

Turning the Tide: A Comparative Analysis of Regional Parliamentary Approaches for Scaling up Climate Action

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Abstract

This study explores the crucial role that regional parliaments play in promoting climate action across different regions. It underscores the necessity of cross-border climate action, given the interconnectedness of the climate system and the transboundary impacts of climate change. The study concentrates on the contributions of regional parliaments, often overlooked, in enhancing climate action through institutional structure. It identifies the approaches, work done, and strategies implemented by regional parliaments to fill the knowledge gap in the field. By empowering regional parliamentary institutions, this study highlights their potential to drive effective climate action and accelerate the transition towards a more sustainable future.

Keyword: AIPA, Arab Parliament, Climate Action, European Parliament, Regional Parliaments

Introduction

One and a half million people have shared their hopes and fears, and identified climate change and environmental issues as the number one long-term global challenge.¹ Climate change is a pressing issue requiring urgent and coordinated action. It is crucial to acknowledge

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1 United Nations, 'UN Common Agenda' <https://www.un.org/en/common-agenda> (accessed 1 December 2023).

the common priorities and work together for solutions to reduce the accelerated heating of the planet and mitigate the damages caused or potential damages. How should parliaments develop strategies at the regional level to scale up climate action?

Legislatures hold immense power in shaping collective response. Their actions in a regional context are vital for the success of climate action plans, fostering a sense of regional ownership and amplifying the overall impact. An understanding of the institutional framework of how the regional parliaments take climate action fosters greater understanding and cooperation, paving the way for a more sustainable future. Within this context, supranational and regional parliamentary assemblies emerge as key players, wielding the ability to navigate the complexities of interconnectedness and translate regional aspirations into concrete action. Their influence extends beyond steering economic development to influencing socio-political dynamics and shaping a collaborative future based on shared responsibility and solidarity.

One example is the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), which embodies this collaborative spirit. Recognised as the premier entity among ASEAN's seventy-nine affiliates, AIPA reflects the crucial role of parliamentarians in driving change and forging a common path forward to tackle climate change. In 2019, the AIPA Caucus mooted a discussion on the need to enhance cooperation on climate action in ASEAN through enabling laws and policies. This aligns with AIPA's role to encourage member parliaments to adopt harmonised policies on Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reduction, renewable/clean energy development, and disaster management. Regional parliaments' actions can directly contribute to addressing climate change.

This study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how supranational and regional parliamentary assemblies covering Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Arab world can leverage their unique positions and resources to 'turn the tide' on climate change. Collective climate action is crucial for a sustainable future, not just at a national level but globally.

Methodology

This study is based on the data and information collected from websites, official reports, academic publications, and policy documents. A due diligence exercise was conducted, including data verification, source checks, and cross-referencing with multiple sources to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data and information. The analysis identifies the

impact of climate change on Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Arab world. A comparison is made of the regional parliaments' responses, actions, and initiatives (if any) in shaping climate policy. While efforts have been made to collect as much data and information as possible to make the comparison more accurate, it is not possible for the study to obtain data and information that can be confidential or sensitive to the respective regional parliaments. Thus, the study can only provide a general overview of the current involvement of regional parliaments in climate action.

The study regions represent different geographical and socio-economic contexts, leading to diverse perspectives on climate action. Southeast Asia, a region of high population growth, faces challenges like rising sea levels and extreme weather events. As a key contributor to historical emissions, Europe² now holds the power to chart a different course – a leader in climate action as it grapples with decarbonisation. As for the Arab world, how would a region heavily relying on fossil fuels for energy take action to tackle Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions? Its commitment to climate change can tip the scales in the energy mix and GHG emissions, not just in the region. It is a key changemaker to a sustainable future for all.

Global milestone events and opportunities from climate change: a balancing act

The impact of climate change has become increasingly evident in recent decades, with a growing number of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and changes in ecosystems. Climate change is undeniably causing a significant increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. These events include heatwaves, droughts, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires, and they are disrupting agricultural production, which, in turn, is threatening food security. Climate change is expected to displace millions due to rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and other climate-related disasters. Furthermore, climate change is creating highly favourable conditions for the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, and Zika virus. It is exacerbating respiratory illnesses and other health problems. According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2023, droughts are becoming

2 H. Ritchie, 'OurWorldInData.org: Who has contributed most to global CO2 emissions?' <https://ourworldindata.org/contributed-most-global-co2> (accessed 15 April 2024).

increasingly severe worldwide, with 1.84 billion people affected and 4.7 per cent experiencing severe or extreme conditions.³ It further highlighted that most of those impacted are from low or middle-income countries.⁴ Hence, to tackle the challenges of climate change, a regional perspective and long-term planning are crucial and cannot be ignored. Moreover, the economic costs of climate change are already substantial and projected to rise significantly. For instance, total damages from the catastrophic flooding in Pakistan in 2022 are estimated to exceed US\$ 14.9 billion, and total economic losses are estimated at US\$ 15.2 billion.⁵

International agreements, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Kyoto Protocol, and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have been adopted since the first World Climate Conference in 1979. The Paris Agreement 2015⁶ and the Glasgow Climate Pact 2021 stressed the need for urgent action. The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report 2022 emphasised the need for immediate action to curb the accelerating impacts of climate change. At COP28, the Climate Action Commitment Counter mobilised over US\$ 83 billion⁷ in new financial commitments for climate action and held its first global stocktake to assess collective progress. At COP28, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) urged cross-sectoral collaboration to develop protective legislation, green economy initiatives, and global parliamentary partnerships to enhance climate resilience.⁸ The global parliamentary network recognised the chance to emerge stronger and more sustainable amidst the undeniable threat of climate change.

Parliaments must collaborate to turn global climate goals into concrete actions in their regions. This will require transboundary cooperation and coordination, as no country can address the climate crisis alone. National

3 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, *Global Drought Snapshot 2023: The Need for Proactive Action* (UNCCD Publication, 2023) 11.

4 Ibid.

5 See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/28/pakistan-flood-damages-and-economic-losses-over-usd-30-billion-and-reconstruction-needs-over-usd-16-billion-new-assessme> accessed 26 December 2023.

6 See <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement> accessed 1 December 2023.

7 See https://prod-cd-cdn.azureedge.net/-/media/Project/COP28/COP28-President_Remarks_ClosingPlenary_13-Dec.pdf?rev=5041a1b245c249a5a392e8ddaa3a2156, accessed on 14 December 2023.

8 Inter-Parliamentary Union, 'Parliamentary meetings at COP28,' <https://www.ipu.org/event/parliamentary-meetings-cop28#event-sub-page-documents> accessed 1 December 2023.

parliaments have already recognised the urgency and seriousness of the threat and are acting through legislation, budgeting, oversight, representation, and international cooperation. For instance, the Houses of the Oireachtas established a Joint Committee on Climate Action to carry out oversight responsibility. They debated on ‘Just Transition’, which forms a crucial part of Ireland’s Climate Action policy to ensure that individuals and communities are safeguarded and ready to face the challenges brought by climate change.⁹ While national governments deliberate, regional parliaments can lead the way with more concrete and immediate measures. Regional parliaments can combat climate change by promoting environmental legislation and fostering regional cooperation on low-carbon economies, clean energy, and sustainable development. What specific actions can regional parliaments take to make a difference?

Supranational parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies: a key driver of climate action

The global challenge of climate change demands concerted action at all levels of governance, including parliaments. While supranational parliaments and regional parliamentary assemblies are crucial players in taking climate action, their approaches to responding to climate change can differ significantly.

A supranational parliament is a unique political body that transcends national boundaries and represents the interests of a broader region or community. It operates beyond the jurisdiction of the national parliament and has the power to pass laws and regulations that can apply to all member states. The European Parliament is supranational—a directly elected body representing European Union (EU) citizens and it shares legislative power with the Council of the EU (Council).¹⁰ The European Commission (EC) is the executive branch of the EU.

A regional parliamentary assembly is a body composed of representatives from the parliaments of individual countries within a specific region. It serves as a platform for dialogue, cooperation, and collaboration on issues of common interest to the member parliaments. AIPA is a regional organisation that promotes collaboration and coordination among member parliaments on political, economic, social,

⁹ See https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_climate_action/2019-12-18/ accessed 6 April 2024.

¹⁰ See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/> accessed 14 December 2023.

and cultural issues. For this study, the Arab Parliament is classified as a regional parliamentary assembly – it primarily serves as a consultative and advisory body and lacks the authority to override national laws or policies.¹¹

1. AIPA

Southeast Asia is one of the most vulnerable regions to the impacts of climate change due to its complex geography, reliance on agriculture, and high population density. Rising sea levels and frequent extreme weather threaten its environment, economy, and society. The Mekong Delta, a crucial agricultural and economic region, is sinking due to rising sea levels and groundwater extraction, threatening food security and displacement of millions.¹² El Niño 2015 caused prolonged drought across Southeast Asia, leading to water shortages, crop damages, and wildfires.¹³ In April 2024, a ‘historic heatwave’ is being experienced across Southeast Asia. In central Myanmar, 44°C was recorded for the first time – marking the highest temperature ever reached so early in the month in Southeast Asia’s climatic history. At least 30,000 people have been evacuated from the areas hardest hit by Cyclone Talim¹⁴ in north-eastern Vietnam. Additionally, the passage of Talim over northern Luzon in July 2023 resulted in almost 10,400 displaced people and more than 95,000 affected.¹⁵ The flooding that affected several Malaysian states in December 2021 and early January 2022 resulted in losses of US\$ 1.46 billion (RM 6.1 billion).¹⁶ Addressing these calamities requires urgent action, including mitigation strategies to reduce GHG emissions, adaptation measures to build resilience and international cooperation to support vulnerable communities.

11 M.A. Abdulhameed, ‘Measuring the Arab Parliament’s institutional development’ (2019) *Review of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. 8 No. 6, 448-468. <https://doi.org/10.1108/REPS-06-2019-0079> accessed 28 December 2023.

12 See <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/eastasiapacific/how-vietnams-mekong-delta-adapting-changing-climate> accessed 15 April 2024.

13 See <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000180-vnm> accessed 28 December 2023.

14 See <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/environment/about-30-000-to-be-evacuated-due-to-storm-talim-4630395.html> accessed 24 December 2023.

15 See <https://reliefweb.int/report/china/china-philippines-vietnam-laos-tropical-cyclone-talim-update-gdacs-dromic-dswd-media-echo-daily-flash-19-july-2023> accessed 24 December 2023.

16 See <https://v1.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/pdfPrev&id=ZlkxS0JnNThiRHk0ZlZlZjdyVm44UT09> accessed 24 December 2023.

ASEAN is an inter-governmental organisation comprising ten (10) member states: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. With a combined GDP of over US\$3.6 trillion, it is the world's fifth-largest economy.¹⁷ With its growing economic prowess, ASEAN is uniquely positioned to take a prominent role in taking on global challenges of climate action and sustainable development. AIPA represents the inter-parliamentary organisation of ASEAN. Besides the ten-member parliaments, it has twenty-three (23) observer-member parliaments¹⁸ and other affiliated organisations. The Parliament of Timor Leste will soon join AIPA as the newest member parliament.

The basis of the relationship between ASEAN and AIPA is defined in their respective charters: the ASEAN Charter and the Statute of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. The Charter lists AIPA as the utmost '*entity associated with ASEAN*', as provided in the ASEAN Charter 2020, Article 16 (1) and Annex 2. The Statute explicitly recognises ASEAN as a partner and includes a dedicated section in the Statute (2021), Article 18, on '*Partnership With ASEAN*'. It specifically provides for the establishment of '*regular communication, interaction and consultation with ASEAN to ensure better coherence and cooperation between the ASEAN government, the National Parliaments of ASEAN Member States, and stakeholders in ASEAN, as well as to enhance relationships with ASEAN bodies.*' In addition, the Statute Article 3 (4) provides, among others, the aim and purpose of '*study, discuss and suggest solutions to problems of common interest and express its views on such issues with the aim of bringing about action and timely response by the members of AIPA.*' The General Assembly is the highest body in AIPA, convening annually to set policy directions and serve as a forum for member parliaments. The Presiding Officer of the national parliament of the member state

17 ASEAN and Allurentis, Investing in ASEAN 2023 (n.a, Allurentis Limited, 2022) 4.

18 Observer Member Parliaments from the National Assembly of Armenia, the Parliament of Australia, the Milli Majlis of the Azerbaijan Republic, the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, Parliament of Canada, the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, the National Assembly of People's Power (Cuba), European Parliament, Parliament of Georgia, Parliament of India, National Diet of Japan, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, the House of Representatives of Morocco, the House of Representatives of Nepal, New Zealand Parliament, the Storting of Norway, National Assembly of Pakistan, National Parliament of Papua New Guinea, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Parliament of Timor Leste, the Grand National Assembly of Turkiye, the Verkhovna Rade of Ukraine, the United States Congress.

hosting the General Assembly shall serve as the President of AIPA and the President of the General Assembly. The AIPA Secretariat is headed by the Secretary-General and assisted by two Assistant Secretary-General. The General Assembly has seven (7) committees: Executive Committee, Political Matters, Economic Matters, Social Matters, Organisational Matters, the Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) and Young Parliamentarians of AIPA (YPA).

AIPA's contribution to climate action can be categorised into three key areas: (1) legislation and policy advocacy, (2) legislative harmonisation and monitoring, and (3) capacity building, knowledge sharing and regional cooperation.

Legislation and policy advocacy

AIPA regularly adopts resolutions urging member parliaments to take specific action on climate change. Between 1990 and 2023, 58 climate-related resolutions¹⁹ were approved and adopted, addressing matters concerning climate action, sustainable development, and green initiatives. These resolutions can be powerful tools to influence national policies and promote regional collaboration.

- As early as 1990, AIPA recognised the link between environmental stewardship and sustainable development, calling for regional and global cooperation for collective action.²⁰
- In 2007, AIPA declared climate change a regional challenge and set ambitious goals to establish an agenda on global warming, lower GHG and formulate an action plan to mitigate the risks in ASEAN. The call for enhanced environmental cooperation underscored AIPA's commitment to a unified front against this threat.²¹
- In 2014, AIPA proposed establishing an ASEAN Green Growth Centre to promote sustainable practices and clean technologies through information dissemination and joint research.²²

19 Based on the resolutions database extracted from the AIPA website.

20 11th AIPA General Assembly, Singapore, 'Resolution on ASEAN Cooperation on the Environment,' accessed 14 December 2023.

21 The 28th AIPA General Assembly, Kuala Lumpur, 'Resolution on Climate Change as a Regional Challenge,' accessed 14 December 2023.

22 The 35th AIPA General Assembly, Laos PDR, 'Resolution on Fostering Green Growth Development Strategy in ASEAN,' accessed 14 December 2023.

- AIPA's 2018 resolution advocated for investments in climate-smart agricultural practices, recognising the vital role of agriculture in regional food security and the potential impact of climate change on food production.²³
- AIPA passed a resolution²⁴ in 2019 urging ASEAN to expedite clean energy policies, scale up zero-emission industries, ensure climate-friendly investments, and utilise AIPA as a platform for exploring carbon pricing initiatives and developing legal frameworks for climate action.

AIPA has been leading initiatives for climate change by promoting clean technologies, sustainable agriculture, and green growth in ASEAN. In 2009, AIPA established a special interface session during the ASEAN Summit to facilitate regular communication with the ASEAN member leaders. At the 42nd ASEAN Summit, AIPA recommended that ASEAN promote a green economy and sustainable economic stability to align with its legal agreements and policies. During the 44th AIPA General Assembly, two resolutions on driving energy transition, developing a green economy in ASEAN, and accelerating green transition for sustainable and resilient economic growth were debated, approved, and adopted unanimously.

Legislative harmonisation and monitoring

The AIPA Caucus was established in 2007²⁵ in Kuala Lumpur and subsequently held its first meeting there in 2009. The Caucus promotes information sharing among member parliaments to develop common legislative initiatives to harmonise AIPA legislation.²⁶ While the first AIPA Caucus had working groups to harmonise laws on combating drug menace and human trafficking, climate action and sustainable developments were popular themes in the subsequent meetings covering disaster management, sustainable tourism, cooperation on climate action

23 The 39th IPA General Assembly, Singapore, 'Resolution on Environmental Sustainability and Sustainable Urban Ecosystem,' accessed 14 December 2023.

24 The 40th AIPA General Assembly, Bangkok, 'Resolution on Regional Parliamentary Initiative for Enhancing Climate Action in ASEAN,' accessed 14 December 2023.

25 The 28th AIPA General Assembly, 19 – 24 August 2007, Kuala Lumpur, 'Resolution on the Establishment of an AIPA Caucus,' accessed 14 December 2023.

26 The 28th AIPA General Assembly, Kuala Lumpur, 'Resolution on the Establishment of an AIPA Caucus,' accessed 14 December 2023.

and green growth.²⁷ Often, discussions during the Caucus working group can lead to a consensus at the General Assembly to take further action on green growth, carbon pricing and emergency planning for extreme weather events. For instance, during the 40th AIPA General Assembly in 2019, a resolution on ‘Regional Parliamentary Initiative for Enhancing Climate Action in ASEAN’ was adopted, following through an earlier deliberation during the 10th AIPA Caucus to expedite clean energy policies and explore carbon pricing initiatives. This will streamline regional efforts and promote an integrated approach to climate action.

In addition, the Caucus tracks the implementation status of the resolutions adopted. Member parliaments must report the implementation status, legal provision and related legislation, and parliamentary and national initiatives. The AIPA secretariat tracks the implementation status through the dashboard on the website and monitors resolutions for further follow-up, such as exploring collaboration. As of July 2023, the implementation status of AIPA resolutions adopted between 2017 and 2022 indicated that 87 per cent were implemented, 10 per cent were partially implemented, and 3 per cent were not implemented/unavailable.²⁸

Capacity building, knowledge sharing and regional cooperation

Observer member parliaments are permitted to attend and make statements at the first plenary session of the General Assembly. The dialogue between AIPA member parliaments and observer member parliaments is an agenda item in the General Assembly’s business. Statements by observer member parliaments shall be confined to matters of mutual concern and common interest. AIPA and the European Parliament have taken the formal relationship further by holding an exclusive dialogue session annually beginning in 2021.

Training programs and workshops have been organised to educate AIPA officials about climate change challenges, such as the ‘ASEAN-UN Regional Dialogue (AURE) VI on Climate, Peace and Security.’ AIPA also shares reports and guidelines on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, such as ‘Promoting the Application of the

27 1st AIPA Caucus, <https://aipasecretariat.org/elements/aipa-caucus-report/> accessed 23 December 2023.

28 AIPA, *Status of Implementation of AIPA Resolutions on Organisational Matters Adopted in 2017 – 2022* as of July 2023 <https://aipasecretariat.org/status-of-implementation/> accessed 23 December 2023.

ASEAN Guidelines for Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry: A Practical Handbook for ASEAN Parliamentarians.²⁹

AIPA plays a multifaceted role in advancing climate action within Southeast Asia. The commitment of AIPA member parliaments to protecting the environment is evident from their adoption of 58 climate-related resolutions and their involvement in programs and initiatives concerning climate action and disaster management. However, the AIPA lacks concrete legislative authorities on climate change, as it is mandated to foster inter-parliamentary cooperation and promote sustainable development policies through dialogue mechanisms, solidarity, understanding, collaboration, and enabling measures among its member parliaments.³⁰

2. European Parliament

The European Parliament is crucial in driving and shaping the EU's response to climate change. The Mediterranean Sea, a vital part of Europe's tourism industry, is rising at an alarming rate, threatening coastal cities like Venice,³¹ Greece, and Barcelona. In 2021, Germany experienced its deadliest floods³² in centuries, causing billions of euros in losses and displacing thousands. The European Parliament also recognises the Alps' critical role as a water source for millions. However, with the massive annual glacier mass loss, the European Parliament is pushing for adaptation strategies like rainwater harvesting, better irrigation systems, and more investments in water-saving technologies.³³ Droughts in Spain³⁴ and Portugal are jeopardising harvests, pushing up food prices that impact farmers' livelihoods. Heatwaves and wildfires deter tourists from visiting popular destinations like Greece and southern

29 Food and Agriculture Organization, 'Climate Change and Food Security: Risks and Responses' <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc6333en> accessed 1 December 2023.

30 AIPA, *AIPA Strategic Plan 2023*.

31 Sheryl L. Hummel, 'Rising Waters: Can a Massive Sea Barrier Save Venice from Drowning?' <https://e360.yale.edu/features/rising-waters-can-a-massive-sea-barrier-save-venice-from-drowning> accessed 1 December 2023.

32 'Germany Floods: July 2021 Update' <https://floodlist.com/europe/germany-floods-july-2021-update> accessed 1 December 2023.

33 'Alpine Glaciers' <https://climate.copernicus.eu/alpine-glaciers> accessed 1 December 2023.

34 Nicola Jones, 'Drought Depletes a Reservoir in Spain, Revealing a 'Ghost Village'' <https://e360.yale.edu/digest/drought-depletes-a-reservoir-in-spain-revealing-a-ghost-village> accessed 16 December 2023.

France, harming local economies.³⁵ Storm surges and floods damage coastal infrastructure like ports and dikes, requiring expensive repairs and hindering trade.³⁶

The EU and the European Parliament are intertwined entities, each drawing authority and legitimacy from the other. First established in 1952 as the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Parliament is the EU's law-making body and is directly elected by EU voters every five years. The last election was in May 2019. The Treaty on European Union³⁷ (TEU) signed in Maastricht in 1992, established the European Parliament as a co-legislator alongside the Council of the EU,³⁸ granting it equal footing in shaping EU laws. Article 14(1) TEU expressed, '*the European Parliament shall, jointly with the Council, exercise legislative and budgetary functions.*' This means the Parliament has a direct say in shaping EU laws and controlling the EU's budget. Article 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)³⁹ defines the legal acts the EU can adopt, such as regulations, directives, and decisions. It also specifies which acts require the Parliament's assent or co-decision with the Council of the EU, further solidifying its legislative, supervisory, and budgetary roles. As the only directly elected EU institution, the European Parliament represents the diverse voices of European citizens on climate issues. This gives it significant political clout to push for ambitious climate policies. The President of the European Parliament, who serves as the speaker of the Parliament, is elected for a two-and-a-half-year term. The Secretary-General heads the Parliament's Secretariat. The 705 Members of EPs (MEPs) from various

35 Colleen Barry, 'Tourism at Risk as Heat Wave, Wildfires Sweep Mediterranean' <https://apnews.com/article/tourism-mediterranean-wildfires-heat-wave-b29f1368f3789ca17c5b79516c4945ec> accessed 1 December 2023.

36 Andreas Christodoulou, Panayiotis Christidis, and Hasan Demirel, 'Sea-level rise in ports: a wider focus on impacts' (2019) ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328345003_Sea-level_rise_in_ports_a_wider_focus_on_impacts accessed 1 December 2023.

37 See also <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eut/teu/article/14> accessed 12 December 2023.

38 European Union, 'The Council is an essential EU decision-maker. It negotiates and adopts legislative acts in most cases with the EP through the ordinary legislative procedure, also known as 'co-decision'. Co-decision is used for policy areas where the EU has exclusive or shared competence with the member states. In these cases, the Council legislates based on proposals submitted by the European Commission.' See also <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/>.

39 European Union regulations.

political groups of 27 EU member states can join forces to champion climate action, leveraging their combined strength to influence legislation and hold other EU institutions accountable.

The European Parliament wields significant authority and influence in shaping the EU's climate action agenda. Its shared legislative and budgetary powers with the Council of the EU directly impact climate-related laws and funding. Additionally, it has a third role of supervising all EU institutions. The European Parliament holds the EU accountable through mechanisms like hearings and votes of no confidence. This oversight function strengthens the Parliament's role as a check and balance on other EU institutions.

The European Parliament was crucial in securing aid for flooding in Germany in July 2021. In its legislative role, it approved the EU's European Union Solidarity Fund, which offered financial assistance to the EU hit by major natural disasters. In another unrelated milestone, in March 2023, the European Parliament adopted the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) revision with 486 votes to 132 and 10 abstentions. The Regulation sets binding annual reductions for GHG emissions for road transport, heating of buildings, agriculture, small industrial installations, and waste management for each EU member state. Currently, it regulates roughly 60 per cent of all EU emissions. The revised law increases the 2030 GHG reduction target at the EU level from 30 per cent to 40 per cent compared to 2005. For the first time, all EU member states must now reduce GHG emissions with targets ranging between 10 and 50 per cent.⁴⁰

To increase transparency and accountability, the European Commission (EC) publishes national actions in an easily accessible format, as requested by the European Parliament. Additional instances demonstrating the European Parliament's commitment to climate action are outlined below:

- The European Parliament played a crucial role in adopting the European Climate Law, demonstrating its commitment to achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and setting obligatory intermediate targets for reducing emissions.⁴¹

40 See https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/effort-sharing-member-states-emission-targets/effort-sharing-2021-2030-targets-and-flexibilities_en accessed 24 December 2023.

41 See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/72/combating-climate-change> accessed 24 December 2023.

- The European Parliament approved the negotiated deal on the EU's Deforestation Regulation⁴² after requesting a modification from the EC.
- The EU's founding treaties prioritise environmental protection in all policy areas. The European Parliament considers climate impacts when shaping legislation across sectors, from agriculture to transport, to align with the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) revision.

The European Parliament's contribution to climate action can be categorised into four key areas: (1) legislative scrutiny, (2) budgetary control, (3) international cooperation, and (4) public awareness.

Legislative scrutiny

The European Parliament's committees are pivotal in scrutinising, shaping, and advancing the EU's climate action agenda. The committees can instruct legislative proposals, appoint a negotiation team to conduct negotiations with the Council of the EU, propose amendments, issue recommendations, and even reject proposals deemed insufficient. They can also adopt their own initiative reports, organise hearings with experts and scrutinise the other EU bodies and institutions. There are twenty-four (24) specialised standing committees, many of which actively contribute to advancing climate-related policies. The Committee on Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety (ENVI)⁴³ leads legislation on emissions reduction, renewable energy, and adaptation strategies, for instance, the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) to reduce GHG emissions from power plants and industrial facilities. The system was proposed in 2002 and launched in 2005, and it has helped reduce emissions and generate revenue for member states. The EC presented policy reforms in July 2021, known as Fit for 55,⁴⁴ to reduce emissions by 55 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030. The European Parliament's approval is necessary for any changes to the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), and they

42 See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20230414IPR80129/parliament-adopts-new-law-to-fight-global-deforestation> accessed 24 December 2023.

43 Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, *Work in Progress*.

44 See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/fit-for-55-effort-sharing-regulation/#:::text=Infographics-,Fit%20for%2055%3A%20reducing%20emissions%20from%20transport%2C%20buildings%2C%20agriculture,to%201990%20levels%20by%202030> accessed 14 December 2023.

have consistently advocated for more ambitious emissions reduction targets, measures to address carbon leakage, and investments in clean technologies. ENVI members also exchanged views with the EC on implementing the Deforestation Regulation, which was adopted on 31 May 2023. The European Parliament has pushed for a more ambitious timeline of achieving a net-zero GHG emissions target and increasing the share of renewable energy to 42.5 per cent by 2030.⁴⁵

Budgetary control

- Budgets Committee members approved Euro 279 million⁴⁶ in EU aid following extreme weather events in Austria, Italy, Portugal, and Spain in 2019.
- The European Parliament successfully increased the budget for the LIFE program,⁴⁷ which has been supporting environmental and climate action projects across the EU.
- The European Parliament allocated significant funds to Horizon Europe,⁴⁸ the EU's research and innovation program, prioritising projects focused on climate solutions and clean technologies.

International cooperation

- The European Parliament promotes international cooperation on climate change through resolutions, dialogues with other parliaments, and participation in global forums.
- During COP28, the European Parliament⁴⁹ demonstrated its climate commitment by calling for increased national contributions to limit

45 See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20221128STO58001/how-the-eu-is-boosting-renewable-energy> accessed 14 December 2023.

46 See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20200520IPR79528/austria-italy-portugal-spain-receive-EU279m-after-natural-disasters-in-2019> accessed 14 December 2023.

47 See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20201106IPR91014/compromise-on-long-term-eu-budget-ep-obtains-EU16-billion-more-for-key-programme-s> accessed 14 December 2023.

48 European Parliament, Legislative Train 03.2024, *Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Missions (Non-Legislative, Q4 2020) – Q3 2020*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/carriage/horizon-europe-missions/report?sid=7901> accessed 14 December 2023.

49 European Parliament, *Resolution of 21 November 2023 on the UN Climate Change Conference 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (COP28) (2023/2636(RSP))*

global temperature rise to 1.5°C. The resolution also emphasises civil society participation and the need to assist vulnerable nations.

- The European Parliament and AIPA have engaged in several dialogues on climate action in recent years to promote regional and international cooperation on climate change and foster the exchange of best practices and ideas between the two regions. Notable instances include the Inaugural European Parliament-AIPA Inter-Regional Dialogue on Climate Change on 22 June 2021, the 2nd AIPA-EP Inter-Regional Dialogue on Climate Action on 14 December 2022, and bilateral meetings and exchanges between the European Parliament committees and AIPA members.

Public awareness

- MEPs raise public awareness about climate challenges and solutions through debates, hearings, and outreach activities. For instance, the public hearing on the ‘Impact of the War in Ukraine on Global Food Security and the Fight Against Climate Change’ in 2023 and the debate on the ‘Proposal for a Regulation on deforestation-free products’ in 2022.

The European Parliament, with its legal authority and political influence, is a powerful force for climate action within the EU. The Parliament’s various groups have been instrumental in driving climate action with their commendable leadership skills, influencing legislation, and raising awareness. For instance, the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, has demonstrated a keen interest in environmental sustainability by prioritising it in the ‘Conference on the Future of Europe.’⁵⁰

Another instance of leadership commitment is the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance Ska Keller, which advocates for higher renewable energy targets and stricter emissions standards.

The European Parliament’s commitment to ambitious targets, ability to hold other institutions accountable, and engagement with the public make it a key driver of change at a critical moment for the planet. As the EU grapples with climate change, the European Parliament’s role will remain vital in ensuring a sustainable future for future generations.

50 See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20231215STO15940/future-of-europe-how-parliament-is-turning-people-s-ideas-into-reality> accessed 18 December 2023.

3. Arab Parliament

The Arab world is also among the most vulnerable to climate change. Exposed to arid and semi-arid climates, the region is predicted to become even hotter and drier due to climate change. Temperatures have risen faster than the world average, with a possible 5°C increase over pre-industrial levels by 2100.⁵¹ A severe drought⁵² in Morocco in 2022 led to water rationing and crop failures, raising concerns about food security in the region. In July 2016, Kuwait recorded a temperature of 54°C, the third-highest temperature ever recorded on Earth – the highest in recent history.⁵³ Kuwait has also experienced an increase in the frequency and severity of dust storms caused by drought and deforestation.

Rising sea levels are threatening coastal communities in the region. As a result, the historic city of Alexandria in Egypt is sinking, causing flooding and damage to infrastructure.⁵⁴ Coastal communities in Tunisia are also facing erosion and displacement due to rising sea levels.⁵⁵ Oil-rich Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have pledged net-zero emissions in the coming decades. The MENA Region Cooling Status Report⁵⁶ noted that the region's energy demand will increase by 50 per cent by 2040. Most Arab League members are in the MENA region.

The Arab League and the Arab Parliament are distinct yet closely interconnected entities within the Arab world, both playing crucial roles in promoting regional cooperation, stability, and development. The Arab League comprises 22 member states in the Arab region that work together to promote solidarity and resolve disputes. The highest decision-making body is the Council of the Arab League. The Arab Parliament, on the other hand, was established during the summit of the

51 See <https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/how-arab-states-region-scaling-climate-action#:~:text=Temperatures%20in%20the%20region%20have%20been%20rising,further%20decline%20by%2020%20percent%20by%202030> accessed 18 December 2023.

52 See, <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/catastrophic-moroccan-drought-boost-import-subsidy-costs-2022-02-18/> accessed 18 December 2023.

53 See <https://www.dw.com/en/kuwaits-climate-crisis-a-scorching-nation-in-denial/a-61261999> accessed 18 December 2023.

54 See <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20221102-sinking-alexandria-faces-up-to-coming-catastrophe> accessed 18 December 2023.

55 See <https://www.euronews.com/green/2023/02/23/why-are-tunisias-beaches-disappearing-and-what-does-it-mean-for-the-country> accessed 19 December 2023.

56 A Pohl, *MENA Region Cooling Status Report: Progress, Opportunities and Insight, Issue 2*, International Climate Initiative (Berlin, Guidehouse Germany GmbH, 2023).

League Council in Algiers in March 2005 as a representative institution within the framework of the Arab League. On 29 March 2012, the 23rd Ordinary Session of the League Council held in Baghdad, Iraq, issued Resolution 559, which adopted the Statute of the Arab Parliament where the principles of *shura* and democracy are practised, freedom and human rights are respected, '*as a tool for dialogue, decision making, a popular impetus to Arab Action system, and an active partner in making of a joint Arab policy that serves the supreme interests of the Arab nation and confirms the principle of widening the scope of political participation as a basis for promoting democracy in Arab countries for closer ties among Arab people.*' The adoption of Resolution No. 559 in 2012 marked a crucial step in the evolution of the Arab League towards greater regional parliamentary representation and potential democratisation. Thus, with the amendments, the Arab Parliament has moved from a transitional to a permanent parliamentary institution.

The Arab Parliament comprises 88 parliamentarians representing the 22 member parliaments of the Arab League. The President of the Arab Parliament is elected to serve a three-year term. The General Secretariat is headed by a Secretary-General and assisted by Assistant Secretary-General. The Arab Parliament has established the Centre for Arab Parliamentary Diplomacy to assist the parliament to achieve the goals identified in the diplomacy strategic plan.

While not directly involved in implementing climate action or sustainable development, the Arab Parliament shapes the policy environment and builds regional consensus on these issues. One notable initiative to rally for collective action in building an Arab framework responsive to climate challenges is the Arab Children's Parliament programme entitled, '*The Arab Children: A Sustainable Effort for the Climate.*'⁵⁷ The program showcased the potential of the children of the Arab League as the future generation to lead climate-focused initiatives.

The Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) is an independent organisation that serves as a forum for national Arab parliaments to foster cooperation and dialogue. It operates alongside the Arab League and aims to promote communication and collaboration among member states through sharing best practices and advocating for common interests. The AIPU provides a broader platform for dialogue than the Arab Parliament and complements its efforts.

57 See <https://sharjah24.ae/en/Articles/2023/07/23/Arab-Childrens-Parliament-Unites-for-Climate-Action> accessed 18 December 2023.

The contribution of the Arab Parliament to climate action can be categorised into four key areas: (1) legislative framework, (2) oversight function, (3) capacity building, knowledge sharing and regional cooperation.

Legislative framework

The Arab Parliament operates under the Statute of the Arab Parliament, which outlines its formation, tasks, and powers. It empowers the parliament to address ‘economic integration, social solidarity and sustainable development.’ This provides a framework for its activities, programs, and collaborations in tackling the region’s climate challenges in accordance with Article 5 of the Statutes,

Parliament exercises its powers in a way that enhances joint Arab action and achieves economic integration, social solidarity, and sustainable development, leading to Arab unity. Its roles and responsibilities include:

- o Working to strengthen Arab-Arab relations, developing forms of joint Arab action, strengthening its mechanisms, and working to ensure Arab national security and strengthen human rights. He may submit recommendations and proposals that he deems appropriate for this.
- o Following up on the process of joint Arab action and hold hearings with the heads of the ministerial councils, the Secretary-General of the League, or the heads or general directors of specialised Arab organisations.
- o Discussing the matters referred to by the Council of the League, the Ministerial Councils, the Secretary-General of the League, or the heads or directors of specialised Arab organisations and express an opinion on them. He may issue recommendations to be a basis when the relevant councils issue the relevant decisions.
- o Directing questions in writing to the heads of the ministerial councils, the Secretary-General of the League, and the directors of specialised Arab organisations on any subject within their jurisdiction. These bodies must answer the members’ questions within a period specified by the bylaws.
- o Approving draft unified laws and collective Arab agreements referred to it is mandatory before the Council of the League approves.

In 2023, the Arab Parliament approved a general framework⁵⁸ to guide the development of policies, plans, activities and mechanisms for environmental protection and development in the Arab League member states. While Article VIII of the framework provides for the Arab League member states to have joint action programs related to climate affairs and Article XVII of the document encourages the Arab national parliaments to establish a permanent committee on environmental matters, the role of the Arab parliament is not explicitly stated.

Oversight function

The Arab Parliament's regulation provides that parliamentarians can review draft budgets and final accounts of the Arab League. Article 5 of the Statute,

Reviewing draft budgets and final accounts of the General Secretariat of the League before they are approved by the competent authorities, as well as reviewing the final accounts of specialised Arab organisations.

Capacity building, knowledge sharing and regional cooperation

The Arab Parliament can facilitate dialogue and cooperation between member parliaments on climate action and sustainable development. For instance, it promotes awareness about climate change adaptation in mountainous regions.⁵⁹ The Parliament raises public awareness about climate change and sustainable development through media outreach and targets groups such as young parliamentarians. Additionally, parliamentarians are also encouraged to support global initiatives aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of human actions on the environment.

Since the Paris Agreement in 2015, the Arab world has intensified its commitment to addressing climate change. The AIPU has partnered with the IPU to co-host the 2022 Arab Parliamentary Forum on the 2030 Agenda, focusing on enabling parliaments to implement climate commitments. Additionally, by hosting COP22 Marrakesh (2016), COP27 Sharm El-Sheikh (2022), and COP28 UAE (2023), the Arab League member states are enhancing their role in promoting climate action.

58 Arab Parliament, *Arab Document for Environmental Protection and Development*, n.d.

59 See <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2023-11/helping-parliaments-reach-new-heights-in-mountain-adaptation> accessed 18 December 2023.

Comparative analysis

The regional parliaments in the study have varying levels of influence on climate-related laws and policies.

Profile of the regional parliaments

	AIPA	European Parliament	Arab Parliament
Provision for Regional Parliament	Statute of the AIPA The ASEAN Charter	Treaty on European Union (TEU) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)	The Statute of the Arab Parliament
Year of Establishment	AIPA in 1977 ASEAN in 1967	European Parliament (Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community) in 1952 European Union (European Coal and Steel Community) in 1951 (formally established in 1992)*	The Arab Parliament in 2005 (transitional) 2012 (permanent) The League of Arab States in 1945
Population	672 million (9% of global population) 3 rd largest in the world	448 million (6% of global population) 5 th largest in the world	465 million (6% of global population) 4 th largest in the world
No. of Member Parliament	10 (excl. Timor Leste)	27	22
Memberships	Max 150	705	88
Leadership	President of AIPA/ President of the General Assembly	President of the European Parliament	President of the Arab Parliament
Objective	Advisory and consultative roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-legislating with the Council of the EU • Can propose to EC to present legislation to call for a community act to be drawn up • Oversight function over the EU budget • Scrutinise policies and programs by EC and EU institutions • Public hearings 	Advisory and consultative roles

	AIPA	European Parliament	Arab Parliament
Flagship Legislation of Regional Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Pollution • ASEAN Strategy on Carbon Neutrality • ASEAN Centre for Climate Change • ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity • ASEAN Disaster Management and Emergency Relief • ASEAN Agenda 2045 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Green Deal⁶⁰ • Fit for 55 Package • Effort Sharing Regulation • EU Deforestation Regulation • The EU Emissions Trading System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arab Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030 • Arab Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2015 – 2030 • Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 • The Arab Water Security Strategy 2010 – 2030
Climate Action by Regional Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing • Adopted 58 climate-related resolutions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon pricing • Energy transition • Green technology • Green growth • Green economy • Deforestation and forest degradation 	Debate, scrutinise, revise, and adopt the EU policy on climate change, especially the European Green Deal, a set of ambitious climate targets and initiatives.	Capacity building, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing

* The Treaty of European Union (TEU)/the Maastricht Treaty 1992.

AIPA

AIPA operates within the framework of its statute, supporting ASEAN's efforts to address climate change. While AIPA does not possess direct legislative authority, it has made concerted attempts to shape the region's climate legislative landscape. This influence is achieved by actively promoting the adoption of critical resolutions and facilitating constructive discussions on climate action policies. A prime example is AIPA's proposal to establish the ASEAN Green Growth Centre and promote investments in climate-smart agricultural practices.⁶¹

60 See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/climate-change/eu-climate-action/> accessed 18 December 2023.

61 See 35th AIPA General Assembly Resolution. See also 39th AIPA General Assembly Resolution.

AIPA plays a pivotal yet nuanced role in the regional landscape by convening together parliamentarians from across ASEAN. Despite lacking direct legislative power, AIPA's influence on national policy-making and its promotion of regional cooperation, particularly in climate action, is gaining traction. However, the current framework within which AIPA operates upholds the principle of state sovereignty, which inherently limits its capacity to enforce resolutions. While reflecting a collective vision, the resolutions adopted by AIPA are not binding and thus do not compel member states/parliaments to act. As a result, AIPA's effectiveness in climate action hinges on voluntary cooperation among member states and parliaments, leading to variability in the implementation of harmonised laws. This challenges the accountability of regional commitments, potentially affecting the strength and effectiveness of a united effort to take climate action.

In light of these considerations, exploring opportunities to enhance AIPA's oversight capabilities is prudent. Climate action discourse within AIPA primarily falls under the purview of the Committee on Social Matters and the Committee on Economic Matters during the annual AIPA General Assembly. Given the pressing nature of climate-related challenges, there may be merit in dedicating more specialised attention to this issue. Forming a dedicated committee focused on monitoring the implementation of harmonised laws and actions could prove instrumental. A dedicated committee would supplement the existing efforts of the Committees on Social Matters and Committee on Economic Matters and provide a focused and strategic approach to oversee the implementation of agreed-upon legislation. Such a committee would embody the collaborative spirit of AIPA and reinforce the commitments made by member parliaments, thereby ensuring that the collective aspirations for climate action are translated into tangible progress.

AIPA could also consider exploring a more proactive approach. One potential avenue could be establishing a dedicated mechanism, such as a Climate Action Foundation, to address climate change and climate action. The mechanism could focus on mobilising resources to support effective programs combating climate change. These programs should include:

- Facilitating the exchange of best practices and evidence-based legislation on climate action among member states.
- Promoting capacity-building initiatives for research and training in climate-related fields.

- Encouraging the adoption of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) principles within businesses across the region, fostering their role in implementing climate action measures.
- Supporting public awareness campaigns to educate communities on ways to tackle climate change at the local level.

In addition, the mechanism could lead to facilitating regional climate policy development through collaboration and knowledge sharing. It could also play a vital role in monitoring progress and providing recommendations to national Parliaments, supporting them in refining their climate action plans.

To enhance its climate agenda, AIPA should prioritise decisive leadership, taking cues from effective governance models such as the European Parliament. This leadership is essential to unify diverse perspectives, create unified regional strategies, and ensure consistent execution of climate action plans across ASEAN.

European Parliament

The European Parliament plays an essential role in ensuring that proposed laws from the EC align with climate action objectives and strategies. It exercises its authority through voting, hearings, resolutions, and oversight powers to hold the EC accountable for delivering on climate commitments and effectively implementing legislation. For instance, in the Fit for 55 package, the European Parliament had pushed for a higher EU-wide renewable energy target by 2030, from the EC's initial proposal, demonstrating their power to impact final legislation. Additionally, the European Parliament's resolution to include aviation and maritime emissions in the EU ETS, while not legally binding, significantly impacted the EC and the Council's decision-making processes regarding these sectors. Specialised committees like the ENVI, are also vital in scrutinising and shaping GHG emission legislation.

Additionally, the European Parliament participates in international climate negotiations and advocates for ambitious global action, representing the EU's voice on the world stage. The most recent negotiation is its participation in COP28. They have played a crucial role in propelling climate action forward by demonstrating leadership abilities, influencing legislation, and creating awareness.

Arab Parliament

While the Arab Parliament and the European Parliament both contribute to regional climate action, the scope of their influence differs significantly. This difference stems from the distinct powers enshrined within their respective founding documents. The European Parliament, established under the TEU, occupies a unique position as a supranational parliament. This means it transcends national borders and wields genuine legislative authority within its designated areas, including environmental and climate change matters. The TEU empowered the European Parliament with tools like budgetary control and legislative co-decision, enabling it to shape EU climate policies and legislation actively.

In contrast, the Arab Parliament, established under the framework of the Arab League, operates primarily as a consultative body. While it holds immense value in facilitating dialogue, sharing best practices, and advocating for regional climate action initiatives, it does not wield the direct legislative influence seen in its European counterpart. This means its influence relies on persuasion, collaboration, and encouraging member states to adopt its recommendations.

The Arab Parliament, though a relatively recent establishment, holds the potential to emerge as a pivotal force in the region. Given the diversity of national priorities and political contexts within the Arab world, a concerted effort towards a unified climate action strategy within the Arab Parliament could be highly beneficial. By championing decisive climate action and fostering stronger regional cooperation, the Arab Parliament can make a profound impact. Fostering greater collaborations and ensuring that the Arab Parliament is equitably represented will be instrumental in amplifying the effectiveness of the shared environmental initiatives.

The global community has witnessed the Arab world's contributions to the collective effort of combating climate change, as evidenced by COP28 UAE's ambitious targets and innovative solutions. The outcomes of COP28 reflect a mix of constructive dialogue and divergent views. While there were differing opinions on the timing of the fossil fuel phase-out, the efforts of the Arab world in pursuing a sustainable, low-carbon future cannot be ignored. The Arab world has the potential to become a leader in the transition to low-carbon economies due to its abundant solar resources and economic resources. Hosting COP22, COP27, and COP28 catalyses this transformation towards a low-carbon future. Some benefits of hosting the COP series are raising public awareness,

pressuring governments to take more climate action, setting ambitious goals, and showcasing the host countries' domestic climate action efforts. These benefits can create a ripple effect that elevates climate action as top domestic and international priorities. Hosting a COP can also attract private sector participation, leading to new investment opportunities and partnerships in clean energy technologies and sustainable development projects, such as launching a financial mechanism - Altéra during COP28. Altéra aims to mobilise US\$ 250 billion for climate action by 2030, and it presents an opportunity to accelerate global progress on climate action by mobilising resources and promoting responsible investment practices. In addition, some Arab League member states are actively revising their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, demonstrating a proactive approach to fulfilling their pledges. The Climate Change Performance Index 2024⁶² provides insights into progress and areas for improvement in the Arab world. Morocco's impressive 9th rank and Egypt's 22nd rank, compared to the EU's 16th rank, showcase regional potential. Whether the Arab Parliament can effectively support the transition from a fossil fuel-reliant region to low-carbon remains to be seen, but the momentum is encouraging.

Conclusions and recommendations

The analysis of regional parliamentary strategies for scaling up climate action reveals mixed responses but also encouraging progress. The European Parliament's leadership on climate action is a benchmark of how regional parliament can play a vital role in addressing global challenges. Its ambitious goals, legislative power, and commitment to international cooperation have made it a key changemaker in the fight against climate change.

Establishing collaborative efforts towards common goals, such as achieving consensus among the member parliaments on the government-proposed targets for renewable energy generation or GHG reduction, would be a good starting point for creating a buy-in commitment to tackle climate change for renewable energy generation or GHG reduction. This could significantly amplify the impact of the regional parliament's actions.

Increased collaboration across regions through dedicated platforms and joint action plans can significantly enhance the effectiveness of

62 Climate Change Performance Index: Ranking, <https://ccpi.org/ranking/> accessed 31 December 2023.

national climate action efforts. The AIPA and the Arab Parliament should continue collaborating with the European Parliament to share knowledge, best practices, and technical expertise on climate action. This could involve workshops, exchange programs, and joint research projects. The network could expand into a global network of regional parliaments, connected through online platforms or regular exchange programs which could foster knowledge sharing, best practice adoption and the development of collaborative initiatives.

To navigate towards the most impactful strategies for regional climate action and a sustainable future, regional parliaments need to:

- Equip parliaments with dedicated staff who are well-versed in climate science and policy, which is crucial for informed decision-making.
- Technical resources and training programs can empower parliamentarians and staff to navigate the complexities of climate action and develop effective strategies.
- Financial support is essential for regional parliaments to undertake research, implement initiatives, and participate in international forums.
- Regional collaboration on common targets and enforcement mechanisms can amplify impact.
- Invest in robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and identify areas for improvement.
- Harmonising legislative frameworks across regions can amplify impact and facilitate knowledge sharing.
- Sharing best practices, resources, and knowledge across regions can enhance the effectiveness of individual efforts.
- Building partnerships with civil society, indigenous communities, and the private sector can strengthen public ownership and drive implementation.
- Establish dedicated inter-parliamentary committees focused on climate action, fostering regular dialogue and exchange of best practices.
- Publish an annual Sustainability Report to track the measurable impact of carbon reduction and climate change action measures.

Addressing climate change is a multifaceted and constantly evolving issue that requires a nuanced approach. Regional parliaments play a crucial role in promoting and guiding climate action, particularly through their integrative and collaborative relationships within regional and international political systems. To take effective climate action, regional parliaments must be well-equipped to take on leading roles in proposing, reviewing, amending, approving, and monitoring climate legislation. They should remain receptive to learning from successes and setbacks, and adjust their strategies based on emerging technologies and emerging scientific insights. Embracing a flexible and iterative approach informed by diverse perspectives and scientific expertise enables regional parliaments to stay at the forefront of combating climate change effectively.

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