

#Parliaments4thePlanet

10 actions for greener parliaments (and those who work in them)



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Climate action begins at home. Parliaments and those who work in them can take concrete steps to reduce their carbon footprint, both as institutions and individuals. By adopting greener policies and embracing a culture of sustainability, parliaments and parliamentarians can help address the climate crisis and pave the way for stronger climate action. The IPU Secretariat has identified **10 key actions** parliaments and parliamentarians can consider as they embark on the greening process, or to complement existing greening initiatives. These actions cover three categories: institutionalizing the greening of parliament, greening the way parliaments and their members work, and leading and fostering a culture of sustainable change. While a wide range of options to become greener exists and will continue to evolve with time, these 10 actions provide concrete entry points for more sustainable parliaments that lead by example when it comes to climate action.



Institutionalizing the greening of parliaments

1. Track emissions from parliament's operations and set clear targets to reduce them

Examples of actions include:

- Establish a system for tracking emissions
- Set concrete time-bound targets for emissions reductions, for example to reduce emissions from parliament by 50% within a certain timeframe

2. Promote transparency in the greening process

Examples of actions include:

- Ensure that a green parliament becomes an institutional objective, for example expressed through a political statement
- Adopt a sustainability strategy with clear targets, for example to achieve 75% of electricity from renewable sources within a certain timeframe
- Establish an internal task force or working group to track the greening of parliament
- Conduct an annual sustainability audit and publish the results

3. Strive for climate-resilient parliamentary operations

Examples of actions include:

- Regularly assess potential climate vulnerabilities and target areas that need resilience building so that parliament's operations can keep functioning in the face of climate threats
- Ensure the needs of constituents will continue to be addressed in the face of climate change

Greening the way parliaments and their members work

4. Make sure parliamentary business is conducted in sustainable, water- and energy-efficient premises

Examples of actions include:

- Replace fossil fuel-consuming equipment with technologies that use renewable energy
- Require any new construction to be designed and constructed to be net-zero¹
- Install on-site solar panels to meet energy needs
- Measure waste production on an annual basis and set targets to reduce it
- Ensure efficient recycling systems are in place and ban single-use plastics
- Conduct water audits and install water-efficient systems
- Promote conservation in the area surrounding parliament's premises to protect local plant and animal species

5. Implement green procurement policies

Examples of actions include:

- Purchase from suppliers that publicly disclose their emissions and production practices
- Prioritize the procurement of products that are made from recycled content, are water- and energy-efficient, have independently been awarded labels that certify low environmental impact and that provide long-term value-for-money
- Integrate biodiversity concerns into procurement plans and operations, for example by conducting an assessment of biodiversity impacts from procured goods and services and identifying ways to minimize negative impacts

¹ In simple terms, net zero means "cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests for instance" (United Nations, 2023). For more information see: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/net-zero-coalition>.

6. Make parliament's transportation sustainable

Examples of actions include:

- Work towards a zero-emissions vehicle fleet by replacing carbon-polluting vehicles with electric ones
- Minimize non-essential travel, especially air travel, and opt for travel by renewable energy-powered trains or buses when possible; when travel cannot be avoided, compensate for carbon emissions through independently verified and internationally recognized carbon-offsetting initiatives
- Adopt hybrid ways of working when possible to reduce commuting

7. Embrace digitalization

Examples of actions include:

- Develop a digital transformation strategy that moves away from paper-based working modes
- Adopt a digital approach for parliamentary work
- Consult sustainable technology experts to identify innovation and technology trends



Leading and fostering a culture of sustainable change

8. Foster a culture of sustainability and climate awareness

Examples of actions include:

- Provide regular awareness-raising activities to parliamentarians and parliamentary staff on global and national climate trends and issues
- Hold briefings on parliament's sustainability plans and practices
- Apply knowledge gained through the greening process to work on legislation, budgeting and oversight
- Consider more vegetarian, vegan and locally-sourced food options



9. Become a climate champion

Examples of actions include:

- Advocate for a greener parliament
- Use a carbon footprint calculator to track your own emissions and share with the public the steps you are taking as an individual to reduce them
- Engage your constituents in dialogues on climate change
- Create opportunities to exchange with civil society representatives, climate experts and environmental leaders, including youth and women leaders, to learn about their experiences and needs due to climate change

10. Prioritize collaboration and knowledge-sharing

Examples of actions include:

- Work across party lines to accelerate green parliamentary initiatives and push for strong climate legislation
- Build partnerships with local, national, regional and international stakeholders to advance climate action
- Share your experience on becoming greener with the IPU and other parliaments
- Use international events and dialogues to showcase your parliament's sustainability efforts and lessons learned

Where to start?

As Speakers of parliament, parliamentarians, Secretaries General of parliament and parliamentary staff, **these are actions you can take now:**

Speakers of Parliament

- Discuss these 10 actions within your parliament, including with political groups, and seek buy-in across party lines
- Ensure that a green parliament becomes an institutional objective, for example expressed through a political statement
- Share your commitment to becoming greener with other parliaments at international events

Parliamentarians

- Become a climate champion and advocate for a greener parliament
- Calculate your carbon footprint and share with the public the steps you are taking as an individual to reduce it
- Engage your constituents in dialogues on climate change and meet with civil society and environmental leaders, including youth and women leaders, to learn about their climate experiences and needs

Secretaries General of Parliament with support of parliamentary staff

- Lead the technical and administrative process for the development of a parliamentary sustainability strategy, including targets for the energy and water efficiency of the parliament building(s)/ premises and a green procurement policy
- Establish an internal task force or working group to track the greening of parliament
- Ensure a system for tracking emissions from parliament's operations is set up
- Hold briefings on parliament's sustainability plans and practices
- Provide regular awareness-raising training to parliamentarians and fellow parliamentary staff on global and national climate trends and issues
- Support digital and hybrid ways of working across parliament to reduce emissions from commuting and cut down on paper waste



Additional resources

ParlAmericas (2020). *Guide on Green Parliaments: Actions to Promote Sustainable Practices within Parliaments*. https://www.parlAmericas.org/uploads/documents/Green_Parliaments_ENG.pdf

United Nations (2019). *Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020-2030*. Phase I: Environmental sustainability in the area of management. https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/imported_files/CEB.2019.1.Add_.1%20-%20Sustainability%20Management%202020-2030_Phase%20I_0.pdf

United Nations (2021). *Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System 2020-2030*. Phase II: Towards leadership in environmental and social sustainability. https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/CEB.2021.2.Add_.1-Strategy%20for%20Sustainability%20Management%20in%20the%20United%20Nations.Phase%20II.pdf

United Nations (2023). *UN carbon footprint calculator*. <https://offset.climateneutralnow.org/footprintcalc>

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Page 9: Parliamentary meeting organized by the IPU and the British Group of the IPU in Glasgow, UK, November 2021. © BGIPU

#Parliaments4thePlanet

My parliament, my planet!

At the IPU we believe that climate action begins at home. Parliaments and parliamentarians must lead by example before preaching to the people.

That's why we're launching a new campaign called **Parliaments for the Planet** to mobilize parliaments and parliamentarians to act on the climate emergency.

My parliament!

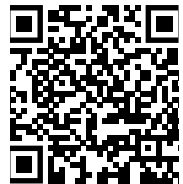
Part 1 of the campaign will encourage parliaments and those who work in them to reduce their carbon footprint and become greener.

My planet!

Overlapping with Part 1 of the campaign, Part 2 will help parliaments step up action through legislation, budgets and, in particular, scrutiny of government measures to implement the Paris Agreement.

Write to press@ipu.org and tell us what your parliament is doing for the planet!

→ ipu.org/parliaments4theplanet



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