

**The Council of State Governments / Eastern Regional Conference  
2016 Annual Meeting**

**The Changing Arctic Ecosystem, the Paris Agreement, and Subnational Policies  
Tuesday, August 9, 2016  
Quebec City**

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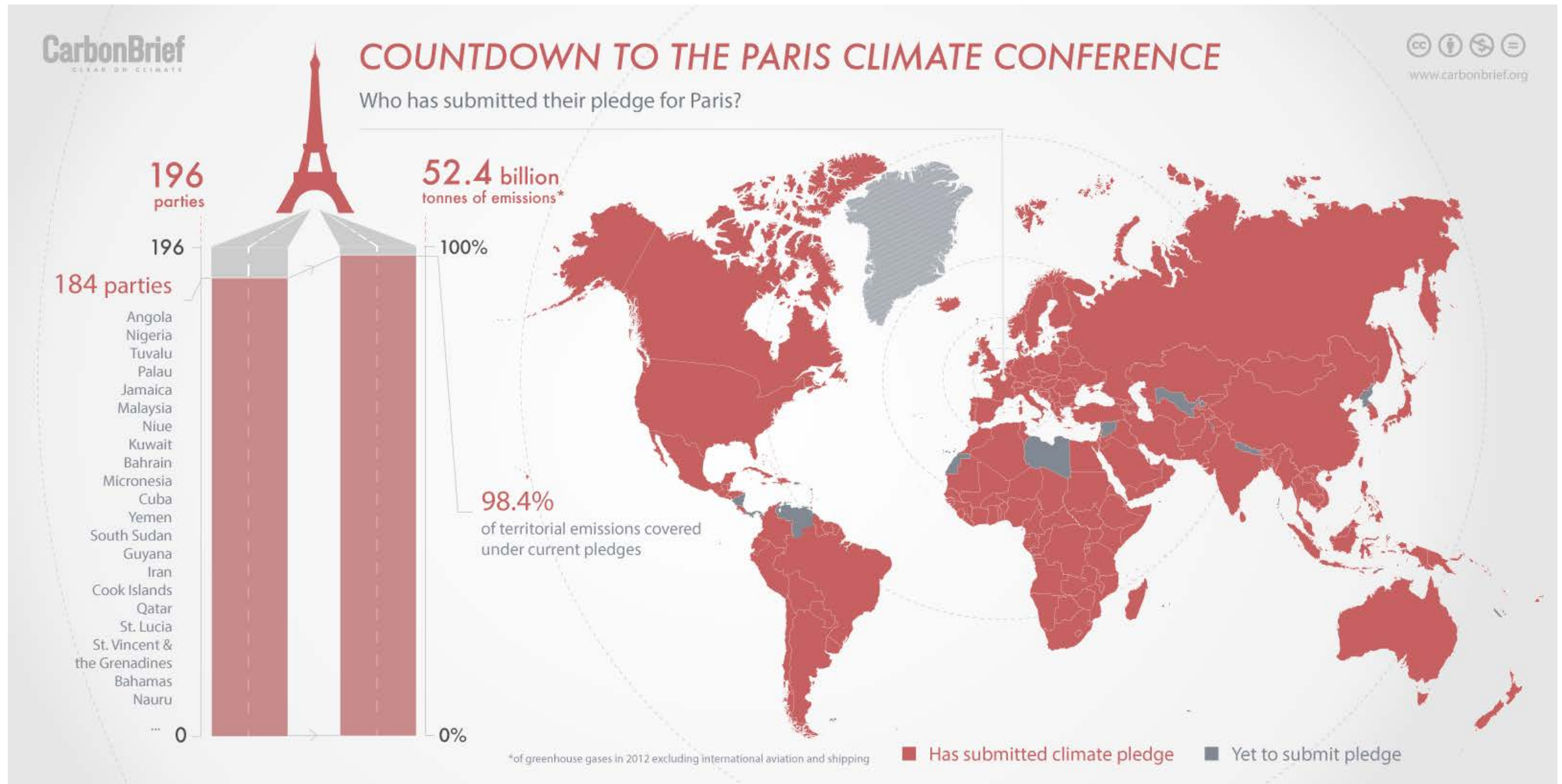
# My provocation for the morning:

- Subnational governments have a “charge-of-the-light-brigade” impulse on progressive sustainability goals and innovation
- Mayors and Governors joyfully accept the implementation lead on other people's goals like COP21 and 80x50
- But mobilizing state and local interests requires a different question:  
not feasibility, but efficacy?  
not can we, but should we?

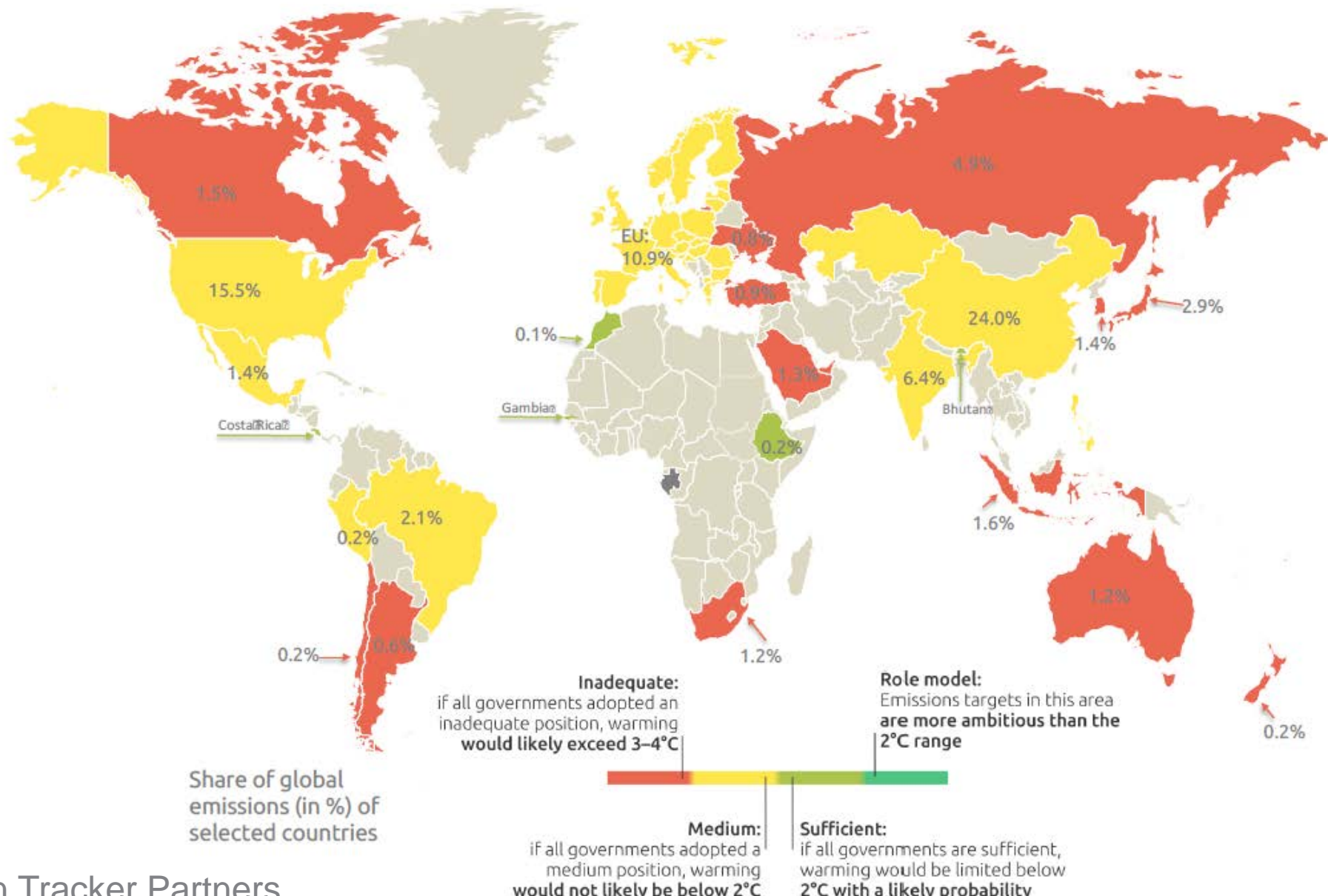
# Outline of the Paris Agreement

1. Temperature Goal: “well below 2C” and “efforts to 1.5C”
2. Long-Term Goal: “balance sinks and sources”
3. Mitigation: pledges for reducing or slowing GHG emissions
4. Ratchet Mechanism: “stocktake” 2018 for new 2020 NDCs
5. Loss and Damage: excludes liability and compensation
6. Transparency: future system for tracking progress

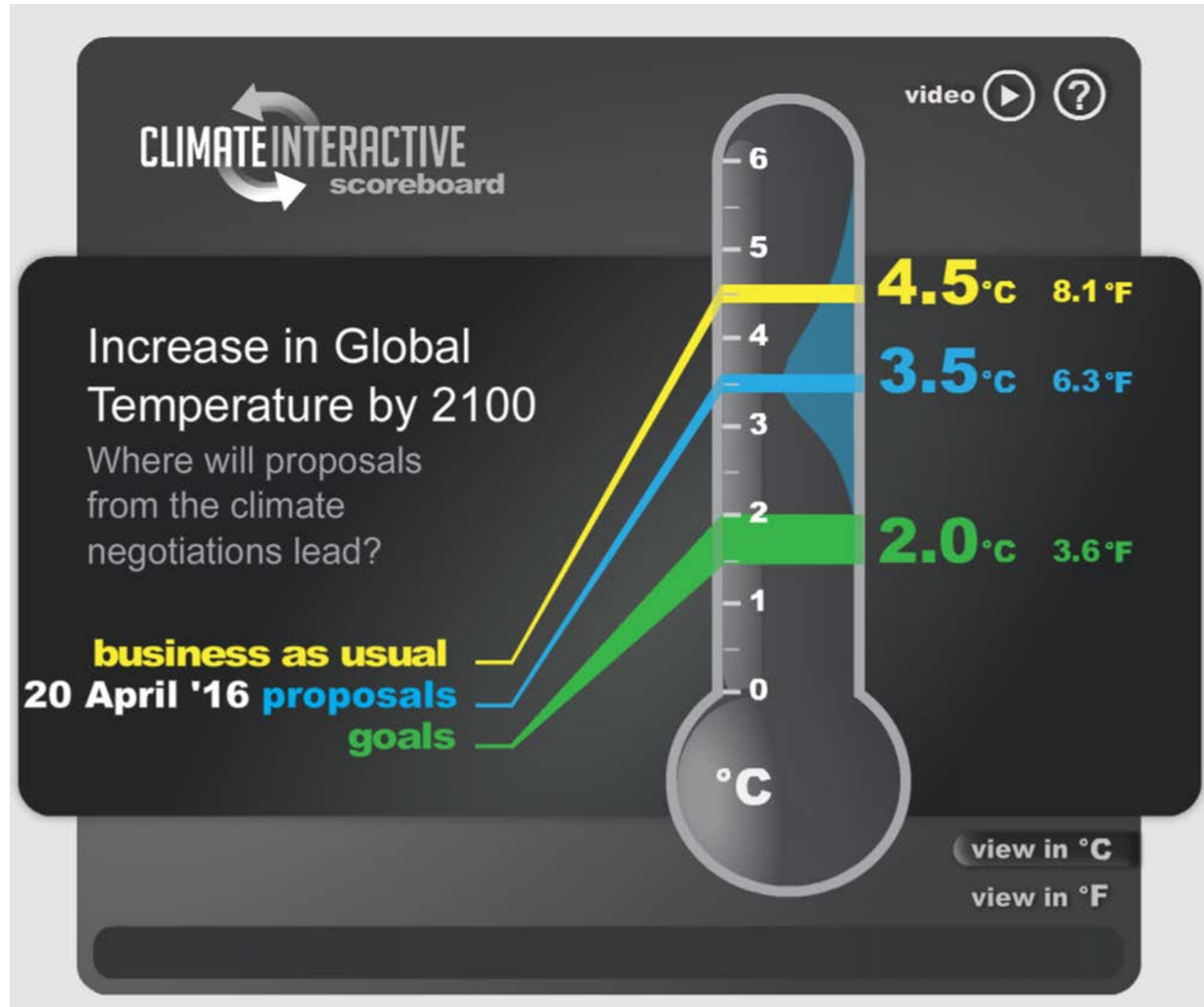
# Big change: universal agreement and participation



# Big caveat: celebration of a weak ambition



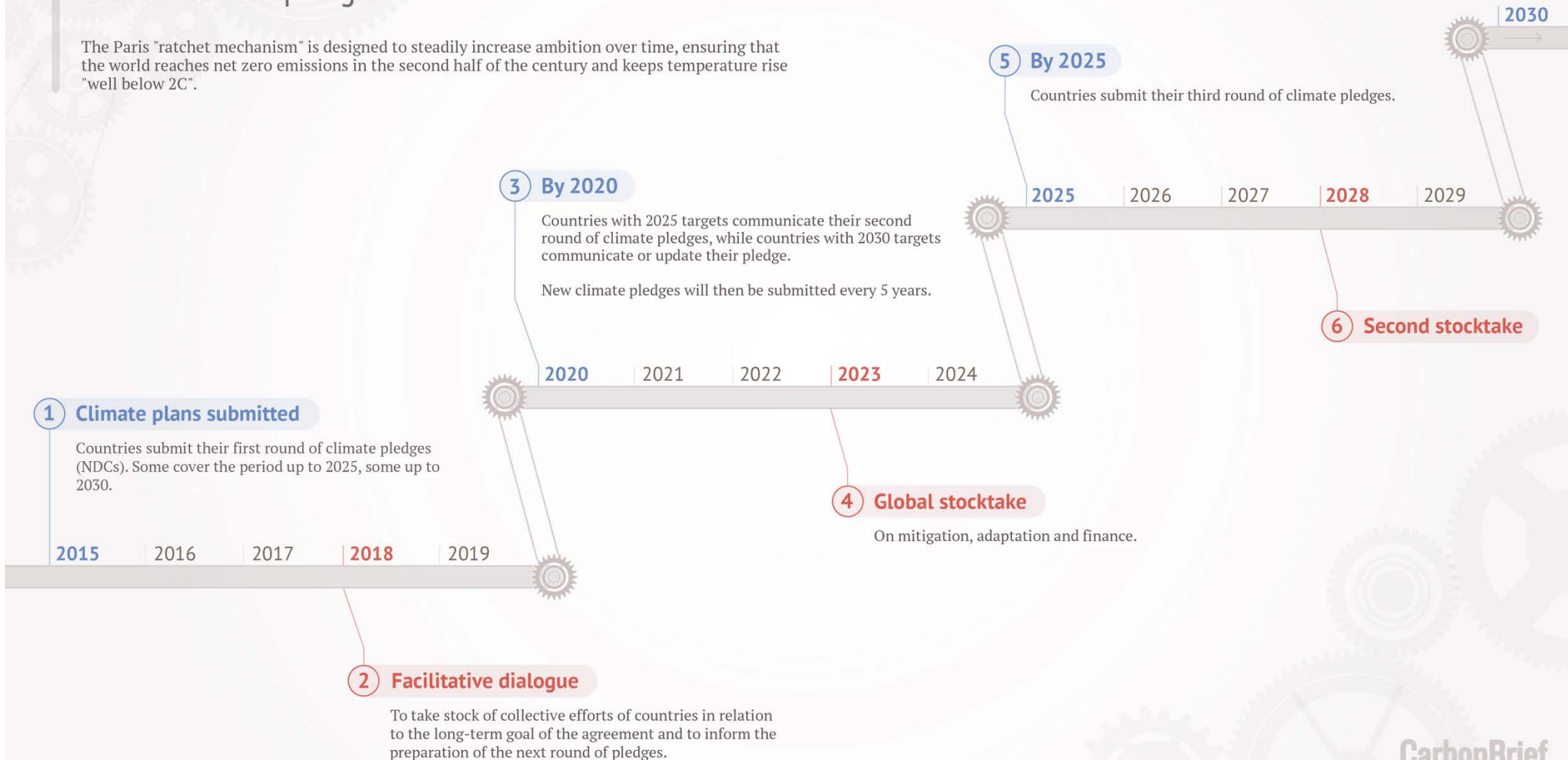
# Big concern: we will not meet the temperature goal



# Big hope: the bicycle theory of negotiations

## Timeline: How countries plan to raise the ambition of their climate pledges

The Paris "ratchet mechanism" is designed to steadily increase ambition over time, ensuring that the world reaches net zero emissions in the second half of the century and keeps temperature rise "well below 2C".



# But here's the big problem:

- ICLEI estimates that over 50% of INDCs require subnational action
- Perhaps the biggest unexamined assumption of Paris and climate policy generally is whether cities, regions, states, and provinces have the capacity to implement the INDCs
- Yet at least 35 US cities and 16 US states have adopted the 80x50 target, which is the mother target for INDCs



# Cautions for governments on 80x50

- **Brutal logic**: Nearly all the benefits of climate change mitigation by cities and states occur outside their borders: 100% of the costs and something much less than 100% of the benefits (and the inverse is true of climate change adaptation)
- **Cruel irony**: subnational governments will under-invest in mitigation compared to adaptation or, more generally, compared to policies driven by local net benefits. To the extent that these produce emissions reductions as a co-benefit (rather than as the organizing goal), selfish strategies are likely to produce more reductions than 80x50 strategies!

# Advice for governments on 80x50

- Taking the implementation challenge seriously means a deep interrogation of the local impacts of various rates of decarbonization on economic, environmental, health, and other conditions at regional scale. Different policy scenarios generate different impacts and different emissions profiles, which no common goal (e.g., 80x50) can comprehend.
- Only an understanding of these local impacts can mobilize the political and financial interests needed to radically transform the energy system and its climate impacts. The logic of adaptation mobilizes these interests more than the logic of mitigation.
- A commitment to the equity aspects of climate adaptation is likely to be more effective with a focus on people not places. Climate change may well challenge of modern notions of place attachment in human settlements.