



Secretariat

CLIMATE GROUP

Under2 Coalition 2020 highlights

**Stronger in state and
regional climate leadership,
fit for the Climate Decade**





2020 has been a year like no other

In the middle of a global pandemic, the Under2 Coalition has shown its overwhelming commitment to action on climate change and to doing more, faster. As Secretariat we, at the Climate Group, are proud of the way members have stepped in and stepped up – showing leadership in an unprecedented and incredibly challenging time.

The Under2 Coalition turned five this year and members showed that their enthusiasm remains undimmed. Collectively we participated in more than 30 workshops, events and peer forums and more than 100 states and regions reported into the Annual Disclosure process. This shows that members are ready both to learn and to hold themselves to account for progress every year – no matter how tough.

Under2 Coalition members supported one another in addressing COVID-19 and webinars were held with states and regions in Europe, North America and South America to consider the opportunities and challenges of green recovery. We now have a webpage dedicated to the efforts of our members in creating new laws and policies, greening transport and strengthening nature. States and regions are proving absolutely central to building a better future for all.

The Under2 Coalition General Assembly also took place virtually this year during Climate Week NYC, with a show of determination and leadership as key decisions were being

made on where and how to invest to recover from COVID-19 and relaunch economies around the world. Every discussion with our members reaffirmed a common view that recovery planning must help the world come back from this crisis by preparing for the future. We must focus on redesigning systems that work for all people and on building global resilience and regeneration. States and regions can support this by adopting 2050 net zero targets and developing pathways to get there.

Nothing could set us up better for the challenges of 2021 than the leadership being shown by our new co-chairs and steering group to ensure that the Under2 Coalition remains the leading high ambition climate network for states and regions. As we move towards COP26 in November that leadership will be in high demand from governments and businesses across the world.

Tim Ash Vie
Director – Under2 Coalition Secretariat

Setting the stage to align recovery and decarbonisation

The ongoing health and economic crisis caused by the pandemic overturned most plans for conducting business as usual in 2020, and for Under2 Coalition members it was no different. Yet for all the ways that the world has seemed to pause, the climate crisis has continued to worsen. This is an ongoing crisis that needs to be treated with the urgency it deserves.

The goals of the Under2 Coalition remain the same

To encourage action towards the highest level of leadership and reaching net zero global emissions, to advocate for stronger climate commitments from national governments, and to work together to design and implement the most effective climate policies.

What has changed is the context

The resources governments have to support programmes are spread thinner, there are new, pressing demands on political leaders and, in some regions, there has been a need for rapid investment in infrastructure to stimulate economic relief and support vulnerable individuals and business sectors.

For the Under2 Coalition to be a true leadership network, we should resist investing in harmful out-of-date technologies and should instead lay the foundations for a rapid, equitable transition to a carbon-free economy.

With a better understanding of our new reality, the Secretariat recommends three key principles for a sustainable recovery:

- 1 Aligning and leveraging financial tools to support long-term economic benefits and a decarbonised future.
- 2 Ensuring the climate agenda advances environmental equity and a just transition.
- 3 Paving the way for economy-wide deep decarbonisation.

2020 highlights

In 2020, five years after being formed, the Under2 Coalition continued to grow in strength. Once again, the Coalition and its members delivered on our promise to be the world's biggest state and regional climate leadership network.

Member engagement & climate diplomacy

Appointed a strong global leadership:

Our members elected a strong set of co-chairs and steering group to lead us through the next two years of growth. Former Governor of California Jerry Brown, a co-founder of the Coalition, was also appointed Global Ambassador.

Co-chairs:



Africa:
Sihle Zikalala,
Premier of KwaZulu-Natal



Latin America:
Francisco Domínguez Servián,
Governor of Querétaro



Asia-Pacific:
Yang Seung-jo,
Governor of Chungnam



North America:
Gavin Newsom,
Governor of California



Europe:
Nicola Sturgeon MSP,
First Minister of Scotland

Global Ambassador:



Jerry Brown,
Former Governor
of California



The role of states and provinces is more important today than when we began five years ago. We know climate change is real, the planet is warming and we have to take action."

Jerry Brown,
Climate Week NYC 2020

Steering group (2020-2022):

- Basque Country, Spain
- Baden-Württemberg, Germany
- Catalonia, Spain
- Emilia-Romagna, Italy
- Hawaii, USA
- Lombardy, Italy
- Minnesota, USA
- North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany
- Pastaza, Ecuador
- Québec, Canada
- São Paulo, Brazil
- South Australia, Australia
- Victoria, Australia
- Wales, UK
- Yucatán, Mexico



25

European regional ministers urged EU Heads of State to commit to

55%

emissions reduction by

2030

Displayed strength in the face of COVID-19:

Not only did Under2 Coalition members persevere through a difficult year, many went beyond in [seeking greater action](#) for integrating COVID-19 recovery with decarbonisation efforts. The leadership of 11 members was showcased in our [‘Building back greener’](#) report, which shone a spotlight on the states and regions building a sustainable, resilient, post-pandemic future.

Showed commitment in the Race to Zero:

20 Under2 Coalition members committed to net zero emissions by or before 2050 as part of the [Race to Zero](#) - a global campaign to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions and investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that guards against future threats, creates jobs and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth.

In November, the Under2 Coalition also hosted ‘States and regions on the path to net zero’: a Race to Zero dialogue event in partnership with Regions4, United Cities and Local Governments and the California Natural Resources Agency. Speakers from governments across the world presented on what it means to be a net zero region and how to meet emissions targets.

Raised state and regional voices globally:

We made our voice heard, where it mattered. The Under2 Coalition General Assembly was held online and during Climate Week NYC for the first time – reaching a record audience and receiving engagement from members across the Coalition.

In Europe, we led 25 regional ministers representing 80 million citizens and a combined GDP of over 2.8 trillion euros in urging EU Heads of State to commit to targets of at least 55% emissions reduction by 2030. We then formalised our alliance with the Committee of the Regions, which will help us in scaling up our work and reaching and influencing more partners across Europe.

At the end of the year we also highlighted the scale and importance of our members’ work at the [Climate Ambition Summit](#), hosted by the UK and French governments to mark the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement.



Pathways

The [Climate Pathway Project](#) continued to support the development of decarbonisation pathways in six Latin American governments: Querétaro, Mato Grosso, São Paulo, Quintana Roo, Madre de Dios and Amazonas have successfully adapted from in-person to virtual delivery and continue working with key stakeholders to finalise their jurisdictional pathways through group discussions, technical webinars and the support of the project consortium.

Engaged in peer learning and disseminated best practice:

Over 84 government representatives from 25 states and regions across Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, México, and Perú took part in the Climate Pathway Project’s ongoing virtual training series on building a pathway led by Libélula, the secretariat of LEDS-LAC, in partnership with the Climate Group. These governments are part of a [dedicated community](#) using peer learning and best practice to develop a concept note that will help them complete a pathway for their respective jurisdictions.

Developed the Pathways Framework for ambitious state and regional governments:

Through conversations with experts, research and knowledge gained through implementing the Climate Pathway Project, the Climate Group has developed a Pathways Framework. The framework is a step-by-step toolkit for ambitious state and regional governments committed to decarbonising their economy and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Through the framework’s unique and flexible approach, states and regions worldwide will bridge the gap between ambition and action.

Provided support for the development of pathways to reduce long-term emissions and achieve sustainable development: Through stakeholder consultations and discussions, the Climate Group led a series of six virtual workshops for the Government of Western Cape that engaged 38 representatives from 10 government departments and from the City of Cape Town to develop a low carbon vision for the province. The Climate Change Directorate of Western Cape is continuing independently with stakeholder engagement to take this vision forward.



Climate Pathway Project, Madre de Dios, January 2020





21
case studies showcasing leadership from states and regions across the world were published

Policy Action

Demonstrated the economic benefit of climate action: In a [handbook](#) published in partnership with the Rocky Mountain Institute, five regions showed how regional governments are reaping the immediate benefits of decisive climate action while also safeguarding the future. For these governments, a few key actions are driving great impacts on the economy, equity, health, and air quality, as well as resilience and security.

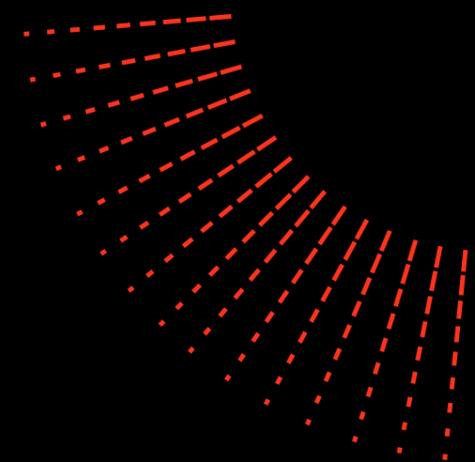
Took bold and ambitious action towards decarbonisation across sectors: The Under2 Coalition is proud to amplify the ambitious actions being taken by our members on climate change. In 2020, 21 case studies showcasing leadership from states and regions across the world were published, with topics including green recovery, climate resilience, low carbon mobility and reducing methane emissions from oil and gas. Our work on climate finance also expanded through our [Climate Finance Accelerator](#), with members showing increased commitment to leadership on green finance.

Progressed towards a low carbon industry transition: As part of the [Industry Transition Platform](#), eleven states and regions worked with stakeholders to develop strategies for lowering emissions from the industrial sector. In 2020, project regions made significant progress by engaging with businesses to foster innovation, published research on fostering disruptive innovation and sustainable hydrogen, and further explored the co-benefits of a successful low carbon industry transition through a series of virtual workshops. In direct response to the need to engage the industry sector in post-pandemic recovery, a number of governments and experts participated in the Climate Group's Heavy Industry Rapid Response Team to develop a set of framework principles that could be widely adopted as a standard for industrial decarbonisation.



Drove the zero emission vehicle (ZEV) transition: In 2020, through the [ZEV Community](#), governments and businesses shared how ZEVs are part of their pandemic recovery plans. Throughout the year, webinars engaged all levels of government on key topics including: best practice for rolling out electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the impact of COVID-19 on ZEVs, the role of ZEVs in green recovery, sustainable ZEV supply chains, and finance. The project also launched a new peer forum series, creating a space for governments to come together, build connections, have meaningful discussions on how to overcome challenges and brainstorm solutions to the ZEV transition.

Explored approaches to reduce methane emissions: Phase two of the [Methane Project](#) brought together a committed group of Under2 Coalition governments for in-depth learning on policy options to reduce methane emissions, with a focus on the oil and gas sector. Insights from the discussions were combined with additional research to produce a [report outlining state and regional solutions](#), with a focus on the United States and Canada. The report identifies a key set of actions governments can take to reduce emissions and highlights elements of best practice. It also builds on the [Action Guide](#) published early in 2020, which outlines state-level examples of curbing methane emissions.



400
people have taken part in the Climate Footprint Project's peer forum series

Transparency

Emphasised the importance of reporting action on climate: As the world marked the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, states and regions demonstrated climate ambition through the [2020 Global States and Regions Annual Disclosure](#). For the second consecutive year, analysis found that states and regions are significantly outperforming the global average in transitioning their electricity supply away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. Of the 121 states and regions disclosing their climate and environmental data in 2020, 55% of those with a 2030 emissions reduction target are showing greater ambition than their national counterparts. Alongside their achievements, disclosing governments also reported concerns about worsening impacts of climate change and other environmental threats and stressed the importance of working with national governments for global change.

Supported states in developing their greenhouse gas inventories: In 2020 the [Climate Footprint Project](#), continued to support states and regions in Brazil, India, Mexico and South Africa in tracking their emissions: demonstrating that it's possible to produce a quality state inventory within a reasonable timeframe with an agile approach and ample stakeholder engagement. Pernambuco in Brazil, for example, created its first greenhouse gas inventory in just six months.

Developed learning platforms for states and regions on monitoring emissions: Recognising that tracking emissions is key to effective climate action, the Climate Footprint Project launched a new e-learning course to equip state and regional governments to understand the process. A peer forum series was also rolled out to inspire states and regions to take action and use fit-for-purpose approaches to track and mitigate emissions. So far nearly 400 people have taken part from 70 different states. New knowledge products, such as an inventory compilation toolbox and case studies from different project states, have been developed throughout the year and used to share resources and learnings with others in the network.



Climate Footprint Project, Chattisgarh, January 2020

Enhanced communications

Hosted and supported ground-breaking global events: The Under2 Coalition General Assembly was held online for the first time this year. It was viewed over 3,400 times and tweets including the hashtag #Under2Coalition achieved a reach of nearly 1 million users during Climate Week NYC 2020. We also co-hosted a session on states and regions for the launch of the UNFCCC's Race to Zero campaign, with over 400 viewers in attendance, chaired a session on international cooperation at Wales' Climate Week and provided a video for the Climate Ambition Summit in December.

Closer collaboration with partners: We have been working with like-minded partners such as Regions4, CDP and the Global Strategic Communications Council (GSCC) to achieve greater reach and impact for our stories. There is also now a communications group within the Under2 Coalition that receives our events calendar and top line messages every month: helping to build collaboration between members and the Secretariat.

Growing media recognition: In 2020 we were mentioned in the media 175 times compared to 85 times in 2019. A significant amount of this was in South America, where we now have a strong presence through our projects. When we announced our new co-chairs in September there was a spike in interest in the work of regions, particularly when our North America co-chair, Gavin Newsom, Governor of California, announced plans to phase out polluting cars from the state live on YouTube.

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2021 focus

State and regional net zero leadership

As we continue through the Climate Decade, states and regions are being increasingly recognised as crucial actors in the effort to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Now, in the run-up to COP26, we are continuing to support our members to step up ambition, set long-term goals and deliver on critical action.



In 2021, the Under2 Coalition will deliver impact through:

- **Net zero leadership and COP26:**
More and more governments are now committing to net zero emissions by 2050 and progressing on those commitments at an unparalleled scale. States and regions are also bringing impact in sectors that fall uniquely under the jurisdiction of this level of government. Recognising this, the Coalition will champion net zero commitments at the state and regional level, and showcase that ambition at COP26 in Glasgow, hosted by our European co-chair, Scotland.
- **Supporting states and regions in the Climate Decade:**
The Coalition will continue to support members to build knowledge and technical capacity, share challenges and solutions, and implement tools to accelerate their climate action through the delivery of impact-led projects. We will continue to explore opportunities to develop peer-learning initiatives on a wider range of topics and target areas of most benefit to our governments. Efforts will be made to strengthen the capacity of our states and regions to deliver on their climate goals and influence the international climate discourse through dialogue on diplomacy and finance.
- **Building our network:**
We will look to increase not just the number of states and regions in the Under2 Coalition but the partners with whom we work. As the biggest coalition of states and regions we have huge influence internationally and we want to use this to make change where it is needed.
- **Encouraging higher national ambition:**
From the Chinese government's plan for net zero emissions by 2060 to the new US administration re-joining the Paris Agreement, there is a new momentum for climate ambition globally. State and regional leaders will continue to have a key role in pushing for stronger, longer-lasting NDCs and leading by example.
- **Leaving no one behind:**
Through the [Future Fund](#), we will continue to support a greater number of governments looking to participate in international forums and to have better access to leadership and learning opportunities.

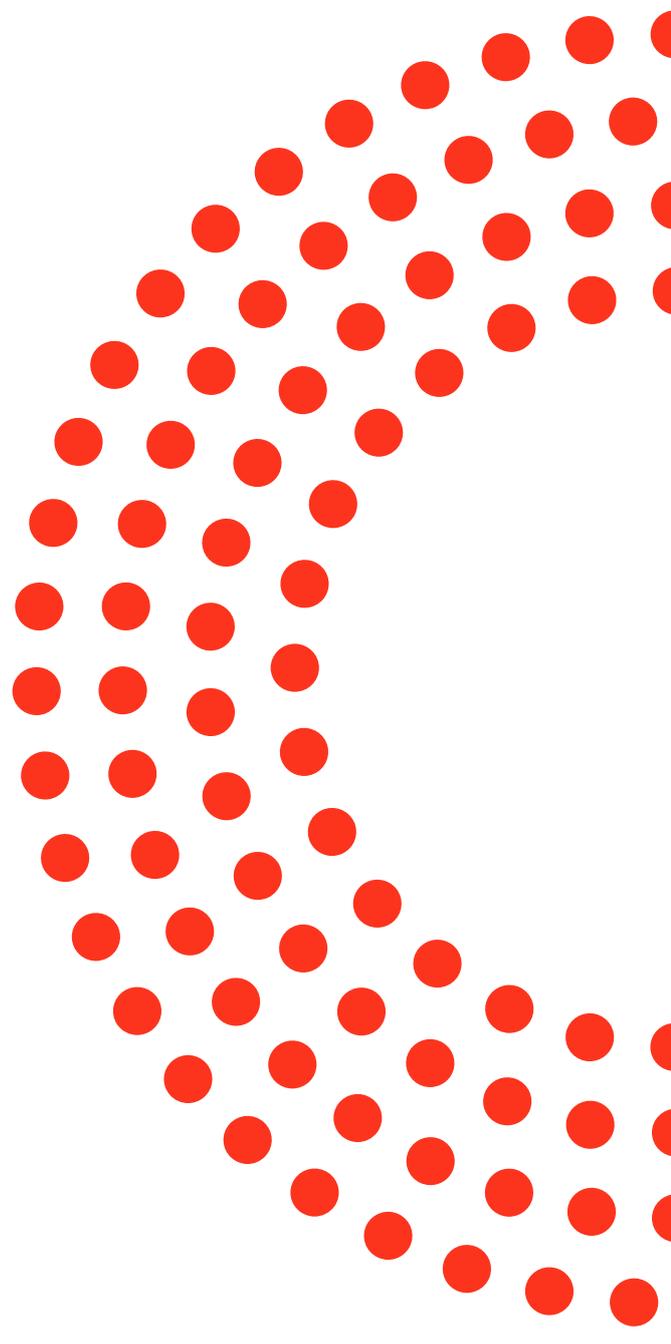
The tremendous achievements highlighted in this report are a result of the ongoing leadership of Under2 Coalition members. We look forward to fostering the power of this network further in 2021, to accelerate the pace of climate action and work towards a global goal of net zero emissions by 2050 with greater prosperity for all.



Thank you to the Under2 Coalition's 2020 donors:

- Children's Investment Fund Foundation
- ClimateWorks Foundation
- Dutch Postcode Lottery
- Energy & Climate Change Directorate of the Scottish Government
- European Climate Foundation
- International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Marisla Foundation
- Ministry of Environment & Energy of the Government of Sweden
- Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative
- Pisces Foundation
- Province of Québec-Bureau des Changements Climatiques (Future Fund)
- Stiftung Mercator
- The Government of Baden-Württemberg (Future Fund)
- The Welsh Government (Future Fund)
- UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

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