



INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITIES
°CLIMATE ALLIANCE

UNIVERSITIES
COLLABORATING
FOR CLIMATE
IMPACT

2020 – 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

UNSW Sydney acknowledges the Biripai, Dharug, Gadigal, Gumbaynggirr, Ngunnawal and Wiradjuri peoples, who are the Traditional Custodians of, and whose communities remain connected to, the unceded territories upon which the University's main campuses are located. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present for their custodianship of Country, and celebrate the cultural knowledges, stories, songlines, ancestors and dreamings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the First Peoples of Australia.

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES CLIMATE ALLIANCE

Climate change targets present the world with an enormous challenge to overcome - but also provide an opportunity to work together, share knowledge and invest in our collective future: this is the core work of universities and the drive that unites the members of the International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA).

The Alliance provides a central hub for universities to share the latest climate research and education, fostering collaboration among leading researchers and educators to support global leaders, policymakers, and industry in planning for and responding to climate change.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals 13 (Climate Action) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) remain at the heart of the Climate Alliance Strategy.

Established by 'the University of New South Wales' (UNSW Sydney) in 2020, the Alliance represents leading climate research universities from across 20 countries with its Secretariat hosted in Australia at UNSW Sydney between 2020 - 2025.

Members include universities that encompass thousands of the world's most accomplished climate researchers, including hundreds who have worked as authors of reports for the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The purpose of the Alliance is to bring institutions together with critical capability in climate research in order to:

- Provide evidence and thought leadership and be a trusted voice on climate change to help accelerate action around the world
- Communicate, advocate and provide outreach on evidence-based means to lower global carbon emissions
- Raise the profile of member universities by showcasing their research capabilities, innovation and expertise
- Share knowledge and best practice on education and research training
- Enable member universities to build research and education collaborations via the Alliance

The Executive Committee is the governing body of the IUCA. Its members are the executive leadership of the member universities. The Executive Committee meets virtually on an annual basis to review the strategy, initiatives, annual budget and management of the Alliance.



FROM THE CHAIR (2022-2025)



UNSW is privileged to have established and hosted the International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA) for the last six years. We are deeply grateful to all in the network who have contributed to its remarkable achievements. On behalf of the IUCA Executive Committee, we are excited to collaborate with the University of Reading as they take on the leadership role in 2026. We have every confidence that the Alliance will continue to grow its global influence, driving innovative, real-world solutions that are essential for building a healthier, more sustainable future for all.

Professor Attila Brungs
Vice-Chancellor & President
UNSW Sydney



FROM THE GLOBAL ACADEMIC LEAD (2020-2025)



Transformative change requires commitment, courage, and trust, with institutions working collaboratively and sharing benefits and burdens equitably. The International Universities Climate Alliance is committed to strengthening an increasingly diverse global membership base, in which all members have different responsibilities and opportunities to bring about change. Some are already well ahead and can continue to achieve a great deal, while others will need support to help manage the change. I know that together we can make an impact.

Scientia Professor Matthew England
Director, ARC Centre of Excellence for
Our Future Oceans, UNSW Sydney

WITH GRATITUDE

It is with great thanks to all IUCA member institutions and representatives, its Secretariat, partners and other contributors over the last six years whose support has helped realise our collective vision and commitment to accelerate action on climate change through partnership.

A very special thanks also to all those who have given their time and shared valuable insights across the world.

PRINCIPLES

Our mission is to provide an authoritative voice that represents the leaders of the global community in climate research. Our members maintain this mission by adhering to the following principles:

CONNECTION

Members are a global network of universities, aligned by their dedication to producing scientific research using procedures and practices understood to be best practice within the global research community.

CREDIBILITY

Membership reflects the world's leading universities in climate research based on objective and measurable outcomes.

EDUCATION

Sharing knowledge and research findings to ensure the global community has access to the latest thought leadership in climate research to reduce duplication and increase collaboration opportunities.

INCLUSION

Members benefit from a multi-disciplinary focus on climate research to enable greater application for policymakers, educators or business leaders looking to apply the latest research findings to accelerate climate action.

MEMBERS

UNITED KINGDOM

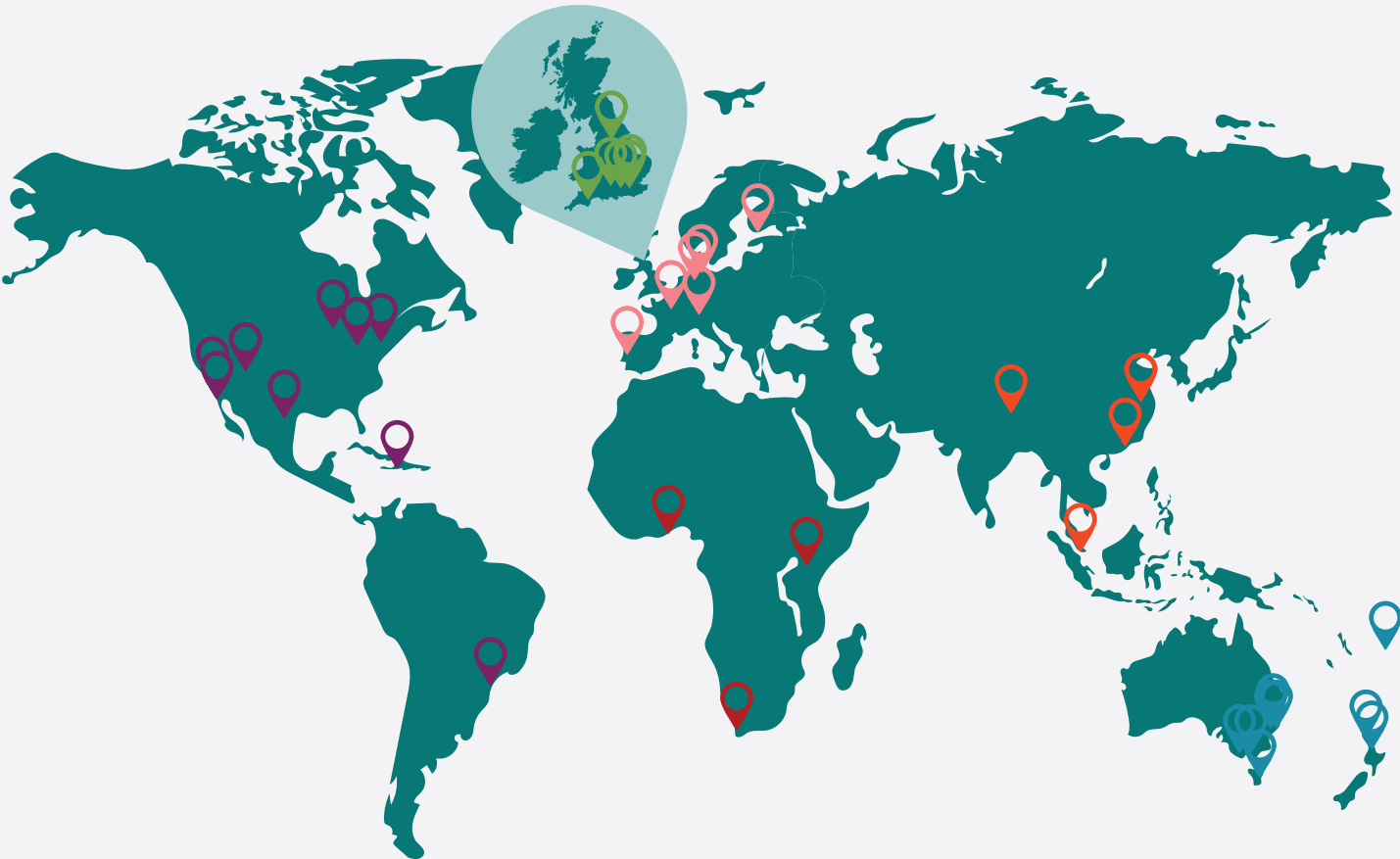
King's College London
University of Cambridge
University of Exeter
University of Leeds
University of Oxford
University of Reading

EUROPE

Sorbonne University
University of Bremen
University of Coimbra
University of Hamburg
University of Helsinki
University of Zurich

ASIA

Nanjing University
National University of Singapore
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Tribhuvan University



NORTH & SOUTH AMERICA

Arizona State University
California Institute of Technology
Penn State University
Queen's University
Universidade de São Paulo
University of California San Diego
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Illinois System
The University of the West Indies

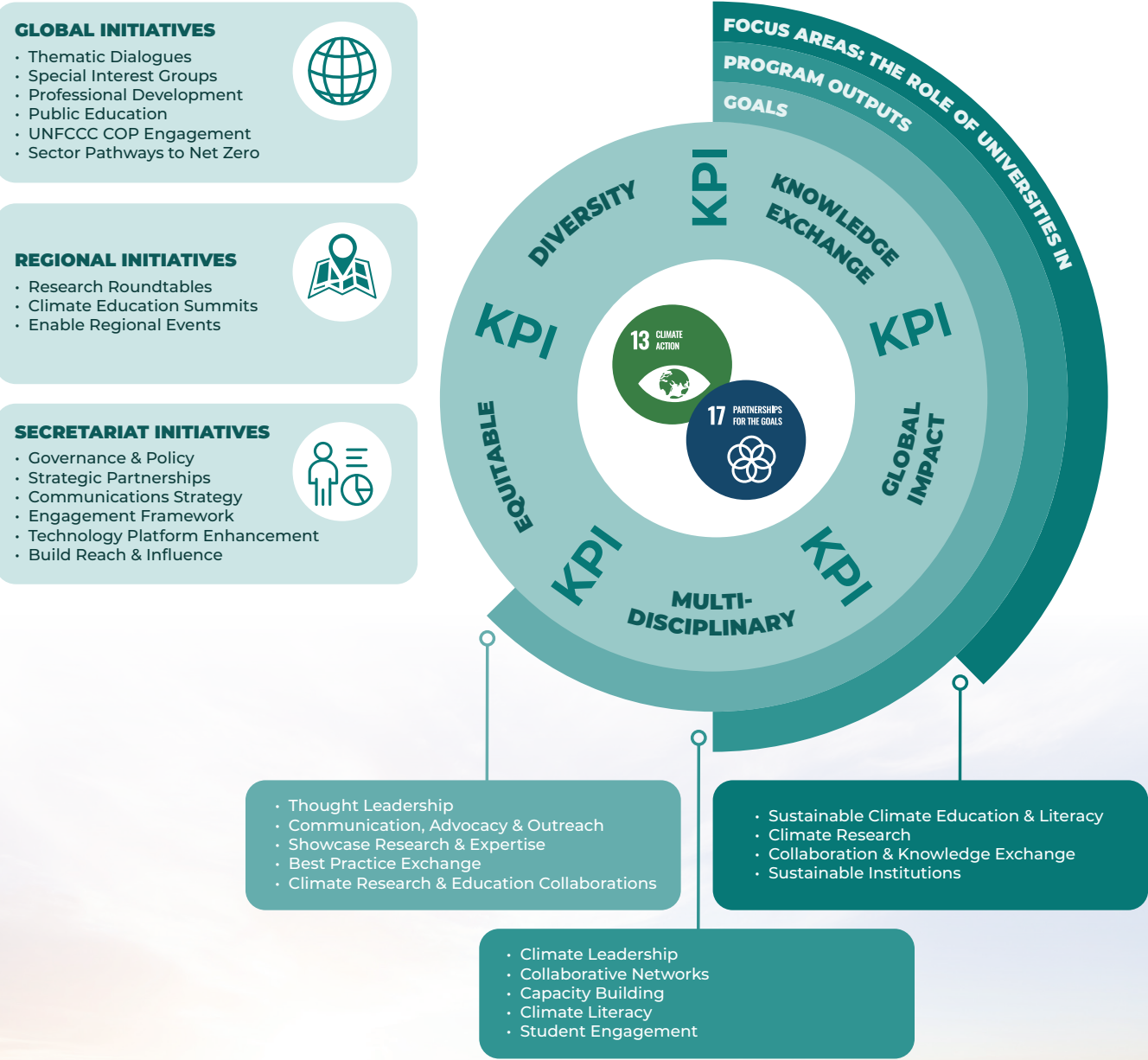
AFRICA

University of Cape Town
University of Ghana
University of Nairobi

OCEANIA

Macquarie University
Monash University
University of Auckland
University of Melbourne
University of New South Wales
University of Tasmania
The University of the South Pacific
University of Waikato
Western Sydney University

STRATEGY AT A GLANCE



HIGHLIGHTS



Successfully hosted a range of interdisciplinary global climate research virtual events, roundtables, workshops and conferences.



Annual virtual convening of the Alliance Executive Committee representing the senior leadership of Alliance member universities.



Provided access to expert researchers as panel speakers for global events and conferences.



2020

The IUCA launched in April 2020 representing the world's leading climate research universities.

- Published one of the largest joint global media statements by universities on climate action to date during the G20 Summit.
- Collaborated with The Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales to promote the inaugural Earthshot Prize.

2021

GLOBAL SURVEY



12,000+ 13

– covering over 12,000 respondents across 13 countries to understand the global diversity of climate literacy and risk perceptions between the public and academia.

IUCA virtual Asia Climate & Cities Conference Transforming future cities in Asia towards a net zero economy



#CLIMATETALKS GLOBAL FESTIVAL, featuring virtual conversations between subject matter experts from universities around the world showcasing diverse perspectives on climate research including circular design, innovation, communications and political science. The Festival also incorporated a virtual hackathon for students to encourage interdisciplinary interest in climate change and circularity principles.

2022

EARTH DAY STUDENT STATEMENT -

Presented at the World Academic Summit in New York during Climate Week. This statement invited Higher Education Institutions to reimagine their role as leaders for climate action, to inspire the next generation toward a more vibrant, sustainable future.



EARTH DAY STUDENT FORUM

IUCA hosted over **600 student representatives** and **40 climate changemakers** in a range of virtual talks and workshops. The contributions from student leaders was developed into a statement.



2023



Australia Pacific Climate & Circular Economy Dialogue | Developing a Roadmap for Collaborative Action.

Recognition by QS Rankings of Alliance members and their commitment to shared strategic objectives.

Global Conference on Climate Change: Polar Studies, Environment, and Climate Change (GCCC) IUCA Panel at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

IUCA visits the **Museum of Climate Change (MoCC)** at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.



EARTH DAY SLAM POETRY FESTIVAL - presented in collaboration

with The World Poetry Slam Organization and the Climate Students Movement featured a series of virtual poetry workshops, a Poetry Slam competition and an exhibition in Hong Kong.



12

member universities



10

countries

International Conference on Urban Climate (ICUC11) IUCA Networking Event hosted representatives from 12 member universities, connecting expertise from 10 countries.

2024

- QS Reimagine Education Conference
- Shaping Sustainability Leaders Panel and presenting the QS Sustainability Awards
- IUCA profiled in the QS Insights Magazine Sustainability Edition
- Celebrated World Ozone Day in Nepal



EARTH DAY - UNIVERSITIES VS PLASTICS

members putting an end to plastics for the sake of human and planetary health.

2025



16-19 June 2025 | Istanbul, Türkiye



Collaborating with global partners, networks and UN agencies, our strategic program included a range of global and regional initiatives for students, academic and professional staff.



Launched the CLIMATE EDUCATION course webpage, demonstrating the transformative power of climate education on offer within the International Universities Climate Alliance. The platform connects leading universities worldwide, offering resources, courses, and insights to empower the next generation of climate leaders.

Launched the CLIMATE LITERACY webpage, featuring a growing collection of recommended resources. These materials are designed to support learning, inspire action, and empower communities to accelerate the transition to a sustainable society and planet.

EARTH DAY

Showcasing Alliance member renewable energy solutions to triple global renewables capacity by 2030.

Global Sustainable Development Congress, Istanbul Türkiye – Association Partner.

International Green Gown Awards – Category Ambassador for 2030 Climate Action.

Global Webinar celebrating Education Day at COP30 | The Journey to Net Zero: Insights and Learning from Universities Leading the Transition.

CASE STUDIES

University collaboration and deepening partnerships is crucial for addressing global challenges. Together, we can make a difference by collaborating, connecting and sharing our knowledge around the globe. Since 2020, the Alliance has convened a diverse array of interdisciplinary global climate related initiatives – through virtual and in-person events, roundtables, workshops, conferences, and special interest groups. These efforts have resulted in influential outputs, including reports, coordinated declarations, and open letters, all designed to accelerate collective action on climate change.

Through strategic partnerships and engagement, and high-profile global events, the Alliance has consistently demonstrated the power of universities to influence climate discourse and policy.



WATER FOR CLIMATE MITIGATION

A world-first project to estimate the global freshwater requirements of climate mitigation measures.

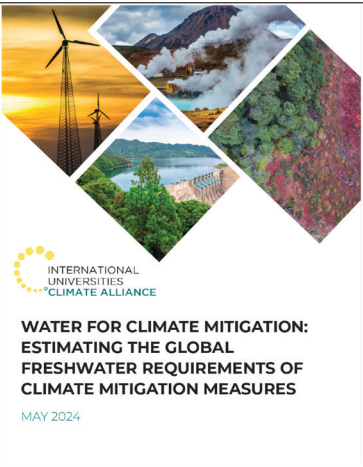
This case study is an important demonstration of how universities and organisations can work together in a coordinated and agile way to have impact on global policy and accelerate action on climate. It highlights the need to achieve better integration between water and climate policies and practice.

The International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA), in collaboration with the UN-Water Expert Group on Water and Climate Change, undertook a study on the water requirements of climate mitigation measures. The study, presented at the opening of the Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB60) in June 2023, provided preliminary global estimates on the freshwater required to meet Paris Agreement targets.

The UN-Water Expert Group on Water and Climate Change was co-ordinated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

This study formed a critical input to a UN-Analytical Brief tabled at COP29 in Azerbaijan in 2024 which informed global policy makers on the freshwater requirements for their own Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

It ranks mitigation measures based on their estimated water requirements and efficiency, noting that the applicability of each measure is contextual, and recommends countries take these rankings into account when reviewing their climate policies.



Among the findings, the report concluded that:

- energy production is – and will remain – highly water intensive;
- natural solutions offer the best return on carbon sequestered per unit volume of water; and
- by 2030, the water required for the clean energy mitigation measures required by the Paris Agreement could be as high as 900 cubic kilometres of water per year.

Acknowledgement

To IUCA members, the IUCA Secretariat, members of the study Steering Committee and Advisory Group, UN-Water Members and Partners and others whose support for progressing this important conversation made this Report possible. With special thanks to:

- National University of Singapore (NUS)
- The University of Leeds
- The University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney)
- California Institute of Technology (Caltech)
- University of Illinois System
- University of Liverpool



These early estimates, ahead of a final report in 2024, should assist policymakers at this COP 28 and beyond to consider water as a critical part of the climate solution.”

PROFESSOR GREG LESLIE
Director, UNSW Global Water Institute



Less attention has been given to the role water plays on facilitating and sometimes limiting climate action. We hope that this subject will have more extensive coverage in the IPCC's seventh assessment cycle during this critical decade for climate action.”

PROFESSOR JIM SKEA
Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

2023

JUNE

UNFCCC Bonn Climate Change Conference, Germany

Following a Technical Workshop on Water and Climate Change Mitigation, held in Bonn in June 2023, which set out to identify what was known and not known about the dependency of Paris Agreement targets on the sustainable management of water resources, the UN Water Expert Group on Water and Climate Change asked the International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA) to undertake a study on the water requirements of climate mitigation measures.

As countries were due to review and update their NDCs in 2025, COP29 in November 2024 was the time to inform how action on water and sanitation can contribute to climate solutions. Water availability may influence which climate mitigation measures to implement, how and where, and inform decisions on how to secure and sustain the necessary water supply.

DECEMBER

COP28 Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Lead Author and Director of the UNSW Global Water Institute, Professor Greg Leslie, presented the preliminary findings of the study on behalf of the IUCA Global Special Interest Group.

This presentation was delivered within the collaborative official side event 'The Critical Role of Water in Achieving Global Climate Goals' within the Science for Climate Action Pavilion. Moderated by Dr. Stefan Uhlenbrook, Director Hydrology, Water and Cryosphere, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), speakers included the Secretary-General, WMO, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Director General of the National Center of Meteorology, UAE and President of WMO and Party representatives.

2024

MARCH

UN-Water Meeting Rome, Italy

The draft report was finalised and presented at the 39th UN-Water Meeting in Rome in March 2024. The Advisory Group included representatives of; The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Aquafed, the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO), the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), the King Abdullah University of Science and technology (KAUST), the Government of Japan (MLIT), the International Water Association (IWA), the International Association for Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research (IAHR), the International Water Association (IWA - Climate Smart Utilities Sub-Group), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the French Water Partnership (PFE), the Government of the United Kingdom (FCDO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), and the International Hydropower Association (IHA).

JUNE

Bonn Climate Change Conference, Germany

Professor Greg Leslie, Lead Author and Director of the UNSW Global Water Institute, presented the findings of the study at the 60th session of the UNFCCC Bonn Climate Change Conference in June 2024. A pre-session event in preparation for COP29 in Azerbaijan, the Bonn conference was attended by thousands of delegates. The study presentation formed part of a side-event that focused on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), with Parties participating in a round table discussion on how countries are taking stock of water action for climate mitigation and adaptation measures, and shedding light on strategic points for mainstreaming water as a necessary aspect for NDC and NAP implementation.



Access the UN-Analytical Brief:

UN-Water Analytical Brief on Water for Climate Mitigation

NOVEMBER

COP29 Baku, Azerbaijan

The UN-Water Analytical Brief on Water for Climate Mitigation was presented by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) at the official Water for Climate Pavilion COP29 in Azerbaijan to disseminate key findings from the brief, discuss practical strategies for integrating water into climate policies, and foster collaboration among policymakers, experts, and stakeholders in support of achieving climate change mitigation goals.



Access the study:

'Water for Climate Mitigation: Estimating the Global Freshwater Requirements of Climate Mitigation Measures'

CASE STUDY

RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW GLOBAL CLIMATE SUMMIT

Advancing the conversation around climate change and human rights

RIGHT
HERE
RIGHT
NOW
GLOBAL CLIMATE SUMMIT



Together, we need to take a stand for climate action, climate rights, and climate justice."

VOLKER TÜRK
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

On 5 June 2025, universities from around the world delivered a live 24-hour global plenary exploring climate change and human rights, bringing together leading voices in climate justice. The summit was delivered in partnership with UN Human Rights, the University of Oxford, the Right Here, Right Now Global Climate Alliance, the International Universities Climate Alliance and universities from around the world.

The Summit was part of the Global Mutirão - an initiative by the COP30 Presidency to mobilise action on climate change across the world.

This global academic achievement would not have been possible without the leadership of the International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA), whose coordination across regions and institutions enabled the seamless integration of research, events, and engagement. The Alliance played a central role in aligning academic priorities, ensuring equitable participation, and making this unprecedented collaboration possible.

A Planetary Conversation

The online broadcast circled the globe—handing the climate justice conversation from Oceania, to South East Asia, to Africa, to Europe and then the Americas. Each partner crafted a regionally grounded session, rich with local expertise, urgent insight, and bold proposals for change. The hybrid event facilitated a global conversation without the need for mass air travel.

This initiative marked an extraordinary convergence between United Nations Human Rights and leading universities around the world - uniting in a singular, urgent voice to centre human rights within the global response to climate change. It demonstrated the immense power of academia when policy, law, science, the arts, and youth come together - in the collective pursuit of climate justice.

Photo Credit: John Cairns

Here's how co-host partners helped write a chapter of this global event:

The University of the South Pacific (USP)
Suva, Fiji

USP opened the global plenary with a powerful expression of youth leadership from Pacific Island nations on the frontlines of rising seas. Cultural performances and speeches on intergenerational rights set a moral compass for the entire Summit.

Monash University
Melbourne, Australia

Monash centered Indigenous-led climate adaptation and explored climate impacts through film, dialogue, and performance. The program spotlighted the intersection of environmental destruction and cultural survival—affirming cultural rights and the human right to health.

UNSW Sydney
Sydney, Australia

UNSW Sydney focused on just transitions, with an emphasis on highlighting voices from climate-vulnerable communities. The UNSW program brought together perspectives and practices from across the Southern Hemisphere and underscored the university's deepening commitment to: a sustainable society and planet; economic and social prosperity; and global collaboration, all pillars of the new UNSW Strategy: Progress for All.

University of Nairobi
Nairobi, Kenya

Nairobi delivered a robust and inclusive agenda focused on human rights, climate finance, adaptation, and regional justice. Featuring the African Development Bank and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the session linked global systems to African solutions.

University of Cape Town (UCT)
Cape Town, South Africa

UCT led a two-part session on embedding human rights into university teaching and research. With a strong focus on post-colonial injustice and decolonizing climate curricula, the university helped chart a path for the next generation of climate scholarship.

University of Oxford
Oxford, United Kingdom

The University of Oxford convened researchers, practitioners, and students for panels on the transformative power of law, unearthing injustice in the corporate supply chains of the green transition, and the intersection of human rights and climate change in conflict zones.

University of Colorado Boulder
Boulder, Colorado, USA

The University of Colorado Boulder addressed water insecurity, pollution, and migration—culminating in a keynote by Inuit leader Sheila Watt-Cloutier. The discussion emphasized the importance of multilateral collaboration, youth engagement, and community involvement, with a focus on using data to track impacts, communicating more clearly to advocate for solutions, and reconnecting with nature to renew how we appreciate and protect our environment.

Universidade de São Paulo (USP)
São Paulo, Brazil

Bringing together a minister, the President of COP30, diplomats, the COP30 High-Level Champion, academics, frontline leaders, and youth activists, USP hosted a powerful pre-COP 30 dialogue linking climate justice and human rights. With a focus on the Amazon, Indigenous and traditional communities, and favelas, the event called for ethical climate finance, a just transition, and inclusive governance in Brazil.

The University of the West Indies
Kingston, Jamaica

The University of the West Indies coordinated a panel discussion with youth voices from different Caribbean islands (Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, Barbados and Bermuda) who shared their perspectives on climate justice which included topics on postcolonial climate reparations, mental health, climate migration, climate finance and the need for equitable climate action. A short video was also included which provided an introductory visual context to the discussion. Support was aptly provided by the UN-Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Caribbean Regional Office.

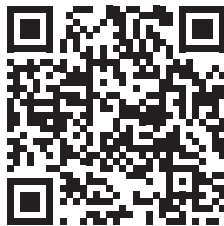


Himalayan University Consortium (HUC)
Kathmandu, Nepal

The Himalayan University Consortium (HUC) engaged community, science, and decision-makers in human rights-based climate action, through a four-way conversation between a community member, a scientist, a policy maker, and an Indigenous knowledge holder from countries in the Hindu Kush Himalayas on climate action.

KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Stockholm, Sweden

In a forward-looking dialogue, KTH challenged global leaders to reimagine the Sustainable Development Goals beyond 2030, integrating planetary boundaries and human dignity into a new framework for global ambition.



**Watch the
2025 Right Here,
Right Now Global
Climate Summit
on-demand**

**UN HUMAN RIGHTS & THE
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES
CLIMATE ALLIANCE (IUCA)**

Understanding climate ambition as a human-rights imperative, three expert panel conversations were facilitated by UN Human Rights and the International Universities Climate Alliance. The panels considered key topics at the intersection of climate change and human rights leading into COP30, including; Advancing gender equality in climate action; Human rights, climate finance and the road to 1.3 trillion; and Integrating human rights in NDCs 3.0.

In recognition of the critical role of journalism in advancing environmental and human rights agendas, UN Human Rights convened a regional panel of journalists from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Mekong region. The discussion explored the intersection of climate reporting, press freedom, access to information and community engagement in Southeast Asia. The panel highlighted the importance of cross-border collaboration, multi-stakeholder engagement, and investing in local journalist networks to ensure climate journalism can thrive as a tool for accountability and justice in the region.



GLOBAL THEMATIC DIALOGUE SERIES

Advancing Climate Action through Interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchange

The IUCA Global Thematic Dialogue Series convened leading subject matter experts from universities and organisations around the world to explore critical climate action and sustainability themes being faced by the higher education sector.

Each online dialogue focused on a distinct climate-related theme, offering a platform for discussion, facilitating knowledge exchange across regions, and showcasing best-practice examples of university-led climate action. By fostering cross disciplinary and cross-cultural exchange, the dialogue series helped build a shared understanding of challenges and opportunities, while amplifying the collective impact of the higher education sector in driving climate solutions.

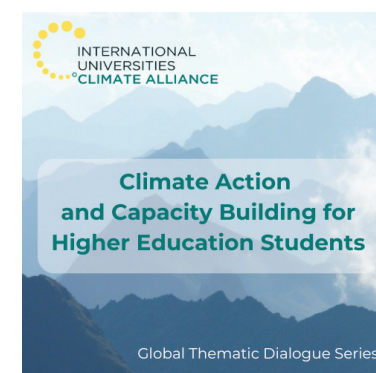
This series reflects the Alliance's commitment to fostering global collaboration and advancing climate solutions through education, research, and policy engagement.



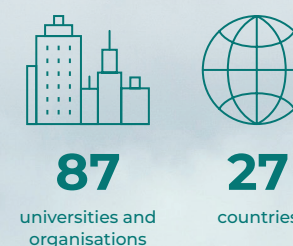
Cultures of Climate Research in the Contemporary University explored the interdisciplinary collaboration and multidisciplinary partnerships for climate action. The dialogue considered how universities are evolving to support collaborative climate research; it highlighted the importance of breaking down disciplinary silos and showcased innovative institutional models that enable integrated approaches to climate challenges, including partnerships with communities, industry, NGOs, and governments.



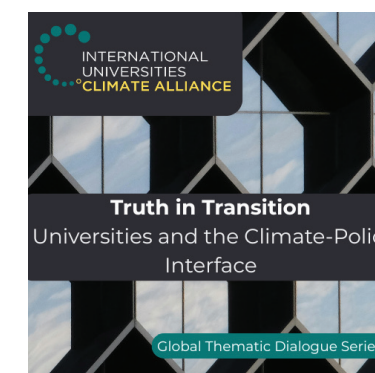
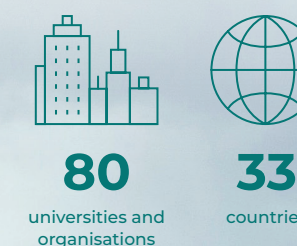
Universities Tackling Scope 3 Emissions in the Supply Chain considered the complexities of measuring and reducing indirect emissions within higher education institutions. Subject matter experts shared emerging and innovative approaches to sustainable procurement and the desire from those working in Higher Education for more cross-institutional collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and tools inclusive of those responsible for accounting for emissions within institutions.



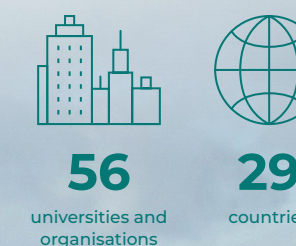
Climate Action and Capacity Building in Higher Education, focused on empowering students and early-career researchers. It featured case studies on student-led climate initiatives and discussed how universities can embed climate literacy and leadership into curricula. The dialogue underscored the role of education in equipping future leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to drive systemic change.



Climate and Health considered the role universities can play in addressing health impacts of climate change. Experts discussed the health impacts of climate related events, such as heatwaves and air pollution, and the role of universities in advancing research and policy responses. The sessions reinforced the urgency of integrating climate and health strategies to protect vulnerable populations.



Truth in Transition: Universities and the Climate-Policy Interface, examined how academic institutions can support evidence-based policymaking. It highlighted the importance of transparency, trust, and the role of universities in bridging the gap between research and policy, especially during periods of rapid climate transition.



UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) ENGAGEMENT

Amplifying the role of higher education institutions in global climate action

The Alliance harnesses the research and knowledge of universities across the globe, providing a robust evidence base on which policy and action can be founded. Members have continued to deepen engagement with UNFCCC processes.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE ACTION

In 2023 following on from the Partnerships for Climate Action Symposium, two panel events were held in the Blue Zone of **COP28** in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Both panels explored the importance of real-world partnerships to promote climate empowerment throughout the Asia Pacific region. Featuring panellists from Monash University, UNSW Sydney, National University of Singapore, University of Oxford, Victoria University of Wellington and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Arizona State University and the University of Melbourne.



CLIMATE PROOFING SMES

In support of the UNFCCC Climate-Proofing Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) campaign, the International Universities Climate Alliance in collaboration with the Centre for Climate Engagement at Hughes Hall, and Cambridge Zero at the University of Cambridge worked with global partners and networks to discuss and document current academic insights.

There are substantial numbers of SMEs, who are under-resourced, and who have an important role to play if properly empowered. Independent, credible, expert evidence is critical to understanding and can underpin effective climate proofing of small businesses.

Academic experts on SMEs and climate change engaged in an online discussion in October 2024 with insights collated to inform **COP29** discussions between High Level Champions and key policy makers/party and Non-State-Actor representatives.



Building on the UN Climate Change High-Level Champions' Climate Proofing SMEs Campaign, and the Drivers, Enablers and Challenges identified in 2024, the International Universities Climate Alliance, the SME Climate Hub, the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford and over 50 SME Climate Action experts around the world collaborated to share the latest insights and global academic expertise in a report published during **COP30** in Brazil.

The report provides a high-level global summary of the current academic knowledge on how governments best support Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to address their emissions and climate risk exposure and what climate mitigation, and adaptation solutions (approaches and/or technologies) are proving cost-effective or ineffective for SMEs.

HIGHER EDUCATION CLIMATE NETWORK OF NETWORKS (NON)

The Alliance regularly engages with the NoN and other global and regional Higher Education networks around the world in the lead up to and during UNFCCC events. Engaging with network leads and representatives from the global higher education community to identify priorities and discuss opportunities to deepen engagement with the UNFCCC and champion our work as non-state-actors through the Global Climate Action Agenda.

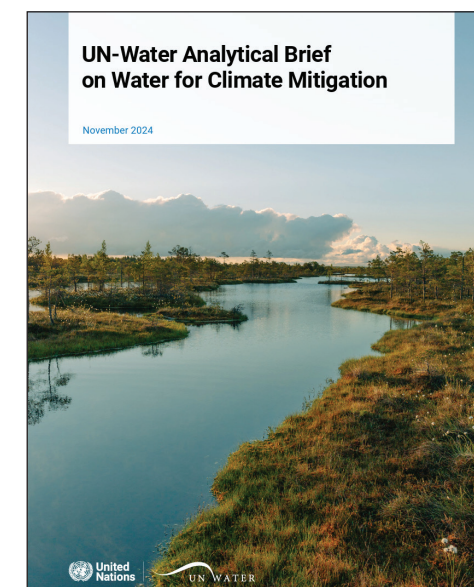
PRE-COP PLANNING

In preparation for each annual COP event, the Secretariat convened member representatives online ahead of the Conference to connect and coordinate activities. Pre-planning ensured an optimal experience for those joining in-person as well as virtually.

UN RACE TO ZERO FOR UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

Universities are uniquely positioned at the heart of the climate crisis response – shaping the next generation of leaders, driving emissions reduction on and beyond campus, and influencing regional and national net zero policy. The Alliance shares the strategic objectives of the UN Race to Zero campaign, initiated in 2020 to offer non-state actors a shared framework to reduce emissions across all scopes in line with the Paris Agreement, which includes Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges.

Alliance members are committed, as institutions, to sustainable pathways to net zero and support and celebrate institutions driving positive, and solutions focused climate initiatives.



We need everyone at the table in order to transform systems. So I wish to thank the organisers again for demonstrating leadership and I look forward to the ideas that will be generated during this symposium and how they can contribute to accelerating the use of the Action for Climate Empowerment toolbox to scale the implementation of the Convention and Paris Agreement."

FLEUR NEWMAN

Action for Climate Empowerment
Unit Lead, UNFCCC

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE | SECRETARIAT TRANSITION

In June 2025, Alliance member universities appointed the University of Reading (UK) to host the Secretariat of the International Universities Climate Alliance (IUCA) from 2026 – 2028. Leveraging a powerful combination of world class research, practical action, and educational innovation, the University of Reading welcomed the opportunity in its centenary year to invest its energy and expertise into advancing the Alliance's global impact, maintaining the strategic and operational frameworks established by UNSW Sydney.

As a co-founding member, the University of Reading recognises that ambitious global action for a sustainable future requires a multi-disciplinary approach to climate scholarship and convening students, leaders, academics, professional and technical staff in collaborative problem-solving.

The appointment process was undertaken in accordance with IUCA policy, and in alignment with the vision of founding members, that its Secretariat would grow, evolve and benefit from a cyclical rotation of the designated host university.

UNSW Sydney is proud to have founded the Alliance and will continue to play an active member role in pursuit of IUCA's global strategic objectives. Members are all united by a shared vision to accelerate action on climate change and we believe it is through globally coordinated collaboration that we can create greater insight, and action. The IUCA harnesses the research and knowledge of universities across the globe, providing a robust evidence base on which action can be founded. Such platforms are needed now more than ever as the world continues to develop coordinated and equitable approaches to tackling climate change.

As the new host of the Secretariat, the University of Reading will advance the Alliance's global impact and maintain the foundations established by founders UNSW Sydney.



The University of Reading shares IUCA members' deep commitment to understanding and addressing global environmental challenges. So, we are delighted to be the new host of the IUCA Secretariat, and we are excited to work with UNSW to engage with all of you and chart our way forward. With the appointment of our Secretariat team, we look forward to leveraging the natural synergies between Reading's strengths and the IUCA's mission."

Professor Robert Van de Noort CBE
IUCA Chair (2026-2028), Vice-Chancellor,
University of Reading





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