

Commonwealth Parliamentary Climate Forum

14 - 16 October 2025

Report



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Programme Overview



The 2025 Commonwealth Parliamentary Climate Forum brought together parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth with experts and civil society representatives to explore the role of parliaments in addressing the climate crisis. It provided a platform for delegates to share experiences, examine challenges, and identify practical solutions to strengthen climate governance.

The forum built on CPA UK's ongoing work to strengthen parliamentary engagement on climate change, with a focus on legislative tools, oversight mechanisms, evidence-based policymaking, and inclusive public engagement.

Over the course of the three days, delegates shared national experiences, discussed challenges and innovations, and explored collaborative approaches to climate resilience and sustainable development. The forum featured contributions from parliamentarians across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Pacific, and representatives from international organisations such as GLOBE International, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and Involve.

Across all the contributions, one of the most important messages was the need to recognise not only the urgency of climate action, but also how much progress has been made in public awareness, legislation and innovation.

Parliaments play a critical role in ensuring accountability, transparency, and inclusive policymaking around climate change. Delegates left with strengthened networks, practical tools, and a renewed commitment to advancing climate action through legislative leadership.

Programme Overview

OBJECTIVE

Delegates will be able to deliver more effective parliamentary oversight and scrutiny of issues relating to climate change.



OUTPUTS

1

Delegates will enhance critical skills to scrutinise climate change related issues in their oversight roles.

2

Delegates will improve their understanding of climate finance mechanisms and budgeting tools to support climate resilience and disaster risk reduction.

3

Delegates will have increased knowledge of ways parliamentarians can engage with constituents and other members of the public on climate change.

4

Delegates will expand their professional networks, creating open communication and collaboration with peers to share good practice on climate change policy.



Participating Delegates



National Assembly of Belize

Senator Rozel Arana



Parliament of Cyprus

Aristos Damianou MP



Parliament of Eswatini

Senator Pastor Lindiwe Dlamini
Hon. Marwick T. Khumalo MP



Parliament of the Isle of Man

Hon. Clare Barber MHK
Robert Mercer MLC



States Assembly of Jersey

Deputy Tom Coles



Parliament of Kenya

Hon. Adan Wehliye Keynan CBS, MP
Senator Betty Montet MP



Parliament of Kiribati

Hon. Bautaake Beia MP
Hon. Tawaria Komwenga MP



People's Majlis of Maldives

Hon. Mohamed Niushad MP
Hon. Abdulla Rifau MP



Parliament of New South Wales

Hon. Taylor Martin MLC
Adjunct Professor Tamara Smith MP



National Assembly of Pakistan

Naz Baloch MNA
Sahibzada Sibghatullah MNA



Parliament of Saint Lucia

Senator Hon. Guibion Ferdinand MP
Senator Kaygianna Toussaint-Charlery MP



The Scottish Parliament

Sarah Boyack MSP



Parliament of Sierra Leone

Hon. Rugiatu Kamara MP
Hon. Mohamed Billoh Shaw MP



Parliament of Sri Lanka

Hon. Anton Sarath Jayakody MP
Hon. Dayasiri Jayasekara MP



National Assembly of The Gambia

Hon. Amie Colley MP
Hon. Sainey Jawara MP

Participating Legislatures



Americas, Caribbean and Europe

Africa



Eswatini



The Gambia



Kenya



Sierra Leone



Belize



Cyprus



Isle of Man



Jersey



Saint Lucia



Scotland

Asia-Pacific



Kiribati



Maldives



New South Wales



Pakistan



Sri Lanka

Parliamentary Scrutiny and Oversight

One of the central lessons from the forum was that legislation is only the starting point for tackling climate change and its impacts. While many countries have enacted climate laws and set ambitious targets, the real challenge lies in ensuring that these commitments are met, are continually evaluated, and are implemented effectively and consistently.

Effective climate governance in parliaments requires robust mechanisms to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and hold governments accountable. Speakers agreed that committees are powerful tools in this regard, particularly when the committee follows up on recommendations and creates continuity across political cycles.

It is imperative that oversight and scrutiny continue after legislation is passed, and that there is a culture of continuous improvement when monitoring how policies are implemented and what progress has been made against climate goals. It is important for parliamentarians to use all the tools at their disposal to keep a consistent pressure on the government to achieve climate goals – including using committee inquiries, parliamentary questions and supporting campaigns outside parliament.



The forum opened with an address from Roz Savage MP, a Member of the UK Parliament and campaigner for the climate. She was the first woman to row solo across three oceans and drew on this incredible experience in her address to delegates:



"We also have to be honest: the path ahead will not be easy. Transitioning to clean energy, protecting ecosystems, and rethinking our economies will take courage. There will be vested interests, political pressures, and moments when progress feels painfully slow. But we must keep going. Because the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of action...."

None of us can do everything, but all of us can do something. And if we do it together, we can turn the tide.

Because what I learned on the ocean is this: the waves may be powerful, but so are we - when we pull together."

KEYNOTE

Parliamentary Scrutiny and Oversight

Using Evidence Effectively

The importance of high-quality, independent evidence came up repeatedly throughout the forum.

In the UK context, the role of the Climate Change Committee (CCC) as an independent advisor on climate change was highlighted as unique and powerful for holding the government to account for its climate commitments. The CCC was established under the Climate Change Act 2008 to provide independent advice and foster a science-based approach. Crucially, the CCC reports directly to parliament, not the government, giving parliamentarians solid independent evidence to challenge where climate commitments are not being met.

Another way in which the UK Parliament incorporates evidence is via the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) and the recent introduction of Thematic Research Leads. Dr Andy Russell, Climate and Environment Thematic Research Lead, spoke to delegates about how he brings expertise on climate issues from academia into parliament to improve the quality of evidence in parliamentary scrutiny and create links between parliament and academia.

Delegates suggested effective solutions from their own parliaments: Eswatini have an effective collaboration with the University of Eswatini to bring evidence into policy making, and the Cyprus Independent Commission and Council of Europe bring independent evidence into parliamentary work in Cyprus.

On the other hand, many delegates highlighted the challenges they have in accessing up-to-date data and research. The biggest challenge came from resource constraints. Collecting, accessing and analysing data takes infrastructure and resources. Further resource constraints within parliaments make it challenging to synthesise the latest data and research for effective use by parliamentarians and committees. Another challenge highlighted was political. Particularly where there are large governing majorities, it can be difficult to get reports and evidence published in the public domain that criticise the government.



Parliamentary Scrutiny and Oversight

Collaboration

Another key insight was the value of cross-party collaboration. Climate change, by its nature, transcends political boundaries and electoral cycles. Delegates emphasised the need to build consensus around climate goals and to insulate climate policy from short-term political pressures. Independent evidence and following the science is a valuable tool for building consensus and finding allies. The UK Climate Change Act was an exemplar as one of the first climate framework laws and is credited as a victory for cross-party collaboration and evidence-led policy.

However, UK speakers and others reflected on a perceived shift away from consensus around climate change in an increasingly polarised political atmosphere. On the other hand, delegates from regions which are more severely impacted by climate change reported having cross-party agreement, as the threat they face is imminent and perceivable by all.

This leads to the importance of international collaboration and amplifying the knowledge and experiences of those who are on the front line against climate change. Such exchange of knowledge and coordinated action is essential for tackling climate change. In addition to regional collaboration and support, GLOBE advocates for more parliamentary engagement in COP and other international discussions.



Adaptation and Innovation

It is well known that the impacts of climate change will disproportionately fall on vulnerable communities which bear little responsibility for global emissions. These include many nations of the Commonwealth, particularly small island states and low-income countries, and marginalised populations across the world. Throughout the forum, delegates shared experiences of floods, droughts, and other climate-related disasters that have disrupted lives, livelihoods, and ecosystems. The clear message is that climate change is not an abstract future problem but is already an existential threat for communities and a lived reality for many Commonwealth nations.

A recurring theme was the need to move beyond mitigation alone and to invest in adaptation strategies that build resilience. This includes strengthening infrastructure, protecting natural ecosystems, and supporting communities to prepare for and respond to climate shocks. Participants discussed the importance of integrating adaptation into national development plans and ensuring that policies are tailored to local contexts.

Adaptation and Innovation

Finance for Adaptation

Financing emerged as a critical enabler - and barrier - of effective adaptation. Whilst there are various funds available dedicated to climate adaptation and green transition, many countries face challenges in accessing climate finance. For small jurisdictions, the application and reporting processes for climate finance are prohibitively complex and require more resources than are available. There is a clear need for simplified application and reporting procedures to address these accessibility challenges. Delegates discussed different solutions for boosting desirability to funders, including building trust with international donor partners through transparency and accurate reporting.

Mobilising private finance is another crucial piece of the puzzle to finance adaptation and resilience projects. Building institutional capacity to be able to deliver projects is one factor to increase ability to attract funding from a variety of sources, including from the private sector via tools like carbon markets and climate bonds. There is an incentive for businesses to invest in areas where the impact will be higher, and cost lower, so facilitating this movement of capital into high-impact regions will support effective climate action.



Adaptation Strategies

Across sessions, delegates discussed the challenges of adapting to the impacts of climate change in their legislature. One of the lessons that emerged from the specific experiences and strategies shared is the necessity of adapting to the unique national context. Particularly when it comes to international models, it is crucial to ensure that these are adapted to the local context and not copied exactly. By engaging local communities and creating local, culturally rooted solutions, there will be broad engagement and greater impact.

There is still a great deal to be learned from sharing how legislatures have tackled common challenges. Many delegates brought up 'easy wins' – success stories of policies which are popular, easy to finance and have clear impact. These are often targeted solutions to specific problems which may seem like small interventions, but they can have significant ripple effects. Another lesson was the importance of National Adaptation Plans and Sectoral Adaptation Plans which set measurable goals to strengthen resilience across sectors.

Adaptation and Innovation

Disaster Risk Reduction

Mathieu Verougstraete (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - UNDRR) and Malini Mehra (GLOBE Legislators) introduced budget tagging as a tool to identify and evaluate climate-related spending. Mathieu shared data showing a 75% investment gap in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, with most countries meeting only 10–25% of estimated needs. Budget tagging is one tool to address this challenge: strengthening oversight, supporting international collaboration, and justifying green and resilience bonds. Avoided costs can also be highlighted to demonstrate the value of investment in resilience.

The delegates took part in a simplified budget tagging task. Each line of a mock-budget was tagged with a marker indicating its relevance to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. In doing the exercise, delegates discussed how the same budget item could have different relevance in different contexts. For example, investment in building and renovating schools in rural areas could be relevant to disaster risk reduction in some contexts, where school buildings are the most resilient structures in the area and act as community shelters. While essential to take context into account, it is also important that this subjectivity is controlled to ensure quality data, such as by ensuring a taxonomy is used consistently.

Finally, UNDRR and GLOBE emphasised the resources available and international frameworks to guide disaster risk reduction. One key agreement to refer to is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030, which complements the Paris Agreement with concrete commitments to actions to mitigate disaster risk.



Adaptation and Innovation

Impact of Emerging Technologies

Technology was also seen as a key driver of adaptation and resilience.

Dr Iain Marshall joined the forum to discuss Solace AI, a new tool which uses AI to create reliable synthesis of evidence to be used in emergency response scenarios. Developed with partners across the world, it follows scientific principles and searches both high-quality scientific literature and local knowledge at the pace and reliability needed for disaster response.

There is a lot of hype around AI, but it can also be a 'force multiplier' for other technologies such as forecasting tools and 'digital twins' – a method of predictive modelling where computer model 'twins' can be used to test 'what-if' scenarios. These can significantly improve disaster planning, guiding investment and optimising use of resources.

New and cheaper technology can also be used to unlock finance by reducing the cost of measuring risk and outcomes, a key hurdle to accessing finance. Innovations which create efficiencies will drive the green transition, reducing consumption of resources even as demand increases. If the support is there to develop them, innovative green products can justify themselves by being better and more desirable in their own right than traditional polluting options.

Of course, this only scratches the surface of the potential impact of new technologies across all sectors for the environment.

However, delegates cautioned that these tools must be deployed equitably and with attention to data quality, digital access, and long-term sustainability. There is a potential for technology to deepen inequalities – particularly as these are often heavily reliant on quality of data, which many nations do not have the infrastructure to collect. Resource and expertise constraints are also a significant barrier to taking advantage of innovation.

There are more interconnections between technology and climate – not least, the impact of the energy use of AI and the potentially harmful e-waste that is generated. Legislation struggles to keep up with the pace of development of new technologies and can be seen as stifling innovation. Speakers emphasised that legislation should not be seen as the enemy of innovation. Effective legislation can better direct innovation and provide levers to level the playing field between clean and polluting industries. It can ensure that capital travels towards sustainable innovations and reduce environmental costs.

The discussion highlighted the importance of embedding both technology strategy in climate strategy, and climate strategy in technology and energy strategy. Policy makers need to stay ahead of the curve, be able to react quickly to breakthroughs but also build foresight into policymaking and consider long-term impact.

Community and Public Engagement

Engaging public support is a theme that came up in almost every session, so it was fitting that the final session of the forum brought this discussion together, with a focus on the role of communication and public engagement in advancing climate action. Delegates agreed that building public support is essential for the success of climate policies, particularly when those policies involve difficult trade-offs or behavioural change.

One of the key lessons was the importance of framing climate change in ways that resonate with people's everyday lives. Concepts like 'net zero' and even 'climate change' can be abstract and technical, and many of the public do not necessarily understand what these terms mean. Rather than presenting climate action as a distant or abstract goal, parliamentarians were encouraged to highlight the tangible benefits—such as cleaner air, lower energy bills, and job creation—that can result from a green transition. By doing this, it supports a shifting of mindset towards climate change as an urgent issue that will directly affect people's lives. This was eloquently described by one delegate as 'shifting climate change down Maslow's hierarchy of needs' - to be seen in the same category as 'bread and butter' issues, rather than a higher-level goal that is in conflict with them for resources.

The forum also explored strategies for engaging communities in the policymaking process. Delegates left parliament to undertake external visits with the City of London Corporation and Barnet Council, to see how local government is engaging citizens and supporting climate adaptation on a more local scale. Examples such as citizen assemblies and climate surgeries were discussed as ways to build trust, gather insights, and ensure that policies reflect the needs and priorities of diverse groups. Yasamin Alttahir discussed how Involve works with UK policymakers to embed meaningful public engagement and ensure that consultation is not just a tick-box exercise for pre-determined policies.

Youth engagement was another major focus. Malini Mehra from GLOBE legislations reflected on her experiences with initiatives like the London Schools Climate Summit and Student-MP Climate Surgeries and the power of the message coming from young people speaking out about the impact climate change will have on their futures. At the same time, delegates acknowledged the need for approaches that support young people's mental health and resilience in the face of climate anxiety.

Finally, the forum addressed the challenge of misinformation and polarisation. Delegates discussed the imperative for institutional robustness (e.g. independent advisory bodies, improved parliamentary mechanisms) to insulate climate action from political volatility and populist attacks. Delegates agreed that clear, honest, and empathetic communication about the realities of climate change and opportunities for action is essential.



Resources

UNDRR & GLOBE

Strengthening Disaster Risk and Climate Change Financing

Background

- 5 Things Parliamentarians can do to boost sustainable development (UNDRR)
<https://youtu.be/XQKnnSBktF0>
- DRR Toolkit for Parliamentarians (IPU and UNDRR, 2021)
<https://www.undrr.org/drr-toolkit-parliamentarians>
- Introduction to Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Budget Tagging for Parliamentarians, focus on Africa (GLOBE Legislators, 2024)
<https://globelegislators.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Briefing-Paper-for-Parliamentarians-on-DRR-Climate-Change-Adaptation.pdf>

Tools and resources:

- Budget tagging for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation: Guide for design and taxonomy (UNDRR, 2023)
<https://www.undrr.org/quick/79969>
- Tracking the money for climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction (IIED and UNDRR, 2023)
<https://www.preventionweb.net/quick/76768>
- Webinar on Tracking the money (IIED and UNDRR, 7 March 2023)
<https://www.undrr.org/news/tracking-money-climate-adaptation-and-disaster-risk-reduction-issue-paper-and-webinar>

Youth and Community Engagement

- London Climate Action Week
<https://www.londonclimateactionweek.org/>
- London Schools Climate Action and Curriculum
<https://londonschoolsclimateaction.org>

Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Environmental Democracy

- Resources for Parliamentary Scrutiny on Environment
<https://www.wfd.org/environmental-democracy>

Sessions & Speakers

Tuesday 14 October

Opening Keynote - Roz Savage MP, UK Parliament

Session 1: Legislative Tools for Climate Action

Chair and Speaker:

- Barry Gardiner MP, *Member of the House of Commons, UK*

Speakers:

- Naz Baloch MNA, *Member of the National Assembly, Pakistan*
- Malini Mehra, *Chief Executive, GLOBE International*

Session 2: Oversight of Climate Policy Implementation

Chair and Speaker:

- Lord Oates, *Member of the House of Lords, UK Parliament*

Speakers:

- Aristos Damianou MP, *Member of the House of Representatives, Cyprus*
- Carla Denyer MP, *Member of the House of Commons, UK Parliament*
- Rafael Jimenez Aybar, *Practice Lead – Environmental Democracy, Westminster Foundation for Democracy*

Session 3: Evidence-Based Policy

Chair and Speaker:

- Baroness Sheehan, *Member of the House of Lords, Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Committee, UK Parliament*

Speakers:

- Hon. Clare Barber MHK, *Minister - Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture, Member of the House of Keys, Isle of Man*
- Dr Andy Russell, *UK Parliament Thematic Research Lead for Climate and Environment; Reader in Environmental Science and Policy at Queen Mary University of London*

Wednesday 15 October

Session 4: Supporting Sectors and Businesses in a Changing Climate

Chair and Speaker:

- Edward Morello MP, *Member of the House of Commons, UK Parliament*

Speakers:

- Senator Kaygianna Toussaint-Charlery, *Member of the Senate, Saint Lucia*
- Hon. Anton Sarath Jayakody MP, *Deputy Minister of Environment, Sri Lanka*

Session 5: Interactive Session: Strengthening Disaster Risk and Climate Change Financing in the Commonwealth States

Facilitators:

- Mathieu Verougstraete, *Head of the UNDRR Infrastructure and Financing for Resilience Unity, UNDRR*
- Malini Mehra, *Chief Executive, GLOBE International*

Sessions & Speakers

Session 6: Emerging Technology and Climate Change

Chair and Speaker:

- Sarah Boyack MSP, *Member of the Scottish Parliament*

Speakers:

- Lindy Fursman PhD, *Director, Climate and Energy Policy, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change*
- Dr Iain Marshall MBChB PhD FHEA, *Clinical Reader in Population Health Sciences, King's College London*
- Robert Mercer MLC, *Member of the Legislative Council, Isle of Man*

Session 7: World Café – Leveraging Finance, Policy, and Innovation for a Green Transition

Speakers:

- Malini Mehra, *Chief Executive, GLOBE International*
- James Hooton, *Managing Director of Missions, Green Finance Institute*
- Isabella Darin, *Policy Manager, Energy UK*
- Yasamin Alttahir, *Director of Advocacy, Involve*
- Annabel Rice, *Senior Political Adviser, Green Alliance*
- Will Blyth, *Green Grids Initiative*

Thursday 16 October

BarNET ZERO and Brent Cross Town Visit

Led by Yogita Popat, *Programme Director, Strategy, Culture and Sustainability* and Anna Godleman, *Head of Sustainability* and representatives from Related Argent.

City of London Visit

The City of London Corporation & Climate Action Strategy.

Session 8: Community Engagement for Climate Action

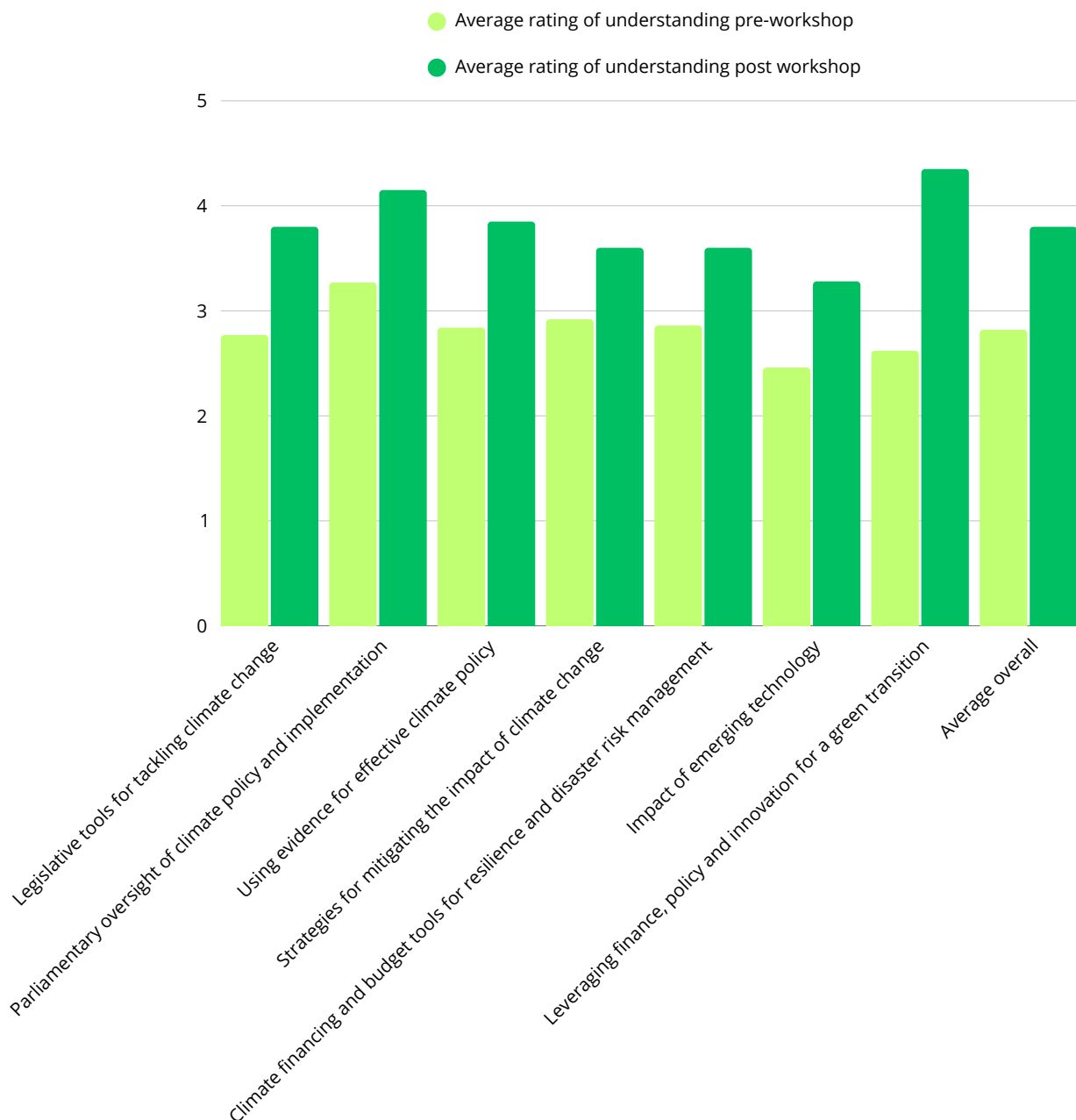
Speakers:

- Adjunct Professor Tamara Smith MP, *Member of Parliament, New South Wales, Australia*
- Malini Mehra, *Chief Executive, GLOBE International*
- Yasamin Alttahir, *Director of Advocacy, Involve*

Monitoring and Evaluation

At the beginning of the workshop, each participant completed a pre-workshop assessment and then completed a post-workshop assessment at the end, evaluating their own level of understanding of the seven areas explored in the programme. The scale of understanding ranged from (1) “None” to (5) “In-depth”.

Overall, participants found that the workshop increased their knowledge in all areas, ranging from 23% to 66%, with an average increase of 35% across all areas, as illustrated in the below chart. Around 95% of participants found the workshop ‘fully relevant’ to their role and 5% stated ‘partially relevant’ while no one said ‘not relevant’.



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