

Rethinking climate governance: lessons and models for the future

1 May 2025 (Thursday)

09:30–13:00 ET

VENUE

Bahá'í International Community

866 United Nations Plaza #120, New York, NY 10017

Hosted by the **United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR)** in collaboration with the **Governments of Brazil, Germany** (tbc).

Format

- Chatham House, closed event
- Presentations with roundtable
- Approximately 25 experts

Framing remarks

- H.E. André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, COP30 President

Event description

2025 is a pivotal year for climate action, marking ten years of the Paris Agreement, 20 years since the Kyoto Protocol's entry into force, and 30 years of global climate conferences. Brazil's hosting of COP30 in Belém – a key site in the Amazon, the heart of the climate crisis – underscores the urgency of transformative governance. The country's role is even more significant given that the decision to hold ongoing climate conferences was made at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Addressing climate change requires governance structures that coordinate responses across all levels, from the sub-national to the global. But effective climate action cannot be separated from broader challenges like hunger, poverty, debt, and development. Many climate-vulnerable countries struggle with fiscal constraints that limit investment in resilience, while international financial institutions fail to deliver resources at the speed and scale needed.

Past assumptions are quickly becoming obsolete in our rapidly changing world. Governance responses to complex challenges still rely heavily on outdated, hierarchical models rooted in linear thinking – despite the growing need for systems thinking, decentralization, and distributed action. Climate change compels us to innovate and identify new cooperation models informed by the best available science and by the principles of complexity science.

At the 2024 G20 Summit in Rio, President Lula invited the international community to explore the concept of a new United Nations Climate Change Council, a platform for climate cooperation capable of accelerating the implementation of the Paris Agreement and of COP decisions by aggregating efforts that are currently fragmented.

Upgraded institutions could embrace experimental approaches and scenario planning to harness system feedback loops, leverage points, tipping dynamics, network effects, self-organization, and emergent behaviors – enhancing preparedness and enabling the exponential diffusion of solutions, while simultaneously addressing systemic bottlenecks and delays. If designed as a node of hyperconnectivity, a permanent UN platform could enhance international cooperation by enabling rapid sharing of data, knowledge, and intelligence, while also leveraging networks, aligning efforts, and coordinating resources, processes, mechanisms, and actors both within and beyond the UN system.

UNU-CPR, in collaboration with the governments of Brazil and Germany, are convening a high-level event to examine governance models, institutional innovations, and prototypes that could inform the future of climate governance. Drawing lessons from global finance, public health, agriculture and food security, pandemic prevention, sustainable development, and more, participants will explore how new governance mechanisms modeled on effective practices can ensure that both climate adaptation and mitigation are prioritized, and that the implementation of the Paris Agreement is aligned with broader global agendas.