Session 2 summary:
Keeping equity & justice at the centre of your net zero target

Net Zero Leader presenter: New York State

Watch the session here (English) and here (Español).
Equity in Net Zero Policymaking

- Equity in climate policies includes questions around offsetting, how fast reductions should be made, the scope of net zero targets and what actions and investments need to be made today – all elements to be considered and included in net zero planning.

- The Oxford Net Zero Principles for Aligned Offsetting can be considered by policymakers when developing offsetting plans.

- The Race to Zero Lexicon document also provides shared definitions of key terms related to net zero.

- While the use and definitions of these terms vary across regions and contexts, it is important for each policy/plan to be clear and explicit about the stakeholders being addressed.

- Oxford Net Zero is developing a framework for stakeholders to consider when developing an equity and justice strategy. Feedback from states and regions is welcome so please get in touch with Kaya Axelsson if you’re interested in inputting.

Net Zero Futures.
New York’s **Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act**

- This legislation came about as a result of strong advocacy from environmental justice organizations in New York State.
- When signing emissions reductions targets into law, it is important for governments to also address the legacy of impacts of fossil-fuel economies.
- The economy-wide transformation of a net zero plan requires special expertise, panels, and groups across various sectors, including working groups for both Just Transition and Climate Justice.

Net Zero Futures.
New York’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act

- The Act was both future-looking and focused on addressing past impacts on disadvantaged communities (e.g. a strategy to reduce toxic air contaminants in disadvantaged communities).
- To do this successfully, governments must establish criteria to identify disadvantaged communities. One challenge has been a lack of sufficient data to back up definitions/criteria. In response, New York State hired a GIS coordinator to compile that data so that it will be available for future iterations.
- Highlighting the voices of communities and taking a ground-up approach takes time. It is better to start from the point of inclusion rather than risking unsuccessful policies or lack of participation later on.

Key takeaways

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New York is proud to be a national leader on clean and renewable energy and is working to achieve the country’s most ambitious climate targets, including 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040 and 85% carbon emission reductions economy-wide by 2050 with a goal of a net zero future. Climate change is a global issue, but together with the new administration in the White House, New York can serve as a model for the nation and the world.

Andrew M. Cuomo,
Governor of New York