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Uruguay

Sixth National Communication

to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations
Framework Convention on Climate Change

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Ministerio
de Ambiente



SIXTH NATIONAL COMMUNICATION
TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

2023

REPÚBLICA ORIENTAL DEL URUGUAY

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The following National Communication reports from November 2019 to October 2023 and includes the 2020 National Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

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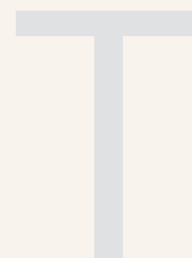
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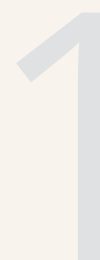
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National Circumstances and Institutional Arrangements



Chapter 1 presents the national circumstances and institutional arrangements. The following is a brief summary of the contents of this chapter.

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay is located on the left bank of the Río de la Plata and the Uruguay River, bordered on the west by the Republic of Argentina, on the north and northeast by the Federative Republic of Brazil and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean. Uruguay is located approximately between parallels 30° and 35° south latitude and meridians 53° and 58° west longitude.

Uruguay has a republican, democratic and presidential form of government, with three branches of government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. National and departmental authorities are renewed every five years through elections, which are held by means of mandatory secret ballot. The consolidation of the political system, citizen participation and pluralism are distinctive features that place Uruguay among the first eleven countries in the world with respect to measures of full democracy in 2022.

Uruguay's population is stable and relatively aged. The country exhibits an advanced demographic transition, involving a decrease in the number of children, an increase in the number of older adults and a tendency towards stabilization of its population structure.

The educational system has a strong State presence throughout the national territory, governed by the principles of free, secular and compulsory education at the initial, primary, secondary and higher education levels. The National Integrated Health System (SNIS), implemented in the country since 2007, has enabled the country to move towards universal coverage and the promotion of quality care, insofar as it provides healthcare to the population throughout the national territory, both through public and private services. As of September 2023, 84.40 % of Uruguay's population had been vaccinated against COVID-19 (at least one dose).

Uruguay's economy is based mainly on the agricultural and services sectors. Commodities continue to account for a very large share of the country's exports. Likewise, the country has gradually increased the services component in its production. The country's productive and export structure makes its economy particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Renewable energies accounted for 56 % of the primary energy matrix in 2022.

In terms of growth, Uruguay was strongly affected by the health crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19 during 2020 and 2021. In 2022, economic activity increased by 4.9 % with respect to 2021, a result that was partly linked to the recovery in activities that in 2021 were still affected, although to a lesser extent, by the economic situation associated with the health emergency caused by COVID-19.

Among the impacts of climate variability and change that affect the country are droughts with their consequent losses in the agricultural and livestock sector, cost overruns in energy and difficulties in the supply of drinking water; floods that affect public health and displaced people, damage to production and infrastructure; extreme coastal events that cause erosion, infrastructure damage and impact on tourism; strong storms that put the population at risk; cold/heat waves that affect human and animal health.

It should be noted that the country has incorporated the issue of climate change into its institutional framework at an early stage, ratifying the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was approved by [Law No. 16,517](#) of 1994; the Kyoto Protocol, approved by [Law No. 17,279](#) of 2000, and the Paris Agreement, ratified by Uruguay and approved by [Law No. 19,439](#) of 2016.

The country has made significant efforts towards strengthening institutional capacity to reflect the climate change approach in the definition of public policies and in planning and management instruments. Through the creation and strengthening of institutional arrangements since 2009, the definition of a National Climate Change Policy in 2017, the approval of the Long Term Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development Strategy in 2021 and the presentation of the First and Second Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2017 ([Decree No. 310](#)) and 2022 respectively, as well as the implementation of various sectoral policies, the country is moving towards a development path aimed at becoming a resilient and low-carbon country.

In 2020, the Ministry of Environment of Uruguay (MA) was created by [Law No. 19,889](#), and as part of its structure, the Climate Change National Directorate (DINACC, *by its acronym in Spanish*) was created, which clearly and forcefully reflects the will to prioritize the environmental issue nationwide and the aspects of climate change and variability in particular.

The main area of inter-institutional coordination for planning the actions necessary for risk prevention, mitigation and adaptation to climate change continues to be the National Climate Change Response System (SNRCC, *by its acronym in Spanish*), created by [Decree No. 238](#) of the Executive Branch in 2009.

National Greenhouse Gas Inventory



Chapter 2 presents the results of the 2020 National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (NGHGI), as well as a Comparative Study of the Country's Net Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 1990, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.

The NGHGI was conducted following the Guidelines for the Preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (Chapter III of the Annex to Decision 17/CP.8) and following the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. It comprises the entire country and includes carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and removals as well as methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) emissions.

Emission estimates for carbon monoxide (CO), non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂), as proposed in Chapter III of the Annex to Decision 17/CP.8, were also included. The 2019 European Monitoring and Evaluation Program Guidelines (2019 EMEP/EEA Guidelines) were used to estimate emissions of these gases.

The following national sectors are included in this NGHGI: Energy, Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU), Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) and Waste.

The NGHGI is prepared within the framework of the SNRCC GHG Inventory Working Group. This Working Group was formally established on 24 June 2020 through Decree No.181/020.

Key categories were estimated by applying the 2006 IPCC Guidelines (Tier 1 and Tier 2 methods) and were evaluated by level and by trend. Uncertainties were estimated using the methodology and default parameters proposed in the 2006 IPCC Guidelines.

In 2020, net emissions were 26,546 Gg CO₂-eq GWP_{100 AR5}, which accounts for 0.05 % of global anthropogenic GHG emissions. This estimation was calculated considering the 2020 global emissions value reported by the UN (54.4 Gt CO₂-eq). If the contribution of category 3.B Land is not considered, emissions were 36,436 Gg CO₂-eq GWP_{100 AR5}*

Net CH₄ emissions expressed in Gg of CO₂-eq GWP_{100 AR5} and without considering category 3.B Land account for 59 % of total national emissions. Net N₂O emissions account

for 21 %, CO₂ emissions 19 % and HFCs, PFCs and SF₆, despite their high global warming potential, account for less than 1 % of total national emissions.

The AFOLU sector generated the largest contribution to total emissions (without considering category 3.B Land) with 75 %, followed by the Energy sector with 18 %, Waste with 5 % and finally the IPPU sector with 2 % of emissions.

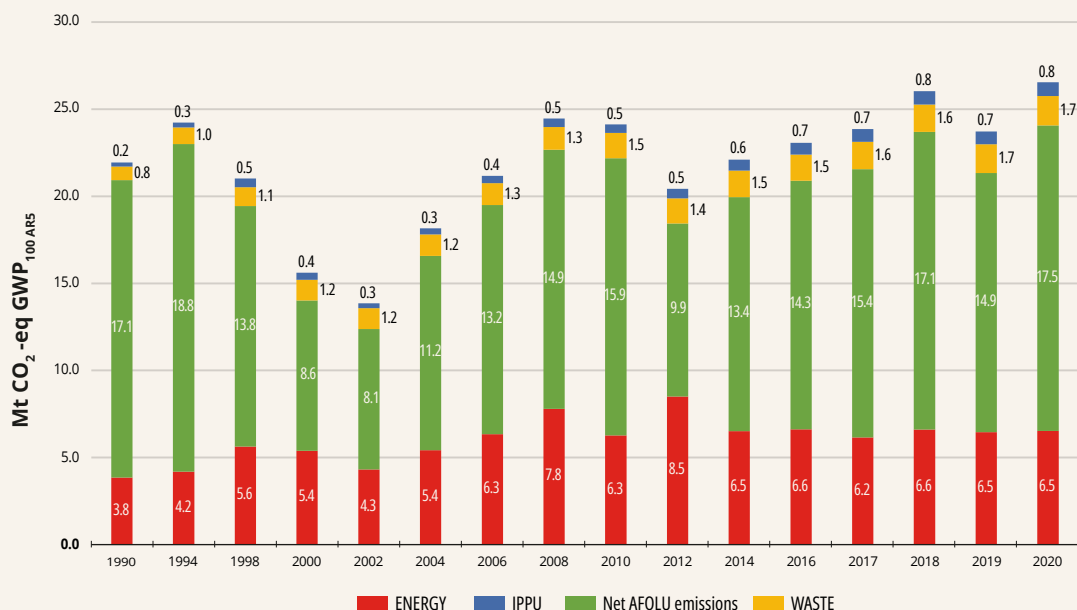
The categories with the highest share of emissions, without considering category 3.B Land, were: Enteric Fermentation (AFOLU) with 52.0 % of national emissions, followed by Direct N₂O emissions from managed soils (AFOLU) with a contribution of 16.5 % of national emissions and Fuel Burning in Transport (Energy) with 10.0 % of national emissions.

By 2020, net emissions from the AFOLU sector were 17,546 Gg CO₂-eq GWP_{100 AR5}. These emissions increased by 21.0 % between 1990 and 2020 and by 11.9 % compared to 2019 under the GWP_{100 AR5} metric.

The main source of emissions throughout the series corresponded to the AFOLU sector, due to CH₄ emissions from enteric fermentation and N₂O in managed soils (without considering 3.B Land). Their relative weight to the national total depends on the metric used to determine the contribution to global warming.

Net CO₂ removals from the AFOLU sector increased significantly between 1990 and 2000 and then decreased. The increase in removals until 2000 was mainly explained by the increase in the area of commercial forest plantations for the sawmill and cellulose industry, which generated carbon sequestration in woody biomass and mulch and an increase in soil carbon stocks.

Since 2002, on the one hand, an increasing part of the plantations planted since the early 1990s began to be harvested and, on the other hand, the area of cropland increased in the 2000s, which increased emissions and led to a sustained fall in net removals until 2008. The increase in removals recorded in the latter period was mainly due to the increase in the area of forest plantations and, therefore, carbon sequestration in biomass, dead organic matter and soil organic matter in Forest Land.

FIGURE 1. Emissions evolution, 1990-2020, by sector, (GWP_{100 AR5}).

For 2020, emissions of 6,523 Gg CO₂-eq GWP_{100 AR5} were estimated for the Energy sector, which accounts for an increase of 70% over the 1990 - 2020 series. CO₂ emissions from the Energy sector had a net increasing trend over the 1990-2020 period, with a significant variation for some years. Transportation has historically been the main sector responsible for CO₂ emissions, surpassed only by the Energy Industries category in years of low levels of hydro-electric power and its consequent higher consumption of fossil fuels for generation.

By 2020, IPPU sector emissions were 790 Gg CO₂-eq GWP_{100 AR5}, with an increase of 230% in the 1990-2020 series. The variation in emissions from the IPPU sector is closely linked to the level of activity of the national manufacturing industry. As in other sectors, a historical minimum was recorded in 2002 due to the low activity resulting from the economic crisis. The main gas associated with the sector was CO₂ generated in cement production. In the last period there was an increase in the sector's emissions, associated with a growth in the level of activity and the increase in imports and consequent use of HFCs for refrigeration and air conditioning.

By 2020, Waste sector emissions were 1,687 Gg CO₂-eq GWP_{100 AR5}, with an increase of 118% in the 1990-2020 series. The main GHG of the sector is CH₄ (>90%). The quality of information and activity data sources in this sector has improved and therefore has improved the estimation of emissions from the last inventories.

According to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, GWP is not directly related to a temperature limit, such as the 2 °C target, while physical metrics of final effects such as GTP may be more suitable for this purpose.

In the case of Uruguay, the metric used has a strong impact on the contribution of CH₄ and thus on the relative weight of the AFOLU sector in total national emissions. For this reason, the 1990-2020 GHG inventory is presented using the GTP_{100 AR5} metric and the comparison against the results obtained with the GWP_{100 AR5} metric. By 2020, a difference in total national emissions of -74% is observed when switching from the GWP to

GTP metric, when category 3.B Land is included. If this category is not considered, the difference in total national emissions is -54%.

When comparing the relative contribution of each gas to total national emissions (without considering 3.B Land), the main gas under the GWP_{100 AR5} metric is CH₄ (59 %), while under the GTP_{100 AR5} metric the main emitting gases are CO₂ and N₂O (41 % each). CH₄ becomes the third largest emitting GHG (18 %).

Steps taken or envisaged to implement the Convention

3

Chapter 3 systematizes the public policies on climate change approved after the presentation of the Fifth National Communication, and presents the adaptation and mitigation measures, programs and projects implemented or being implemented. Some of the contents that are discussed in greater depth in the third chapter of this National Communication are highlighted below.

In 2020, the National Policy for Comprehensive Emergency and Disaster Risk Management in Uruguay (2019-2030) was approved by [Decree No. 66](#).

During the year 2021, the Long Term Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development Strategy was prepared with the objective of agreeing and making explicit a country vision on GHG emissions and removals and adaptation, resilience and risk reduction towards 2050. In the same year, the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan was approved within the framework of the National Climate Change Response System (SN-RCC, *by its acronym in Spanish*) with a 2024 perspective, and the National Action Strategy for Climate Empowerment was prepared.

In December 2022, Uruguay submitted its Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC2), in compliance with the Paris Agreement, which states that each country must communicate a NDC every five years. On the same date, Uruguay also submitted its Second Adaptation Communication.

During the reporting period, the first issuance in 2022 of a sovereign bond associated with environmental indicators that aligns the public financing strategy with national climate commitments ([Climate Change Index-linked Bond - BIICC](#)) stands out.

In terms of **adaptation to climate change**, Uruguay continues to promote actions from different sectors, working together with several actors.

As of 2023, Uruguay has developed National Adaptation Plans in the Agricultural and Livestock, Coastal, Urban and Infrastructure sectors and is developing plans in the Energy and Health sectors.

In its First Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC1), Uruguay defined specific adaptation contributions, gearing its efforts towards the Global Goal on Adaptation under the Paris Agreement of increasing adaptation capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability. The Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC2, 2030

as the time horizon), submitted in December 2022, sets out adaptation objectives and corresponding actions. In order to link national adaptation efforts with the elements established in the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), the Second Adaptation Communication (ADCOM2) has outlined general objectives and specific objectives for each adaptation area and, in addition, an effort has been made to establish the qualitative contribution of each of the proposed adaptation actions to the GGA, in order to establish a strategic framework for their implementation.

In relation to the adaptation measures, priority is given to the continuity of actions initiated in the First Adaptation Communication (ADCOM1) that require greater precision and/or moving to a subsequent stage, emphasizing the measures proposed in the National Adaptation Plans and reinforcing the needs found in some of the adaptation areas. In addition, social commitment, the risk reduction approach and the inclusion of the gender perspective are mainstreamed in all measures.

National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change and Climate Variability for the Agricultural and Livestock Sector (NAP- Ag). In 2022, the indicators matrix and the action plan were monitored. The exercise showed the need to strengthen statistics and indicators and the capacity to provide continuity to monitoring and verify that the indicators are reflecting the specificities of climate change adaptation in the agricultural and livestock sector. With respect to the 2025 action plan, the evaluation of the NAP-Ag identified some challenges.

National Adaptation Plan for Cities and Infrastructures (NAP-Cities). The plan lays the foundations for building adaptation capacity and resilience in urban centers, protecting fundamental and essential infrastructure and urban environments, facilitating the integration of adaptation to climate change in policies, programs and activities, with a focus on reducing existing and future risks in the face of socio-natural phenomena that may be triggered by climate change. Some of its main achievements and advances include the progress made in institutional processes such as the preparation of departmental plans for integrated risk management, climate action, rainwater and urban water drainage, and tree-planting plans and ordinances, among others. In terms of education and training, lines of work for research, teaching and extension related to adaptation to climate variability and change were promoted.

In addition, the inter-institutional work promoted by the national and departmental governments has made it possible to design a binational initiative for the Uruguay River, a territory that is particularly vulnerable to climate variability and change. This work concluded with the approval, in 2021, of the **Uruguay-Argentina Regional Program for Adaptation to climate change in vulnerable coastal cities and ecosystems of the Uruguay River** to reinforce the adaptation actions undertaken in the departments of Artigas, Salto, Paysandú, and Río Negro, on the left bank of the Uruguay River.

National Adaptation Plan for Coastal Areas (NAP-Coasts). The main goal of the NAP-Coasts focuses on strengthening the capacities of institutions to identify impacts and vulnerabilities to climate change and to strengthen the capacities of both government institutions and other stakeholders to define concrete adaptation strategies and actions in the coastal zone to address these impacts.

Chapter 3 delves into the progress made in the implementation of the NAP-Ag, NAP-Cities, and NAP-Coasts.

Significant progress has been made in the **management of urban floods** related to adverse climate events, in line with the goals set out in the NDC1.

In 2023, the first **National Plan for Comprehensive Emergency and Disaster Risk Management in Uruguay** was presented, which includes the cross-cutting axes that are present in the different actions of the National Emergency System (SINAE): the rights approach, the gender, generations and disability perspective, and the permanent commitment to comply with accessibility and transparency standards.

In terms of **climate change mitigation**, the most outstanding accomplishment has been the decarbonization of the electricity matrix achieved in recent years through the incorporation of installed capacity in wind, biomass and solar photovoltaic energy, which together with hydroelectricity accounted for 91 % of the electricity generation in 2022. These actions, together with energy efficiency measures, address mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the energy sector within the framework of the National Energy Policy, in force since 2008, with a 2030 perspective, and in line with the National Climate Change Policy.

Chapter 3 provides more information on projects related to sustainable mobility (MOVÉS and NUMP).

In the agricultural and livestock sector, the project “**Climate-smart Livestock Production and Land Restoration in the Uruguayan Rangelands**” stands out. One of the most significant outcomes of the project was the preparation of a National Strategy for sustainable livestock production, which includes the submission to the UNFCCC of a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) that seeks financial support for its implementation. NAMAs are a UNFCCC instrument designed so that mitigation measures defined by developing countries can be submitted to the international community seeking technical or economic/financial support, but also measures already implemented can be submitted for international recognition only.

Also noteworthy is the formation of a technical working team to study the environmental footprint of livestock farming in Uruguay, whose work led to the development of unified methodologies and a set of indicators that were reflected as public goods in a document presented in 2022 for four environmental components: biodiversity, water, soil and air.

The actions related to native forests have a clear synergy between adaptation and mitigation, and therefore their relevance at the national level. In 2022 the country completed the first stage of the **Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation** (REDD+) project.

With regard to the waste sector, strategies are being developed to improve waste management and recovery within the framework of the implementation of the National Waste Management Plan. Chapter 3 presents the main progress made to date under the National Waste Management Plan.

Other information considered relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention

4

Uruguay continues to work on the quality, quantity and availability of information and data in order to improve decision making in the face of climate change and climate variability. Information systems have been designed as tools for the integration, analysis and dissemination of information, based on decentralization (networks, decentralized monitoring, State and private services); systematic and sustained monitoring; interoperability, integration and georeferencing of information.

In Uruguay, several institutions have information systems in place that contribute to decision-making for the planning and implementation of actions or measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The first section of chapter 4 refers to the main information systems and their progress.

These include the information provided by the Uruguayan Institute of Meteorology (INUMET) from a National Meteorological Network, the National Hydrological Observatory, the Territorial Information System (SIT), the National Environmental Observatory (OAN), the National Agricultural Information System (SNIA), the Information and Support System for Decision-Making in the Agricultural Sector (SISTD), the Geographic Information System (GIS), the Integrated Risk and Impact Monitor (MIRA), the Geographic Information System on adaptation to climate change in cities, and the System of Environmental and Economic Accounts (SCAE). The NDC1 Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System and the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory (NGHGI) Viewer are also mentioned.

Section 2 presents the main research and studies carried out during the period covered by the current National Communication (2020-2023). Some examples include the knowledge generated within the framework of: a) the development of the NAP-Coasts and NAP-Cities, b) the inter-institutional group of the Livestock Environmental Footprint and the “Climate-smart Livestock Production and Land Restoration in the Uruguayan Rangelands” project, c) the research carried out by INIA and, d) the topic of sustainable mobility.

Section 3 presents a summary of the institutional framework, the main management instruments and the progress made in the implementation of climate change issues in the country's education system, capacity building and citizen participation.

In this section, special reference is made to the National Action Strategy for Climate Empowerment (ENACE, *by its acronym in Spanish*) and the capacity building carried out in the framework of the implementation of the National Adaptation Plans, the elaboration of the Sustainable Mobility Policy, the execution of the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan and the UNDP Climate Promise initiative.

The main instances of citizen participation in the period corresponding to this National Communication are the processes related to the Long Term Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development Strategy, the NAP-Cities, the NAP-Coasts, the National Waste Management Plan (PNGR, *by its acronym in Spanish*), the National Action Strategy for Climate Empowerment (ENACE, *by its acronym in Spanish*) and the Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC2).

Section 4 refers to the different networks and working groups that have contributed, during the period of this National Communication, to the follow-up of the commitments arising from the Convention, the deepening of scientific knowledge, the strengthening of capacities and the implementation of adaptation and mitigation actions in the country.

Section 5 mentions the contributions from communication, with a focus on citizen empowerment, disseminating information and technical data in an accessible way, deepening on gender and climate change, launching the participation process for the elaboration of the Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC2) and elaborating a specific communication strategy for its dissemination. Section 5 also presents the main communication actions developed during the period of this National Communication.

Finally, Section 6 presents the information corresponding to the financial and technical support received by the country from non-reimbursable international cooperation for the development of initiatives related to the response to climate change. Note that in most of the international cooperation projects analyzed, the funds have a climate change component, i.e., they are not entirely earmarked for climate change activities.

Constrains and gaps, and related financial, technical and capacity needs

5

Uruguay must continue to implement a significant set of actions to adapt to climate change, which generates impacts on its territory, its economy and its people. The country is also pursuing voluntary mitigation actions in key sectors that will allow it to continue moving towards a low-carbon economy.

In order to implement the set of additional adaptation and mitigation actions identified, as well as for the sustainability of the existing ones, the country requires means of implementation to be provided by external sources, as well as specific capacities for their implementation.

Through a participatory process and analysis of key documents, a series of financing, technology and capacity gaps, needs and constrains have been identified.

In terms of adaptation, the sources of information considered were: ADCOM2 (which considers the main barriers and challenges based on the analysis of Uruguay's main adaptation instruments), the NAPs (Coasts, Cities and Agriculture) and the Long Term Low Emission and Climate Resilient Development Strategy. In addition, the information presented in the 5th National Communication, which considers a selection of NDC1 measures, was reviewed and updated.

In the case of mitigation, the information presented in the BUR 4 regarding NDC1 measures (conditional to additional and specific means of implementation) and the National Waste Management Plan was reviewed and updated.

In Sections 1 and 2 of the aforementioned chapter, gaps, needs and obstacles in financing, technology and capacity for adaptation and mitigation are listed, respectively.

On the other hand, Section 3 refers to the consultancy "Accelerating the implementation of Research, Development and Innovation (R&D&I) measures of Uruguay's NDC" (I. Bortagaray, 2022). This work identifies knowledge gaps in issues related to climate change.

Finally, the last section highlights the results of the "Virtual survey on gender capacity building needs" (consultation period 5-28 July) conducted within the framework of the National Gender Council.

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