

Summary of Parallel Session 13: Justice and Democratic Norms in Climate and Sustainability Action  
(prepared by Okka Lou Mathis, session chair)

This session was an important contribution to the conference theme because the participants discussed normative foundations, principles and actors constellations for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

*What did we learn from this session?*

**Norms regarding the pace of transformative change** can be attributed to the individual or subnational entities (micro level), the nation-state or society (meso level), or the international community (macro level). All levels are being addressed in the current global sustainability discourses. Different normative sets and expectations towards the roles of entities may even be conflicting. The level of nation-states and societies is crucial for sustainable development as this is where normative sets from the macro and the micro level have to be reconciled. (Presentation by Esther Meyer and Gregor Schmiege, Leuphana Universität, Germany)

From ongoing research, it can be expected that the governance mode of **national self-differentiation** as laid out in the Paris Agreement will spread to other global policy forums and international regimes. Specifically, this new governance mode may reshape the relations between countries and could even be instrumentalized by some in order to attract external support. It remains to be researched whether and how national self-determination will affect climate governance at different levels. (Presentation by Meg Boyle, Pennsylvania State University, US)

The Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda acknowledge the crucial role and contributions of subnational and non-state actors. However, the definitions of these actor groups remain vague. It is therefore necessary to **distinguish carefully between subnational and non-state actors**, above all regarding their democratic mandate. Subnational actors are characterized by a narrow democratic mandate. Non-state actors lack a democratic mandate, but are legally recognized actors who are virtually everywhere. It is important to acknowledge that they cannot and should not substitute other actors in sustainable development. State and non-state actors typically interact in either consultative relationships based on feedback only, or in a co-productive relationship based on interaction in both directions. (Presentation by Navam Niles, Sri Lanka)

Interviews with experts from German partner countries in the Global South show that the sustainable development narrative is more broadly anchored in societies than the climate narrative in the context of the NDCs. Based on these interviews **international cooperation supporting the implementation of the NDCs in developing countries** (e.g. in the context of the “NDC Partnership”) is expected to follow several principles. Most prominently, partners wish to engage a broad variety of stakeholders,

strengthen country-ownership and capacities vis-à-vis international experts and donor structures, as well as to embed climate action into long-term national strategies. (Presentation by Joachim Fünfgelt, Brot für die Welt, and Manuela Mattheß, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung)