



**Friends of
the Earth
International**

QUICK FoEI FACTSHEET

INDCs vs. Fair Shares

What is an 'INDC'?

An INDC—or **Intended Nationally Determined Contribution**—can be understood as a national plan to tackle climate change proposed by each government. It is an 'initial offer' outlining the kind of effort a country is willing to commit to in combatting the climate crisis.

In the context of adopting an agreement at the UN climate negotiations in Paris this year, all countries have been invited to prepare INDCs, and to communicate these during 2015. Governments' INDCs will therefore serve as building blocks for the Paris agreement and the forthcoming multilateral rules-based system on climate change.

How these intended contributions will become definitive Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris agreement is not yet decided. What should be their scope? What legal form should they take? This is currently the subject of intense negotiations.

What about the INDCs currently on the table?

Developed countries were due to announce their INDCs on 31 March 2015, a date that should have been a major milestone on the road to Paris. However, only a handful of countries met this deadline. The world's worst historical carbon emitters have submitted pledges that do not reflect their immense historical responsibility or show any real willingness to address the scale of the climate crisis.

If the existing insignificant pledges are an indication of what is to come, we are on track to a world which will be 4-6°C warmer on average. To put this into context, the climate impacts we are facing today are the consequence of a planet which is only 0.8°C warmer than it was in pre-industrial times.

What do INDCs currently include, and what should they include?

Many governments from rich industrialised countries favour an agreement in Paris that focuses only on mitigation (emissions reductions), excluding other elements, such as adaptation, finance, loss and damage, technology transfer, capacity building and transparency.

Because of this, most rich countries have pushed back against taking on greater responsibility under a more holistic Paris agreement, by **only addressing the mitigation element** (that is, only offering an emissions reduction target) in their INDCs. In doing so, they have ignored the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) guidelines which state that countries should 'consider including an adaptation component' in their INDCs.

Furthermore, developing countries are due to put forward their INDCs later this year. **For them, the extent and level of their contributions will depend on the availability and extent of finance, technology and capacity-building support from rich countries.**

The greater the support from developed countries, the greater the ability for developing countries to contribute to mitigation efforts, and the greater their ability to include adaptation, loss and damage, and capacity-building measures in their INDCs.

Why should we push for an alternative?

A system by which each country proposes its own 'contribution' is not one in which we are likely to succeed in limiting warming to well below 1.5°C, as we cannot be certain all of the contributions will 'add up' to the global effort we need. Such a system has been compared to trying to build a bridge in order to cross a river. If each worker can bring as many materials as they like, there's no guarantee the crossing will be made.

What can we do?

By using a 'fair shares' approach, we can more effectively hold our national governments to account. With a calculation of each country's individual responsibilities, we can judge each country's contribution by how well—or how badly—it measures up.

THE 'FAIR SHARES' APPROACH

The 'Fair Shares' approach is the position of many in the movement that **a fair and effective global agreement can only truly be reached by setting a global carbon budget and sharing the effort to remain within that budget.** To return to the 'bridge' analogy: each worker must know how much material they are required to bring in order to build the bridge, so that the total effort gets us to the other side.

A global carbon budget is the amount of greenhouse gas emissions we can emit while still having a reasonable chance of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. That amounts to a certain number of gigatonnes of carbon that could be burned and released into the atmosphere whilst keeping us below that temperature increase. This is the carbon budget.

If this is divided according to each nation's responsibility, capacity, and right to sustainable societies, we would have a much better idea of what each country's real national plan should look like. This is the 'fair shares' approach.



We are calling for an energy revolution that:

- Ensures justice for people affected by climate change
- Stops fossil fuels and other dirty energy, while protecting workers in these areas
- Supports community-owned renewable energy – giving people the power, not corporations

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