

G-Zero: A Unified Voice for Carbon-Neutral and Carbon-Negative Nations

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The world is confronting an unparalleled climate crisis. With rising temperatures and diminishing biodiversity, the urgency for decisive action has never been greater. Amid fragmented efforts and unfulfilled promises, a transformative alliance has emerged: The “G-Zero” Forum. This coalition of carbon-neutral and negative nations seek to amplify the voices of those who contribute the least to climate change yet suffer its harshest consequences.

G-Zero was formally launched in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November, 2024, on the sidelines of the 29th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change). The founding members - Bhutan, Madagascar, Panama, and Suriname - came together to sign a Declaration announcing the formation of this group of countries.

The Declaration establishes the G-Zero as a coalition committed to accelerating global climate action. It expresses deep concern over the failure to meet the Paris Agreement goals, emphasising the critical role of natural carbon sinks in limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

The Declaration underscores the urgency of integrating nature-based solutions into climate policy and calls for stronger global frameworks to recognise and support the efforts of carbon-negative and carbon-neutral nations. It commits to advocating for ambitious climate policies, promoting climate justice, securing innovative financing for ecosystem conservation, and fostering international collaboration. Ultimately, it urges a bold and inclusive global movement to protect nature and accelerate the transition to a net-zero, nature-positive world.

A Vision Grounded in Responsibility

G-Zero represents a pivotal shift in global climate diplomacy. Unlike alliances centred on economic power or emissions reduction targets alone,

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this forum unites nations that have achieved—or are resolutely pursuing—carbon neutrality or negative emissions. These countries host some of the world’s most critical carbon sinks – forests and ecosystems that absorb more greenhouse gases than they emit.

Bhutan, as a shining example of a carbon-negative nation, embodies the leadership and vision that G-Zero champions. The nation’s vast forests, covering approximately 70% of its land area, act as significant carbon sinks, absorbing more carbon dioxide than the country emits (climateactiontracker.org). In 2017, Bhutan’s carbon dioxide emissions were approximately 2.2 million tonnes, while its forests had the potential to sequester nearly three times that amount (earth.org). This achievement is underpinned by Bhutan’s Constitutional mandate to maintain a minimum of 60% forest cover, reflecting a deep commitment to environmental conservation.

This forum is not merely about acknowledgment but also about action. G-Zero members stand at the forefront of climate action, making intentional policy choices to preserve their natural carbon sinks despite economic challenges.

Madagascar, home to unique biodiversity, enforces policies to limit emissions and conserve its forests. Panama, a carbon-negative nation, maintains strong forest protection measures while balancing development. Suriname, with over 90% forest cover, actively safeguards its ecosystems to sustain its carbon-negative status. Their perspective, shaped by the lived reality of balancing development needs with environmental stewardship, offers a vital voice in global climate negotiations.

Transformative Objectives

At its core, G-Zero declares that it seeks to accelerate progress toward a net-zero, nature-positive future. Its goals include:

Building momentum for unified representation among high-carbon-sink countries, advocating for their perspectives in global dialogues on climate change policy and financing for development. G-Zero countries seek to develop a coordinated position for international climate negotiations, ensuring their priorities are reflected in global climate finance and policy dialogues.

Bringing together stakeholders from member countries to share experiences, exchange policy solutions, and foster technical co-operation on net-zero and nature-positive pathways. Capacity building programmes will be organised to enable knowledge exchange between policymakers, researchers and technical experts to develop joint strategies on carbon neutrality and nature-positive pathways.

Advocating for enhanced global ambition, including stronger climate finance instruments, technology transfers, targeted investments, concessional lending, and preferential trade agreements tailored to member nations.

Maximising access to innovative financing mechanisms for conserving and enhancing carbon sinks, with recognition of their climate and biodiversity benefits.

Time for Action

It is widely accepted that the climate crisis is no longer a distant threat but a present and escalating reality. Recent findings, including the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, warn that breaching the 1.5°C threshold is imminent. G-Zero nations emphasise that the stakes are immediate, with rising temperatures and erratic weather threatening lives, livelihoods and ecosystems.

G-Zero aims to be a beacon of resilience and responsibility. By challenging the notion that economic growth and environmental conservation are incompatible, G-Zero highlights their interdependence, showcasing how sustainable development can chart the path to a liveable future.

G-Zero invites the world to reimagine climate action through the lens of equity and shared responsibility. By supporting this coalition, governments, institutions and individuals can contribute to a global movement prioritising planetary health alongside human well-being.

In a world often paralysed by inaction, G-Zero embodies the strength of collective resolve. It is stating its commitment to a shared future where every nation, regardless of size or resources, plays a role in safeguarding our planet.

“Bhutan is working together with its fellow member countries to chart out the way for a permanent secretariat proposed to be hosted in Bhutan,” according to a statement from the Prime Minister’s office in Bhutan.

References

<https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/bhutan/>

<https://earth.org/bhutan-carbon-negative-country/>