual dialogues on trade through 2028.

The tensions surrounding Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAMs) highlighted both their potential to accelerate global industrial decarbonisation and the deep fairness concerns raised by emerging economies. Future discussions must focus on aligning trade measures with equity, climate finance and real-economy emissions cuts.





### Progress, but incomplete commitments

Negotiators **failed to secure an agreement** on a roadmap for transitioning away from coal, oil and gas, despite strong support from over 80 countries.

The new Belém Global Implementation Accelerator, which assists countries in moving from planning to action, is voluntary – but an important step towards full implementation of climate action. While not legally binding, momentum for phase-out roadmaps is growing. Being outside the negotiations may give subnational governments more space to move with speed and agility, increasing pressure on national governments to adopt these measures. The critical issue is to start the work now and not wait for formal endorsement.

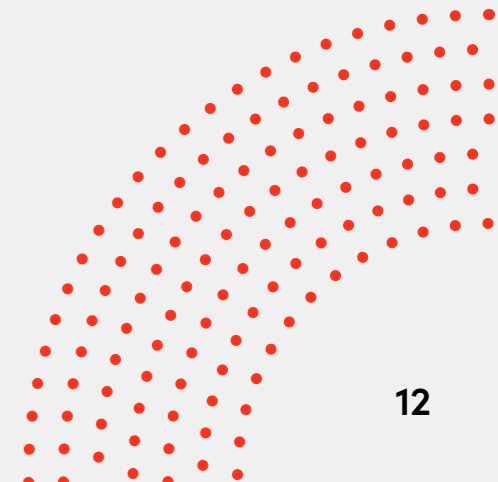
### Why subnational leadership matters more than ever

When national progress slows, states and regions keep delivering. COP30 reinforced that **subnational governments are essential drivers of implementation.**

The world’s most tangible climate progress – from electrifying transport to restoring forests – is happening at the state and regional level, where local leaders can move faster and respond directly to community needs.

New global finance targets and implementation mechanisms offer opportunities to position investment-ready projects, strengthen adaptation plans and push for more direct access to finance.

COP30 also made clear that we need to double down on real-economy delivery – supporting just transitions away from fossil fuels, accelerating electrification across key sectors and mobilising the finance that enables subnational projects to scale.



# Thank you

On behalf of the Under2 Coalition, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks for joining us in Rio and Belém. We deeply appreciate the challenge of stepping away from daily responsibilities to engage in these critical climate discussions. Your presence, energy and leadership were crucial in advancing dialogue and driving momentum at a moment of global urgency.

Over 70 leaders joined us in Rio and over 50 in Belém from across the Americas, EU, Africa and Asia, demonstrating the scale, urgency and potential of subnational climate action. Leaders from Brazil, Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, South Korea, Morocco, Nigeria and beyond contributed expertise and commitment, strengthening state and regional agendas and inspiring peers to achieve more.

The Global States & Regions Summit in Rio marked a first for governors and regional leaders at a COP. Strategic partners joined to advance action at scale, the Subnational Solutions Bank was launched, and foundations to accelerate subnational finance were laid.

COP30 in Belém reinforced the importance of subnational leadership. While concrete global commitments fell short, your engagement ensured the voices of states, regions and communities were heard, sending a clear signal that subnational action can move faster than multilateral negotiations.

Your leadership has already improved the climate action landscape, increasing visibility, enabling peer collaboration and creating momentum for real progress. The Under2 Coalition will continue to focus on scaling implementation across our three priorities: just transitions away from fossil fuels, electrifying key sectors and mobilising finance for state and regional climate investment.

Thank you for your continued partnership. Together, we're demonstrating that subnational action is not only possible, its essential for delivering tangible results for the climate and for communities around the world.



With gratitude,

**Nehmat Kaur**

**Director of Under2 Coalition  
and Subnational Governments,  
Climate Group**



# What's next

Looking ahead, we're developing a state and regional investment strategy built around three core areas: a political leadership space to set priorities, an accelerator to turn ideas into investment-ready projects, and deal-making summits that mobilise finance and shift capital towards high-impact subnational climate solutions. The year ahead offers several key moments to advance this work and keep building momentum together.

## The next big moments in your climate calendar:

**Mumbai Climate Week**  
February, Mumbai

**US Climate Action Summit**  
April, Washington, DC

**First International Conference on the  
Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels**  
April, Santa Marta

**Climate Group Asia Action Summit**  
May, Singapore

**London Climate Action Week**  
June, London

**Climate Week NYC**  
September, New York

**COP31**  
November, Antalya





## Under2 Coalition at COP30 Brazil

Thank you for your support

