

Geopolitics Snapshot – Methodology

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Overview

To assemble the Geopolitics Snapshot, the geopolitical landscape has been broken down into essential components that are material for global climate diplomacy and climate action. For each indicator, a definition is provided, and a list of sub-indicators are provided against which assessments are made. For each sub-indicator, a test question is formulated to ensure consistent interrogation during each snapshot. A set of metrics is also established as benchmarks for assessments. The below tables set these out in full.

Data

Data is collected across the four indicators, with a geographical focus on Europe, the USA, China, G7/G20 countries, BRICS & Africa. Data include both qualitative sources (including but not limited to diplomatic readouts, statements, speeches, press conference remarks, press releases, news reports and comment pieces) and quantified public data from international institutions (WHO, IMF, UN), among others. Whilst all data points in this Snapshot are derived from publicly available sources, assessments are sometimes informed by private discussions with government stakeholders. This database is available on request.

Indicator #1: Geopolitical Foundations

Definition: This indicator assesses the extent of current geopolitical tensions between the EU, China and the US, OECD countries and large middle-income countries (BASIC). This also encompasses the strength of solidarity between the Global North and South, where COVID-19 has resulted in heightened tensions as a result of its impacts on developing country fiscal space and unequal global vaccine distribution to date. Bridging these divides and building trust between developed and developing countries is a critical component of success at COP26.

Key sources: Diplomatic readouts, media representation of relationships, discussions with government stakeholders

Sub-Indicators & Key Testing Questions	Metric
<p>(1a) Major power relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of US-China relations? • What is the status of EU-China relations? • What is the status of the transatlantic relationship? • What is the extent of alignment between OECD countries? • What is the extent of alignment between BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) economies? • What is the nature of the China-India relationship (competitive vs. cooperative)? • How do these major power relations aggregately define the wider geopolitical foundations? 	<p>High tensions Medium tensions Low tensions Currently uncertain</p>
<p>(1b) Global North-South relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of low trust in North-South relations as manifested by a difference between the reality of North-South relations as borne out in the data, and the rhetoric from leaders surrounding it? • How are major power relations playing into North-South relations? • What is the disparity in COVID-19 vaccinations between developed and developing countries? • Are developed countries making progress on increasing climate finance towards the \$100bn goal, financing adaptation in climate vulnerable countries (balance between mitigation and adaptation, extra finance and harmonisation of resources) and increasing international aid? 	<p>High tensions Medium tensions Low tensions Currently uncertain</p>

Indicator #2: Economic Foundations

Definition: The persistence and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is a key force shaping 2021. This tracks indicators of global recovery strength, as the capacity and political space to address climate amidst multiple crises depends on fiscal space and equity within countries; the collective generosity to support the fiscal security of others; the distribution of COVID-19 impacts between countries; and ongoing COVID-19 waves. This also tracks the ‘greenness’ of global and key major power recoveries as the shape of economic recoveries impacts fiscal space for investing in climate action in the medium to long as well as immediate term. Finally, this tracks international trade dynamics including the extent to which countries cooperate to shape global trade rules, the extent to which supply chains are reshored, the nature of new trade agreements and tariffs, and the manner of global approaches to carbon border adjustment mechanisms.

Key sources: WHO data on COVID-19, IMF data on economic recovery, E3G/Wuppertal Institute Recovery Tracker, Energy Policy Tracker, diplomatic readouts, media representations

Sub-Indicators & Key Testing Questions	Metric
<p>(2a) Global recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of further waves of COVID-19 restricting economic recovery in areas where vaccination rates are inadequate to arrest viral transmission? • Are countries cooperating to address limited fiscal space concretely and sufficiently in debt-distressed developing countries through the following measures? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDB reform and expansion of financing capabilities • Issuance and reallocation of special drawing rights, debt service relief and deeper structural reforms for debt sustainability 	<p>Unbalanced Somewhat unbalanced Somewhat balanced Balanced Currently uncertain</p>
<p>(2b) Green recovery</p> <p>To what extent are countries coordinating to ensure green, fair and resilient recoveries through the following mechanisms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing joint standards for green recovery, shared minimum floors for green public spending and commitments to do no significant harm • Establishing accountability mechanisms to monitor, track and enforce green recoveries • Reforming the financial system for sustainability including supervisory stress-testing, greening monetary policy, and private finance disclosure • Addressing differential access to capital markets for lower-income countries 	<p>Backsliding Off track Improving On track Currently uncertain</p>
<p>(2c) Open trade & economies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are countries cooperating in relevant fora (WTO, OECD) to harmonise regulations and standards for global trade? • Are countries cooperating through agreeing trade deals, or competing against each other through issuance of trade tariffs? • Is there evidence of significant supply chain retrenchment in major markets? • Are major economies taking a coordinated approach to potential Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms? 	<p>High tensions Medium to high tensions Low to medium tensions Low tensions Currently uncertain</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are border closures restricting the flow of people and goods? 	
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Indicator #3: Cooperation in the Multilateral System

Definition: Effective climate action requires strong multilateral cooperation across trade, finance, resilience, development and other agendas, which is under threat if countries turn inwards in response to COVID-19 crises. How countries operate across the wider multilateral system and the extent to which they invest in good faith in the international rules-based order is a key component of the geopolitical context. This indicator examines the nature of cooperation in the multilateral system in response to COVID-19 and wider humanitarian issues. This indicator also tracks the extent of cooperative good-faith and inclusive engagement in multilateral fora, and the extent to which processes for effective multilateral systems (coordination amongst country groupings) is impacted by COVID-19 requiring virtual diplomacy.

Key sources: WHO data on COVAX, UN data on humanitarian issues, diplomatic readouts, media representations of UN meetings

Sub-Indicators & Key Testing Questions	Metric
<p>(3a) Coordinated responses to COVID-19 and humanitarian issues</p> <p>Are countries with greater vaccine distribution capacity engaging in multilateral cooperation via the WHO and the COVAX Initiative to accelerate vaccination in developing countries, as opposed to solely via bilateral cooperation?</p> <p>To what extent are countries responding emerging humanitarian issues of the types listed below via multilateral cooperation through UN bodies and mechanisms, and the G7 and G20, in order to effectively address such crises, as opposed to solely via bilateral cooperation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Famine Food insecurity Violent political instability 	<p>Fragmented responses</p> <p>Mediocre responses</p> <p>Harmonised responses</p> <p>Currently uncertain</p>
<p>(3b) Engagement at multilateral fora</p> <p>Is there sufficient inclusivity of countries in multilateral fora, or is the voice of less advantaged countries excluded?</p> <p>At the following multilateral fora is there evidence of countries engaging with them in good faith to achieve shared outcomes?</p>	<p>Unconstructive and exclusive engagement</p> <p>Neutral engagement</p> <p>Constructive and inclusive engagement</p> <p>Currently uncertain</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Security Council • UN Human Rights Council • UN General Assembly • World Trade Organisation • World Health Organisation • NATO 	
<p>(3c) Functional multilateral processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of countries' engagement in the processes for multilateral diplomacy, including virtual negotiations for climate (at the UNFCCC) and nature (at the CBD) amongst others? • To what extent are countries coordinating amongst groupings and alliances effectively, including South-South coalitions? 	<p>Disrupted processes Somewhat disrupted processes Somewhat effective processes Effective processes Currently uncertain</p>

Indicator #4: Climate Diplomacy	
<p>Definition: This indicator assesses the extent to which climate diplomacy processes and outcomes, interspersed across the G7, G20, COP26 and other fora, advances a cooperative geopolitical agenda. Showcasing shared action on climate change can be a means of demonstrating global cooperation and building confidence among world leaders on the prospects of multilateralism. In this way, climate action can facilitate cooperative geopolitics to address wider challenges that COVID-19 has exposed to world leaders. Climate solutions can also be central to addressing interlinked economic, social and environmental challenges. At the same time, COVID-19 raises fresh challenges to the process of climate diplomacy which can act as a flashpoint for disruption.</p> <p>Key sources: Diplomatic readouts, media representations, discussions with government stakeholders, NDC Registry data, Climate Watch data on NDCs & LTS</p>	
Sub-Indicators & Key Testing Questions	Metric
<p>(4a) Climate weaved as a 'golden thread' of cooperation in the geopolitical agenda</p> <p>To what extent is climate integrated as a golden thread of cooperation throughout major geopolitical moments this year?</p>	<p>Weak Medium Strong Currently uncertain</p>
<p>(4b) Climate diplomacy outcomes</p> <p>Is climate diplomacy resulting in ambitious and balanced outcomes in any of the following areas? Is momentum on these outcomes gaining or waning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) 	<p>Unbalanced outcomes Somewhat unbalanced outcomes Somewhat balanced outcomes Balanced outcomes</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term strategies (LTS) • Net zero targets • Fossil fuel phase out commitments including coal • Clean energy transition • Commitments to end fossil fuel finance • Financial system reforms for sustainability (public and private sector) • National Adaptation Strategies • Loss and Damage • Whole of society climate action 	<p>Currently uncertain</p> <p>Unambitious</p> <p>Somewhat unambitious</p> <p>Somewhat ambitious</p> <p>Ambitious</p> <p>Currently uncertain</p>
<p>(4c) Impact of climate diplomacy coalitions</p> <p>To what extent are countries forming climate diplomacy coalitions this year including but not limited to the below list?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) • Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) • Least Developed Countries (LDCs) • High Ambition Coalition (HAC) • G77 and China • Climate Vulnerables Forum (CVF) • African Group (AGN) • Umbrella Group • Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs) 	<p>Low impact</p> <p>Low to medium impact</p> <p>Medium to high impact</p> <p>High impact</p> <p>Currently uncertain</p>