Briefing: GRA Position on NDCs

Summary

At COP28, the first global stocktake (GST) set a goal to triple global renewable capacity to 11,000 GW by 2030 and transition away from fossil fuels. This target should now inform national energy planning and be reflected in new and updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The February 2025 deadline for enhanced NDCs presents an opportunity for nations to re-evaluate and align renewable ambitions with 1.5°C and the GST, and outline how they will leverage renewables to meet climate and economic goals. COP29 marks the start of the official NDC submission deadline, offering a moment to raise ambition on the energy transition through updated NDCs alongside a strengthened COP package on energy and finance.

We strongly recommend governments include renewable energy targets in new and updated NDCs and integrated energy plans that are:

- **Ambitious:** aligned with the GST outcome and 1.5°C pathways.
- **Specific:** include quantifiable, renewable energy targets for 2030 and 2035.
- **Actionable:** underpinned by robust energy, resource and investment plans and enabling policy reforms that provide certainty to the industry and finance sector.

We encourage governments to commit to integrating renewable energy targets in NDCs and national energy plans at the Global Renewables Summit in September, hosted in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

Integrating renewable ambition in NDCs and long term strategies via targets and sectoral plans is essential to providing clarity on the level of ambition and pace of the transition and future energy mix. It also allows the private sector to reciprocate with investment plans and align their strategies with national goals, helping to ensure a robust, bankable pipeline of renewable energy projects. This briefing provides recommendations on how to integrate renewable energy targets and plans into NDCs.

Context

NDCs form the foundation of international climate action. They are central to shaping government decarbonisation plans and sending market signals on the energy transition. They can also be a vehicle to help drive economic development, enhance energy security and deliver increased access to affordable and reliable renewable energy. However, to date, they have not been overly effective in supporting implementation of the transition, lacking clarity and credibility on sector pathways.

The Emissions Gap Report (UN, 2023) shows current NDCs put the world on track for 2.5-2.9°C of warming by 2100. Recent IEA analysis also shows that out of 194 NDCs submitted, only 14 include explicit targets for total renewable power capacity for 2030, amounting to 1300 GW, 12% of the tripling pledge (IEA, 2024). Yet, existing national energy policies lead to nearly 8,000 GW globally by 2030, achieving 70% of the tripling pledge (IRENA, 2023), highlighting a disconnect between national policies and current NDC commitments. There is a need to harmonise international climate pledges with national policy objectives to raise global ambition and create new norms for the transition.

Levels of ambition also vary drastically across countries. Currently, renewable energy investment is disproportionately concentrated in China, the US and the European Union, with less than 2% of investment going to Africa, despite the continent's largest renewable energy potential (IRENA, 2022). To achieve the tripling goal, the pace and deployment of renewables must accelerate in most regions and major countries (IEA, 2024). Although global renewable capacity additions reached 560 GW in 2023, a 64% year-on-year increase, meeting this goal is not guaranteed. Critical actions are needed to speed up permitting, extend and modernise grids, scale up finance to emerging and developing economies (EMDEs), address supply chain bottlenecks and enable a just transition (see GRA's Action Agenda). Developed nations must lead by example and provide the means of implementation to developing countries. This includes substantial increases in public funding, alongside measures to minimise project risk and the higher cost of capital faced by EMDEs, as much as five times more than in most OECD countries (IRENA, 2023).

Setting renewable energy targets in NDCs and integrated national energy plans, aligned with broader emission reduction goals, can help close the ambition gap. This approach can chart a clear path to tripling renewable energy capacity, alongside fossil fuel phase out. NDCs must pay attention to the right mix of variable renewables (such as wind and solar) and clean, firm resources (such as storage). For these targets to be effective, they must also be translated into actionable energy transition plans and strategies. This process presents an opportunity to align government ministries on implementation, foster collaboration with key stakeholders such as business, and strengthen overall NDC governance. This will help facilitate consensus on how to integrate renewables into mainstream planning, policy, finance, and legislation and build the necessary enabling regulatory and investment frameworks. This approach will also provide certainty to developers and investors across the supply chain, facilitating the pipeline, development and deployment of relevant technologies.

Recommendations

1. *Set clear renewable energy targets*: Governments should include specific, measurable renewable energy capacity targets within NDCs and integrated energy plans that align with the COP28 GST tripling goal. Attention needs to be paid to the mix of renewable resources and storage to ensure supplies are secure and reliable. These targets should incorporate just transition principles and be made legally binding to provide investor certainty.

2. *Develop robust implementation frameworks:* To ensure effective delivery, governments should commit to publishing comprehensive energy transition or sectoral plans as part of their NDCs. These should feature realistic timelines for renewable energy development, detailed technology-specific pipelines, and focus on creating favourable policy and regulatory conditions. Such transparency will build confidence in the implementation process.

3. *NDC cooperation:* Leading countries should support peer-to-peer engagement to enhance international cooperation on this agenda and encourage highest possible ambition in NDCs. This is via both bilateral and multilateral forums, including UNFCCC processes. Developed countries, in particular, should rapidly scale up and enhance

financial and technical support to EMDEs to support long-term energy transition planning and implementation.

4. *Develop long-term multi-stakeholder collaboration*: To support the above, governments should establish "NDC-councils" to enhance collaboration across government agencies, the private sector, financial institutions and civil society in NDC planning and implementation. Active participation from the private sector will help facilitate technical and market intelligence sharing, ensure latest technology advancements are accounted for and that targets are informed by economic realities.

5. *Coordinate investment mechanisms*: Governments should also develop and publish NDC investment strategies that are integrated into sectoral and national plans. These should present and promote quantified, bankable mitigation projects supported by robust investment mechanisms. For example, to catalyse commitments from developers and financiers, governments could showcase the pipeline of renewable energy auctions that would allow the country to meet its emissions reduction goals from the power sector.

6. *Enhance permitting and infrastructure development*: Where relevant, governments should expedite the permitting process and prioritise the modernisation of national electricity grids to facilitate faster integration of renewable energy sources and mitigate infrastructure bottlenecks.

7. *Integrate existing energy transition goals*: Existing energy goals and policies should be integrated into current and new NDCs to help raise ambition into 2030 and beyond, ensuring balanced actions that simultaneously phase out fossil fuels while scaling up renewable energy. To ensure NDC's are aligned with 1.5°C, they must also be informed by the latest science.

The Global Renewables Alliance is ready to support governments in delivering on this agenda. Please reach out to Louise@globalrenewablesalliance.org for more information.