



# A Regional Assessment of the Nationally Determined Contributions of West African Countries

Report by the Independent Global Stocktake West Africa Regional Hub



# Analysis of West African Countries' Commitments to Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Climate change presents significant threats to development, economic growth, and human well-being. In response to this global challenge, countries around the world negotiated the Paris Agreement in 2015 and signed it as an international treaty on climate change in 2016 covering mitigation, adaptation, and finance. A core component of this treaty is the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) which outline the commitments by each country to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the 15 West African countries have all submitted their NDCs and updated versions. As a region with shared challenges as well as resources, an understanding of the collective commitment of the countries is important for mutual learning and will help to ratchet up national ambitions during the next round of NDC revisions, ultimately contributing to the fight against climate change at national, regional, and global levels.

The West Africa Regional Hub of the Independent Global Stocktake (iGST WA Hub) aims to bring the independent (i.e., non-state) community including researchers together to provide complementary support to the governments of the region to enhance their contributions to the achievement of the goals of the Paris Agreement. To facilitate this, the iGST WA Hub initiated the Young Fellowship Program with the aim to conduct a regional assessment of the countries' NDCs vis-à-vis the outcome of the first global assessment – the first Global Stocktake (GST).

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the NDCs of countries in West Africa by assessing their sectoral commitments as well as the role of non-state actors (i.e., Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)) in NDCs development and implementation. Additionally, it evaluates the extent to which West African countries' NDCs align with the outcomes of the first GST. Specifically, the analysis focuses on three main objectives, namely to:

- Evaluate sectoral commitments to climate mitigation and adaptation,
- Assess the role of csos in supporting climate actions,
- Compare the current ambitions derived from the ndcs with the first gst outcomes.

## Methodology

The assessment framework of the NDCs consists of analyzing the level of commitments of the countries in climate mitigation and adaptation. The framework encompasses the target sectors (e.g., energy, agriculture, forest, etc.), objectives, alignment with the PA, targets and measures for mitigation and adaptation, means of implementation, and changes in policy as well as involvement of relevant stakeholders and local communities. In this study, CSOs, especially NGOs, active in climate change related issues were considered in addition to the government institutions.

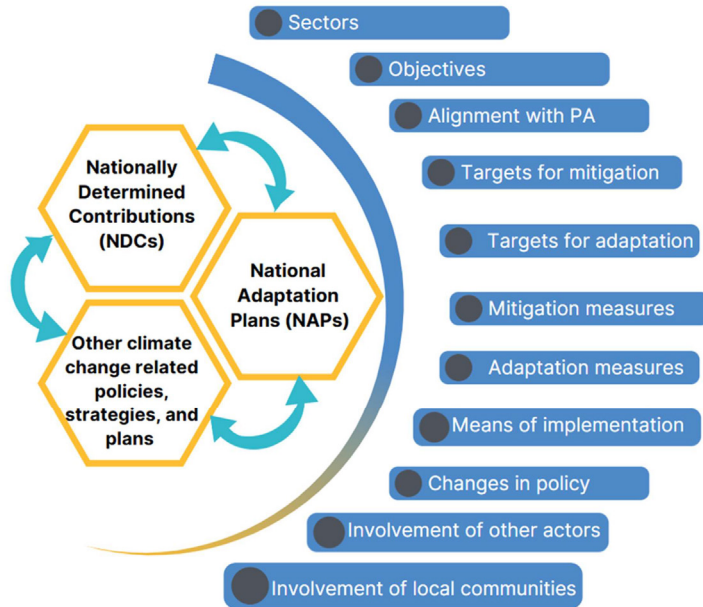


Figure 1: Assessment framework

The report analyses the data obtained from the NDCs of the 15 West African countries. Data gaps were filled using related documents such as the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). It also draws information from primary data collected from surveys and interviews with government officials who play key roles in NDCs development and implementation, and 109 West African CSOs that are actively engaged in climate change related issues.

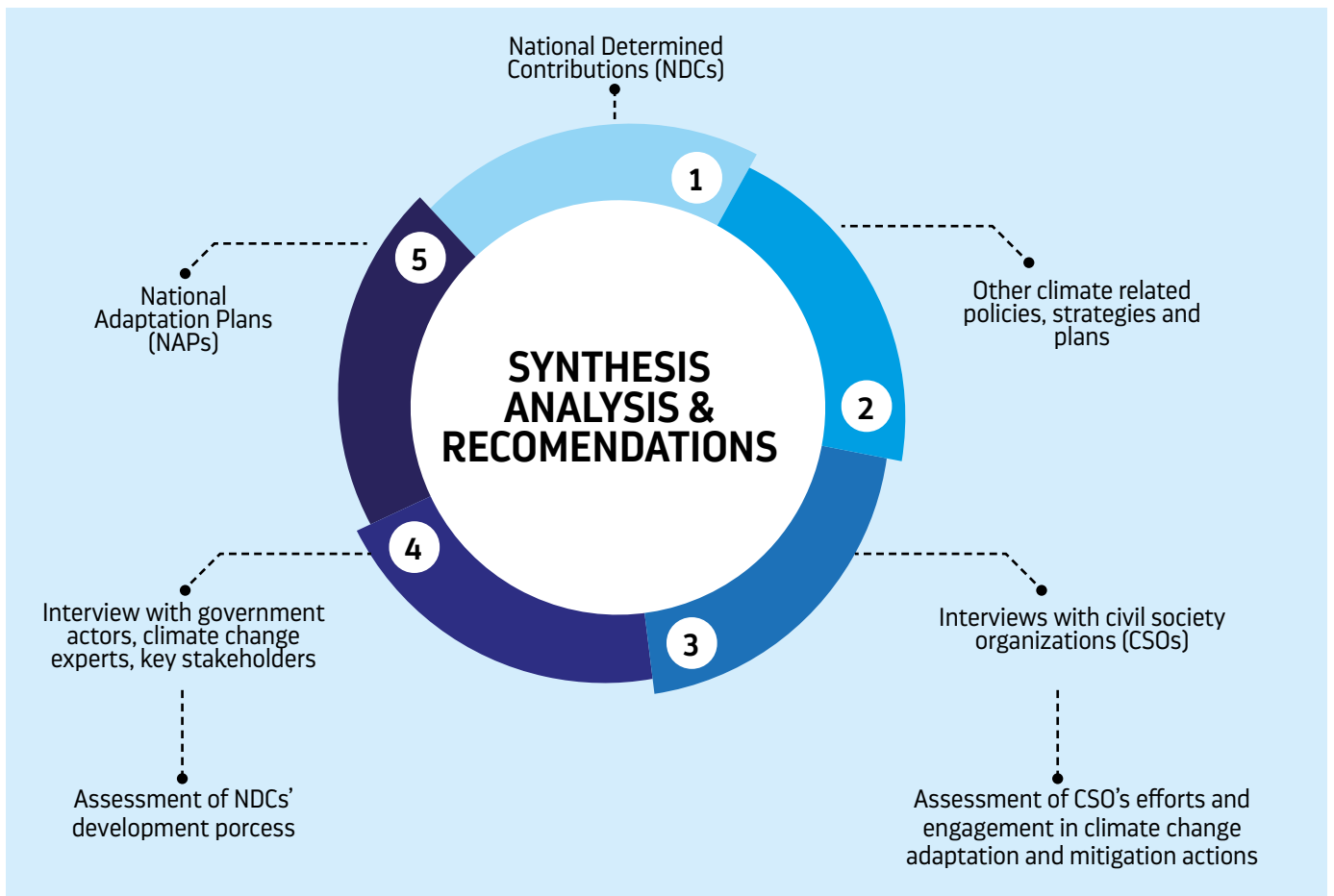


Figure 2: Synthesis framework

## KEY FINDINGS

1. West African countries have made notable effort to enhance their climate ambitions, with many revised targets that reflect more ambitious goals with potential for impact in the region. All countries have demonstrated increasing commitments by ratcheting up their ambitions through strengthening existing mitigation and adaptation targets or adding new ones.

Table 1: Overall comparison of levels of ambitions within different revisions of NDCs

Countries	Revised from previous submission	Reduced total GHG emissions in 2030	Strengthened or added GHG target	Strengthened or added sectoral target	Strengthened or added policies and actions	Strengthened adaptation	Provided additional information for clarity, transparency, and understanding
Benin	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Burkina Faso	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Cabo Verde	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Côte d'Ivoire	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Gambia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ghana	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Guinea	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Guinea Bissau	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Liberia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mali	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Niger	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Nigeria	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Senegal	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sierra Leone	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Togo	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Legend	●	YES
	●	Unclear
	●	NO

2. Important unconditional commitments have been made by West African countries which constitute a notable progress but are insufficient to meet the escalating climate challenges because they represent only about 28% and 31.5% of the total resources needed for adaptation and mitigation, respectively. With about 70% conditional commitment to climate change adaptation and mitigation, the region has expressed its clear position to put a third of its domestic resources on the table while expecting the gap to be filled with funds from external sources.

Figure 3: Sectoral greenhouse gas reduction commitments

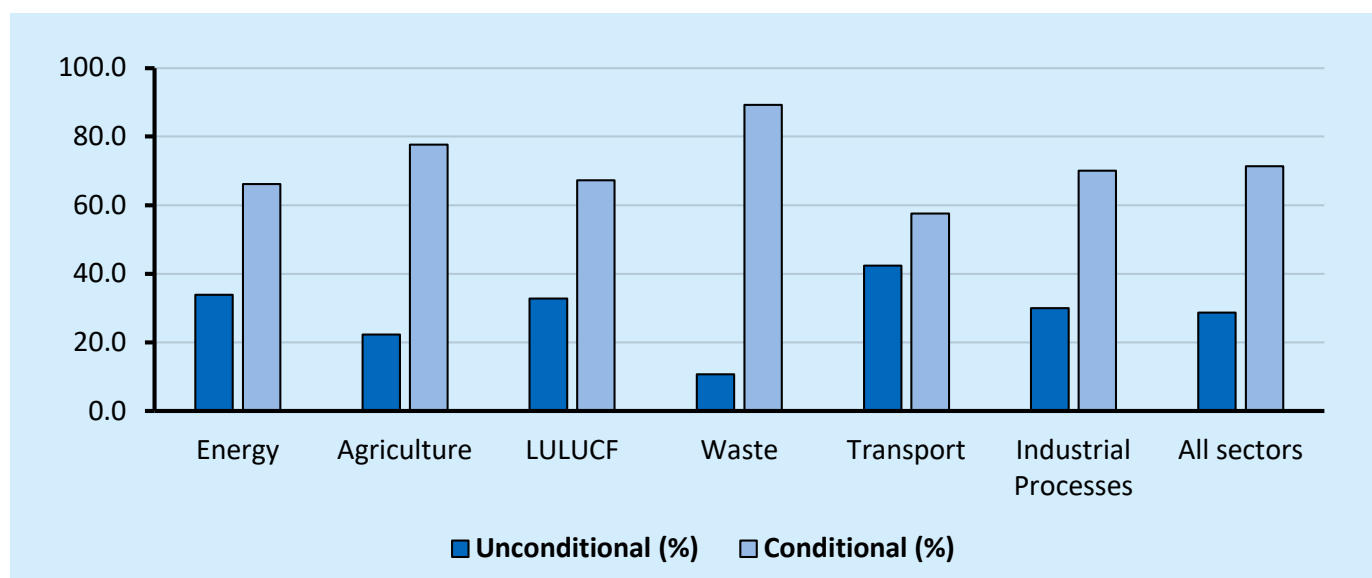


Figure 4: Overall greenhouse gas reduction commitments

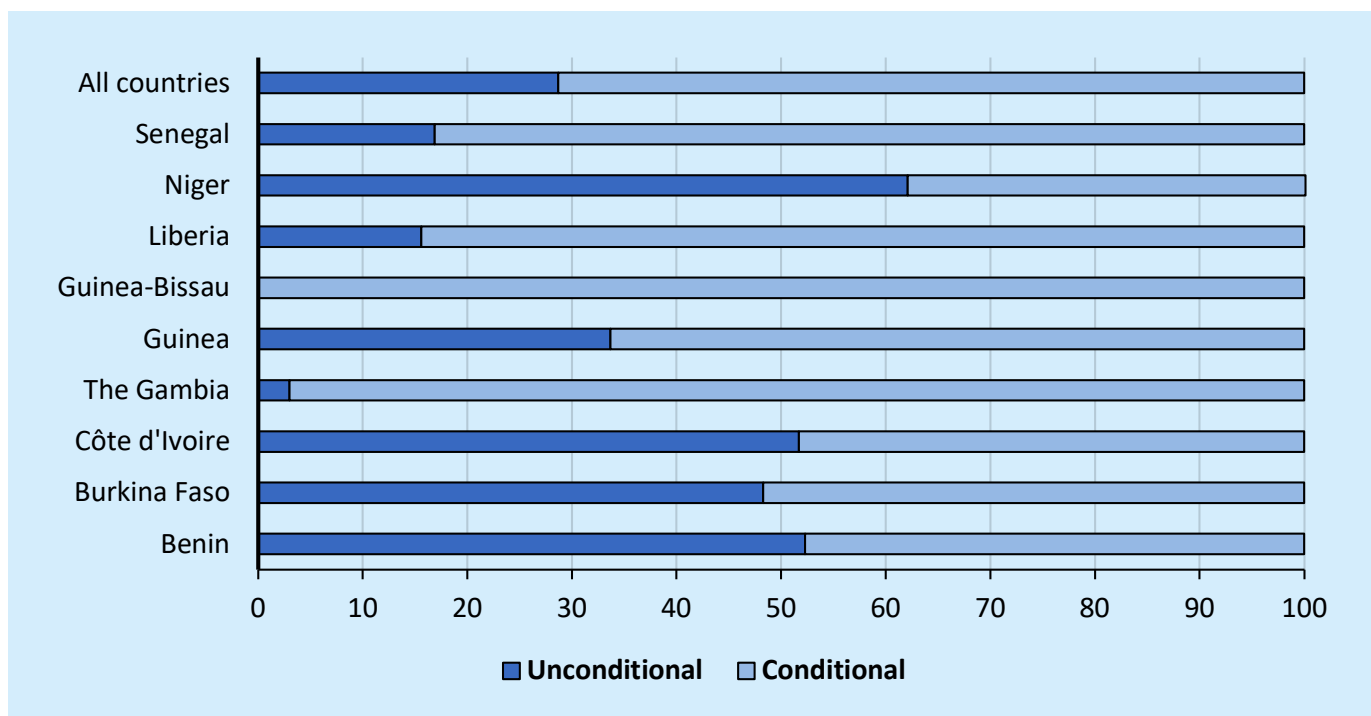
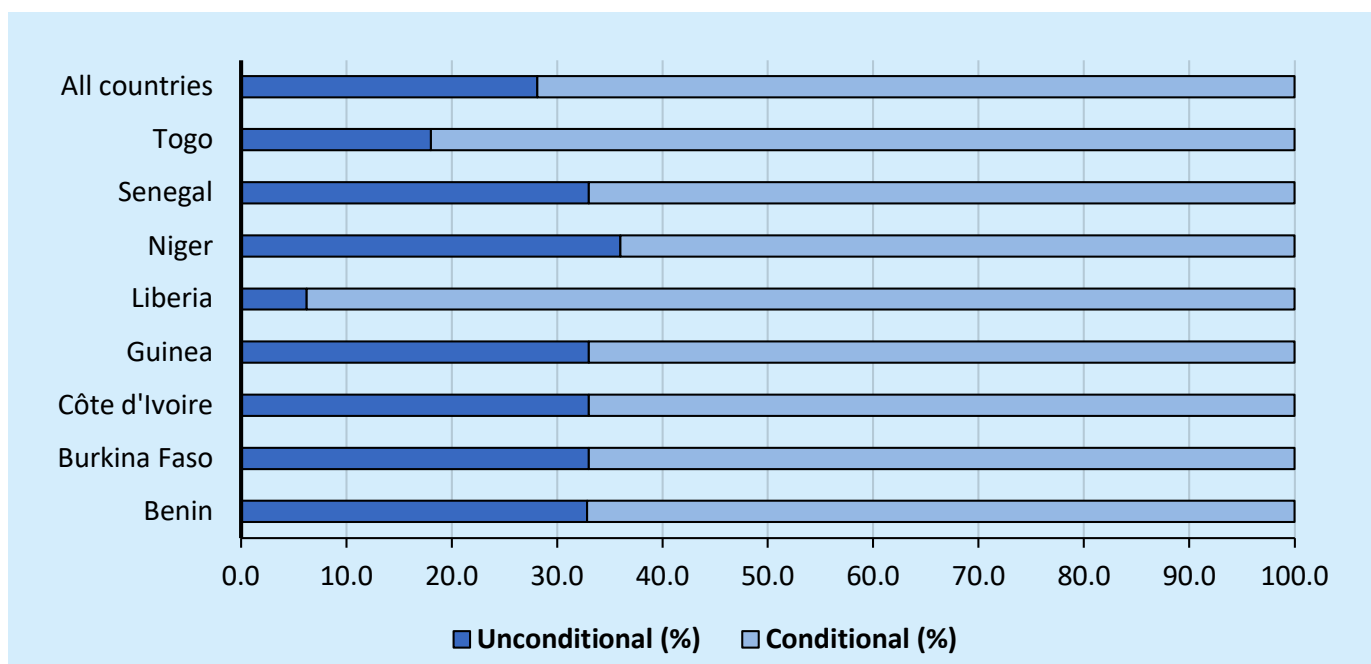


Figure 5: Sectoral greenhouse gas reduction commitments



3. Shortfall in climate finance flows is a barrier to the fulfilment of conditional commitments. Despite increased international climate finance, the current financial flows into the region remain insufficient to enable the countries to fulfil their conditional commitments to address critical climate challenges. According to the Climate Policy Initiative, West Africa's annual climate finance needs up to 2030 are projected at USD 35.2 billion, yet actual finance flows reached only USD 7.3 billion (20.74%) in 2019/2020 and USD 10.9 billion (30.97%) in 2021/2022. Thus, there is a big gap between the financial needs expressed in the NDCs (Table 2) and the actual inflow of climate finance to the region.

Table 2: Total investment needs of countries by 2030

Country	Total cost by 2030 (million \$)	
	Adaptation	Mitigation
Benin	1796.13	8556.81
Burkina Faso	2788.06	1334.80
Côte d'Ivoire	12000.00	10000.00
The Gambia	82.29	n/s
Guinea	1000.00	13800.00
Liberia*	89.95	400.65
Mali	8000.00	4.34
Niger	6785.94	3165.10
Senegal	4300.00	8762.73
Togo	2779.44	2699.36

Notes: \* Investment needs were presented up to 2025 instead of 2030

\*\* Countries whose NDCs did not specify (n/s) total investments needs include Cabo Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

- Technology transfer needs are great for all countries and are expressed across all sectors, but the weak enabling environment is likely to be a hindrance. Barriers to effective technology transfer and adoption in the region include domestic policy challenges, infrastructure limitations, and weak governance.
- Heterogeneity in NDC content, structure, and formats across the region. West African NDCs show wide heterogeneity in content, presentation structure, formats and units, with many countries providing limited information on sector-specific commitments. In addition, some countries have detailed their adaptation costs and split them into unconditional and conditional funding, while others have not.
- Low involvement of civil society in all countries. Civil society, as recognized by the Paris Agreement, plays a crucial role in climate action in varying proportions across different sectors, but this study reveals that in all countries their involvement in NDC formulation was either perceived as insufficient or their opinions not considered with no justification.

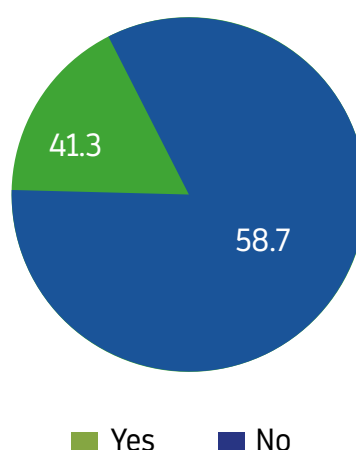


Figure 7: Level of involvement of CSOs

7. Like other regions, West Africa's current ambitions are low compared with the first GST decision. Although the GST decision is global in nature, finding alignment in all regions will provide some guarantee of our collective progress toward the achievement of the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. This study reveals that West African countries' commitments in NDCs are still low compared with the expectations expressed in the first GST decision, particularly regarding mitigation ambition and adaptation. For example, the GST decision highlights several key expectations for strengthening adaptation action such as national inventories of climate impacts over time which the NDCs do not explicitly address.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Several opportunities exist as outlined below for enhanced climate action in the region.

1. Strengthen the unconditional (i.e. domestic) commitment through investment in key sectors. In the region, opportunities exist in vital sectors such as energy, agriculture, and land use to boost investments. This can be achieved by creating incentives for private sector usage of low-carbon technologies while supporting local adaptation actions. Such incentives could include creating national level databases to record and publicly recognize climate actions by all members of society to attract more local interest and investment from the private sector.
2. Strengthen conditional commitments through climate diplomacy and advocacy. West African countries could unify their efforts in international climate forums, debates and negotiations to emphasize the urgency of fulfilling financial commitments under the Paris Agreement with a focus on the moral and legal obligations of developed countries. Engaging in dialogue with other donors to readjust funding priorities towards the specific needs outlined in NDCs is crucial.
3. Facilitate technology development and transfer through an enabling environment. Addressing the climate change problem provides a unique opportunity to countries in West Africa to encourage the development of suitable local adaptation and mitigation technologies by enhancing local technical expertise and improving the infrastructure. Moreover, countries in the region could pursue the opportunity offered by climate change through the Technology Mechanism to attract advanced technologies by developing supportive policies and establishing relevant partnerships with technology providers.
4. Standardize the content, structure, and formats of the NDCs. Proper documentation of all the key elements of the NDCs and subsequent reporting according to these elements are important foundations for documenting a country's efforts and for attracting adequate finance flows into a country. Thus, regardless of the differences in national circumstances and supporting mechanism for the development of the NDCs, ensuring adherence with the existing UNFCCC standardized methodology and reporting guidelines is an opportunity to create the enabling environment for unlocking adequate financing to address local climate change challenges.
5. Enhance capacity building for NDCs' development. Targeted capacity-building initiatives on the development process of NDCs provide an opportunity to train experts who can accurately assess and detail the countries' sectoral contributions, adaptation costs, and funding needs while enhancing the overall technical capacity of the countries to deal with climate change and other development challenges. More importantly, countries with all the requisite capacities have the opportunity and liberty to provide

realistic conditional and unconditional commitments based on national circumstances without external influences.

6. Empower and encourage CSOs to contribute to NDCs' development and implementation. The provisions under the Paris Agreement to welcome the contribution of civil society provide a unique opportunity for all countries in the region to enhance climate action across all actors of society. Specifically, the next round of NDCs' revision provides an opportunity to the countries to empower all members of society to engage in climate action considering the outcomes of the first GST. Such empowerment could entail broad involvement as well as the provision of tailored training programs to CSOs to enhance their understanding of national circumstances through the NDCs while encouraging them to contribute to both implementation and GST processes. This is important and will facilitate the alignment of the CSOs' activities with national climate priorities, leading to more coherent and impactful climate action.
7. Ratchet up ambitions in response to the outcome of the first GST. The outcome of the first Global Stocktake provides countries with the necessary motivation and opportunity to, where necessary, increase unconditional commitments while considering national circumstances in the spirit of the Paris Agreement.
8. Addressing climate change in West Africa requires coordinated efforts from governments, international partners, and CSOs. An effective way to practicalize this is through stepwise increase and implementation of national ambitions through the NDCs through international cooperation.

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