

INSIGHT BRIEF

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Shifting Climate Diplomacy: Positive Narratives for Accelerated Action

Ramoudane Orou Sannou

Main Challenges

Insufficient Climate Finance

Effective climate action requires substantial financial resources. However, current global climate finance flows, estimated at \$1.3 trillion annually, fall significantly short of what is needed and are disproportionately concentrated in a few countries. Only 15% of these funds reach developing nations, with just 3% allocated to the least developed countries and a mere 5% directed toward adaptation efforts (WEF, 2024).

At the recently concluded COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, countries agreed to raise at least \$300 billion annually for climate finance by 2035. Despite this progress, the financing gap remains a major obstacle to addressing the climate crisis effectively.

Tension over who should bear the financial burden of climate action

Historical emitters, such as the USA and European countries, have significantly contributed to cumulative greenhouse gas emissions that drive the current adverse impacts of climate change (WRI, 2024). Meanwhile, rising emitters like China and India are now among the largest annual contributors, further accelerating global temperature increases.

Highlights

Countries in the Global South can emphasize positive narratives on climate adaption and mitigation to inspire optimism among private sector investors and government actors in the Global North. This approach can help mobilize resources to bridge the funding gap and accelerate climate action.

Showcase successful nature-based solutions from vulnerable and Indigenous communities on national platforms and integrate these achievements into the countries' national branding efforts.

Move beyond traditional groupings of historical emitters (USA and Europe), rising emitters (China, Brazil, India, etc.), and low emitters (African countries) to enable more nuanced and effective cooperation.

Cluster countries based on shared vulnerabilities, such as drought-prone regions or low-lying island states, as well as funding and technology needs, to shift the focus from assigning blame to fostering collaboration and collective action

In contrast, low emitters, primarily in Africa, have contributed the least to emissions but are often the most vulnerable to climate impacts due to limited adaptive capacity and insufficient financial and technological resources. These disparities fuel tensions over who should bear the cost of climate action.

Approach

From Crisis to Opportunity: Positive Climate Narrative for a Sustainable Future

Climate change poses an existential threat to many communities and, in some cases, to entire nations. Pacific islands face the risk of being submerged due to rising sea levels, while increasing global temperatures disrupt the water cycle, leading to extreme droughts in some countries, causing desertification, flooding, or the collapse of agricultural harvests (NASA, 2023).

While the adverse impacts of climate change are undeniable and demand urgent attention, they often overshadow innovative solutions with the potential to drive meaningful and transformative changes

Additionally, wildfires, such as those in the Amazon in 2019, devastate biodiversity and sacred sites. These examples form part of the common narrative surrounding climate change—rightly so, as they aim to raise awareness and encourage climate action. However, emphasizing positive narratives about climate action, focused on scalable and efficient solutions, can attract investors and help bridge the climate finance gap.

While the adverse impacts of climate change are undeniable and demand urgent attention, they often overshadow innovative solutions with the potential to drive meaningful and transformative changes. Around the world, many inspiring climate adaptation and mitigation actions offer hope and optimism, just waiting to be scaled up. Emphasizing positive narratives about climate action, focused on scalable and efficient solutions, can attract investors and help bridge the climate finance gap.

Harnessing Nature's Blueprint

While climate change poses a fundamental threat to nature, species, and people, nature also provides key solutions for carbon storage and building climate resilience—if the global community takes steps to protect, restore, and better manage our natural resources (IUCN, n.d.).

Nature-based solutions (NbS) are increasingly recognized for their potential to address climate change while providing benefits for biodiversity and local communities. Studies estimate the mitigation potential of NbS to be around 10-12 billion tons of CO₂ equivalent (GtCO₂e) per year, which could reduce peak warming by about 0.3°C (WEF, 2021).

In countries like Indonesia and the Philippines, mangroves are successfully used as natural barriers against storm surges and coastal erosion, while also sequestering significant amounts of carbon. Indonesia's efforts in restoring peatlands have reduced greenhouse gas emissions and decreased the risk of wildfires, benefiting local communities and ecosystems.

Furthermore, expanding agroforestry practices can enhance carbon sequestration, improve soil health, and increase agricultural productivity. In the Sahel region, large-scale

natural resource restoration initiatives such as the African Great Green Wall have shown clear links to positive social sustainability outcomes, including improved food security.

Other nature-based solutions, such as coral reef restoration, can help rebuild damaged reef areas and support marine biodiversity. Urban green spaces can reduce urban heat islands and improve air quality. These solutions hold significant potential and need to be replicated globally.

Eco-Identity: Leveraging Nature for National Branding

Leveraging nature-based solutions (NbS) tailored to a country's specific climate and ecological challenges can enhance its national branding by showcasing innovation, resilience, and leadership in sustainable development. For instance, African countries with high mangrove potential can highlight mangrove restoration projects by promoting success stories through international platforms like COP conferences, global summits, and other UN events to attract investments. By identifying flagship projects (e.g., wetland restoration,

Nature-based solutions (NbS) are actions that protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems to address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits. NbS leverage the power of nature to tackle issues such as climate change, disaster risk, food and water security, and biodiversity loss (IUCN, n.d.; WRI, 2023).

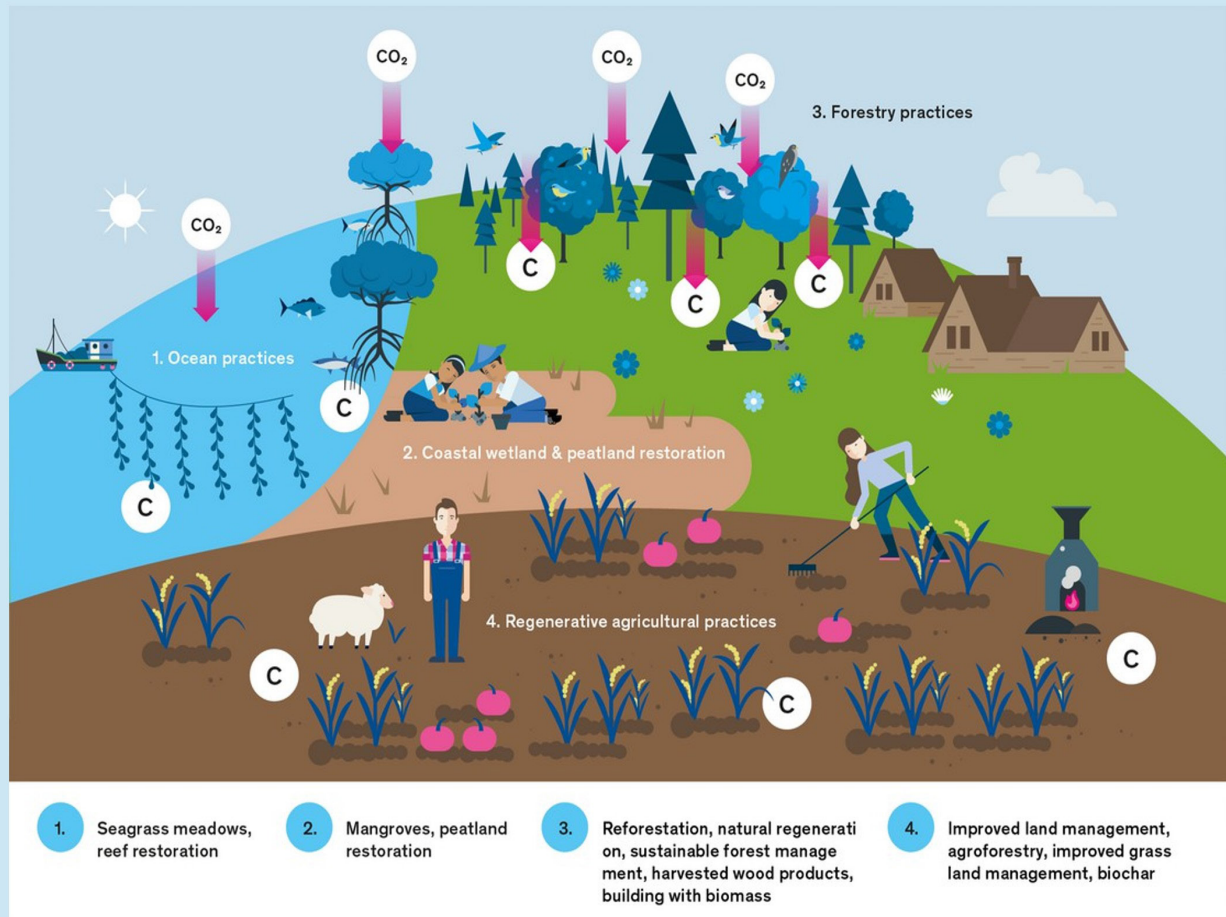


Photo: Different Examples of Nature-based Solutions

Source: myclimate.org

large-scale reforestation) and labelling them as part of the country's identity, countries can amplify recognition and build partnerships with international funding providers.

Investment brochures for green projects can attract private entities looking to reduce their carbon footprint and be labelled as sustainable. By emphasizing the unique natural assets and NbS that each country is implementing, countries not only showcase their natural beauty but also use this as a proactive approach to climate diplomacy.

Collaborative Clustering of Countries and Cities for Climate Resilience

Scaling nature-based solutions requires collaboration between governments, local communities, and international organizations, which can be challenging with the current clustering of countries. To better attract specific investments, countries can be grouped based on shared vulnerabilities and the potential for replicating successful climate solutions. For example, countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, with extensive peatland areas, can benefit from conservation efforts similar to those in Indonesia.

Similarly, coastal nations like Tanzania and Seychelles can implement coral reef restoration projects similar to those in Indonesia and the Philippines. Additionally, African cities such as Nairobi and Lagos can adopt strategies for creating urban green spaces similar to Cities like Singapore and New York, which can enhance climate resilience, improve public health, and provide recreational areas for residents. Countries with similar vulnerabilities can share best practices for protecting and restoring ecosystems to help mitigate climate change, support biodiversity, and provide sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

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EDITORIAL INFORMATION

About the Author:

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