Global Governance Policy Proposal
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Proposal for a
Responsibility Chain Task Force[2]

Major landmarks in global climate governance, such as the Paris Agreement, have shown that states are essential but not the only key actors for addressing climate change. Many states, including some of the largest emitters of greenhouse gasses, have fallen short of their commitments to mitigation. In other areas of climate action—such as adaptation, losses and damages, and climate financing—loose promises have not translated into substantial action and resources, even as the latest IPCC report shows that climate change is already having extensive impacts on local communities, migration, and societies as a whole. And efforts to protect the environment through broad, binding commitments have repeatedly run up against discourses of national sovereignty that weaken efforts at international cooperation. For instance, unlike in the areas of climate, biodiversity and desertification, there is no global forest treaty to ensure the protection and sustainable management of forests, although such a proposal was put forth at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. These gaps suggest that states alone do not suffice in addressing the ecological crisis, and that global governance models that focus too narrowly on them frequently run up against these walls.

At the same time, commitments by private sector and finance firms have proliferated recently as Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) norms spread, and as momentum gathers for Green Transitions. However, although there are individual promises or collective announcements, such as those made along with the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use, at COP26—which heightened expectations that supply chains from forest areas would be free from deforestation, those documents and pledges have proven to be insufficient to address the challenges of climate change and the ecological crisis, even as pressure from consumer groups and other civil society entities increases.

Bringing these actors—states, private sector, international organizations and civil society together for the common goal of protecting our planet is increasingly important because climate is not a self-contained policy area but rather a cross-cutting issue. Far more than just mitigation, the climate agenda now increasingly dovetails with themes such as

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biodiversity, desertification, and deforestation—as captured by the concept of the Triple Planetary Crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste)[3].

Yet global governance fragmentation and United Nations "silos" through which expertise and initiatives are over-compartmentalized tend to inhibit cross-cutting responses. This is increasingly problematic because the Triple Planetary Crisis entails interlinked challenges inducing:

- How to generate commitments that states and the private sector will actually follow through?
- How to build trust in the capacity of global governance to address the Triple Planetary Threat?
- How to build a governance model that is both inclusive and effective, especially with respect to non-state actors (civil society, private sector, indigenous and other traditional leaders, etc)?
- How to develop an approach that is as cross-cutting as the problem at hand, and that can strengthen the enforcement of socio-environmental commitments and ensure inclusiveness in decision-making?
- How to ensure accountability by multiple actors, all along production-consumption chains?

Plataforma CIPÓ proposes that one of the main building blocks of strengthened climate governance should be "**responsibility chains**": the interconnected sets of socio-environmental relations that link commodity producers to consumers, from primary production and extraction to manufacturing (when applicable), exporting and importing, all the way to final consumption. The concept of responsibility chain acknowledges the roles of multiple actors and thus demands accountability all along the chain: state (both producers and importers), private sector, financing, and consumer groups. Responsibility chains also entail international cooperation among producer and consumer countries, often bridging North-South divides.

Responsibility chains are broader than "supply" or "value chains", concepts that tend to focus more narrowly on economic relations, often from the perspective of consumer states and societies or transnational companies. Responsibility chains:

(a) incorporate social, environmental and human rights aspects all along each chain, along with economic dimensions;
(b) feed into and give rise to more robust sectoral and cross-sectoral normative frameworks, accountability and enforcement mechanisms and
(b) link up to global governance through pre-existing UN frameworks and mechanisms, including the UN Global Compact and efforts to build a Treaty on Business and Human Rights, as well as external efforts, such as the Exponential

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[3] UNEP (2020) "The triple planetary crisis: Forging a new relationship between people and the earth" 14 July:
https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/triple-planetary-crisis-forging-new-relationship-between-people-and-earth

Roadmap Initiative, which seems to halve all greenhouse gas emissions before 2030 trough exponential climate action and solutions#. In addition, responses built around responsibility chains can help address the unforeseen consequences and "dark side" of the Green Transition, especially in terms of overseas socio environmental and economic impacts of the move away from fossil fuels by developed countries.

Where to start?

It is possible to identify, using quantitative data, the commodities that strongly contribute to climate change--which are highly associated with environmental crimes leading to widespread deforestation, pollution and contamination. These include, for example, commodities such as minerals, timber, soy and beef, as well as certain types of fish. Data is also available for estimating the socio environmental impacts of these chains. Starting with ensuring zero deforestation and zero tolerance for other social environmental violations along one or two key Responsibility Chains will build trust in the capacity of global governance to address the Triple Planetary Crisis, and then more chains can be added to the effort.

How to link Responsibility Chains to Global Governance?

There are also precedents that may provide inspiration and lessons learned, as **the Kimberley Process**,[4] for example. This international, multi-stakeholder initiative was created to increase transparency and oversight in the diamond industry in order to eliminate trade in conflict diamonds, or rough diamonds sold by rebel groups or their allies to fund conflict against legitimate governments. It has brought together governments, the private sector (including industry association and specific companies) and civil society (especially in the role of independent monitors) to curb the trade in conflict diamonds in Africa— underpinned by a UN mandate. As of 2022, 81 countries, representing 99.8% of the global production of conflict diamonds, have joined the Kimberley Process, and research has shown that the effort has led to a significant reduction of global trade in such minerals.

The certification of the Kimberley Process has gaps -- for instance, it focuses solely on the mining and distribution of conflict diamonds, rather than diamonds more broadly. However, lessons (both positive and negative) can be learned from this model and applied to other products, including in places where the discourse of national sovereignty has posed considerable hurdles to international cooperation around climate and environmental issues. In the Amazon, there are multiple ongoing efforts to clean up supply chains for commodities that are pressuring the forest, such as beef, timber, soybeans and gold. However, they run up against challenges that include destructive environmental policies and poor enforcement of environmental laws in producer countries on the one hand; and on the other, flawed due diligence protocols and weak mechanisms (and even inadequate legislation) in importing countries to ensure administrative and criminal sanctions against actors acquiring and profiting from products from environmental. Major gaps also remain in international

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[4] The Kimberly Process: https://www.kimberleyprocess.com/

cooperation among law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders involved in tackling illicit activities across supply-consumption chains.

In order to link Responsibility Chains with global governance, the following measures are recommended:

- A **Task Force on Responsibility Chains** should be created bringing together representatives from states, international organizations, civil society and private sector, to map relevant initiatives and devise an action plan for:
    - Linking up ongoing initiatives on clean supply chains, both at the UN and in other organizations, such as the OECD, to global normative efforts around business, human rights and prevention of illegal deforestation.
    - Developing mechanisms to facilitate a more predictable and efficient cooperation between stakeholders in producing and importing countries, with a focus on environmental monitoring and law enforcement agencies tasked with tackling socio-environmental violations, financial crimes and other related illicit activities at the producing and consumption ends
    - Incorporating the concept of Responsibility Chains into major spaces for discussion of global governance and the Triple Planetary Crisis, starting at COP27.
- Through the *Our Common Agenda* efforts of the United Nations,
    - Responsibility Chain data (for instance, on the environmental, social and climate impacts of supply chains) can be collected and analyzed via the **Futures Lab**, and used for projections of environmental degradation and destruction, as well as associated social impacts on human rights, health, income and wellbeing;
    - The concept can be incorporated into the coordination mechanism foreseen in the **Summit of the Future** and the **Declaration on Future Generations**;
    - The **High Level Advisory Board on Global Public Goods** can advance discussions of responsibility chains and their role in the protection of global goods.
- A narrative shift is needed from supply chains, which reflect the viewpoint of consumers, to that of responsibility chains. The concept—and its role in Global Climate Governance—should be explored in **key global governance events**, such as Stockholm+50, COP27, as well as discussions of global governance improvement that are led by civil society, such as and future Global Policy Dialogues (especially that under planning for Recife, Brazil, on the specific topic of the Triple Planetary Crisis) organized by Plataforma CIPÓ through the Global Governance Innovation Network (GGIN) and other partners.
- The concept of Responsibility Chains should be promoted at the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** as a way to better incorporate supply-consumption chains into international trade frameworks and initiatives.
- At a political level, the **Alliance for the Protection of Tropical Forests** can help galvanize political will to incorporate Responsibility Chains into the discourse and major international efforts to address the root causes and international dynamics

behind environmental crimes such as deforestation, pollution and contamination in forest areas. It can also help to link up ongoing initiatives on clean supply chains, both at the UN and in other organizations, such as the OECD, to global normative efforts around business, human rights and prevention of illegal deforestation.

Plataforma CIPÓ (www.plataforma_tipo.org) is an independent, non-profit research institute based in Brazil, led by women and dedicated to the themes of climate, governance and peace in Latin America and the Caribbean and, more broadly, across the Global South. CIPÓ's efforts are designed to support the work of local and national governments, international organizations, civil society entities and the private sector to develop effective responses to the challenges of the Anthropocene.

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