

## RIFS-Blogpost

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# The UN Intersessional Negotiations Reflect a Divided World]



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The mid-year climate change conference took place from June 16 to 26, 2025 in Bonn

**! Zum Aktualisieren der Textelemente, Zitation markieren und dann F9 drücken !**

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## 1.1 2025 is proving to be a year of setbacks in climate policy

In late June, at the annual intersessional negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn, states discussed important cornerstones of international climate policy and began preparations in earnest for the UN Climate Conference COP30, which will take place in Brazil in November. These discussions made it clear that, rather than marking a year of progress, the tenth anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement has become a year of setbacks and missed opportunities. The 'elephant in the room' this time was the question of how States can pursue ambitious climate policy in an increasingly divided world. The USA has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement. Although this will not take effect until January 2026, for the first time in history they did not send a delegation to Bonn. Other countries, such as New Zealand, Indonesia and Argentina, are considering following suit.

The parties to the Paris Agreement must submit updated 'Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)' in 2025, i.e. plans in which they show how they will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to climate change adaptation. Currently, only 27 of the almost 200 signatory states have done so. The targets and instruments contained in the NDCs are intended to enable compliance with the global 1.5 °C target. For example, the latest NDCs could include roadmaps for a tripling of renewable energy generation worldwide, a move away from fossil fuels and a just transition by supporting local, indigenous and marginalised communities, as agreed at COP28 in Dubai. Regrettably, little progress has been made towards the profound transformations that this will require. According to Climate Action Tracker, most NDCs still lack ambition, fall short of aligning with a 1.5°C pathway, use



unclear emissions data – in particular with respect to sectoral contributions – and rely heavily on unproven future technologies. This is especially concerning given that the 1.5°C threshold was already breached last year. Some progress was made in Bonn with regards to just transitions and gender, but hardly any progress was made on the issue of climate change adaptation. Brazil, which will host COP30, now faces the Herculean task of finding instruments to encourage the global community to be more ambitious or cooperate better and to revitalise the inadequate NDC process.

Climate financing, which has always been the most contentious issue, also dominated the negotiations in June. It remains unclear how the annual payment targets of USD 300 billion adopted last year and the 'targeted mobilisation' of USD 1.3 trillion by 2035 are to be raised - especially in light of the fact that the USA has stopped all international climate financing and almost all development aid funding. In June 2025, however, the German government also presented a draft budget that may prevent the country from honouring its international commitments, as it could fall short of the pledged amount for international climate finance. Under Angela Merkel, Germany promised to provide 6 billion euros annually from budget funds for international climate financing by 2025 at the latest. This is primarily allocated to programmes and projects of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Climate Initiative (IKI). In recent years, Germany has worked hard to gain international trust through constant financial aid and decisive diplomatic leadership roles in the climate negotiations and is now jeopardising this in an already tense situation. On a side note: At the NATO summit held in parallel in The Hague, Germany agreed to increase its defence spending to 5 percent of its gross domestic product. According to the German



Economic Institute, this would result in (cumulative) approximately 143 billion euros in additional spending by 2029, based on 2024 levels.

Many are now looking to the EU and China, in the hope that they will fill the gap left by the USA. But the EU is wavering: It is in the process of watering down the Green Deal, e.g. by weakening the rules for sustainable finance such as corporate sustainability reporting. The EU Commission is also proposing to lower its ambitions regarding the achievement of its climate targets. The proposed new target of achieving a 90% reduction in GHG emissions by 2040 shall no longer be achieved solely through efforts within the EU – instead, Europe is also to rely on a quota of carbon credits purchased abroad. China is forging ahead in many areas, e.g. with record figures for the installation of renewable energies (93 gigawatts of solar energy installed in May alone), but it remains reluctant to disclose concrete policy plans and make any financial commitments.

To be honest, it's difficult to find grounds for optimism at the moment. To end on a positive note, two Brazilian initiatives are worth noting: The first of these is an initiative against climate disinformation, launched in late 2024. The importance of this issue was reinforced during the negotiations. Secondly, Brazil has an ambitious implementation-focused vision for COP30 in November and is calling for a 'mutirão' – a collective act of strength, a collective movement, and strength in diversity. It is also fostering reflection and the necessary reform of the COP process. Hopefully, this focus on communality will endure in the long term.

This article was first published on 2 June 2025 on the website of the German Climate Consortium.



