

Center for Global Sustainability

2035 NDC Assessment: Kenya

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This analysis is part of the Center for **Global Sustainability (CGS): Country Climate Ambition Project**, which presents a set of detailed, country-specific analyses in a consistent, robust, and integrated approach with the goal of informing individual country ambition and supporting the Paris Agreement's NDC process. With in-depth assessments of key emitting countries, the Country Climate Ambition project provides the latest summary—with regular updates—of analyses on plausible, High Ambition country pathways that are based on CGS's field-leading modeling, data-driven empirical analyses, deep country knowledge, international research collaboration, and strategic policy engagements. For additional analysis and information, please see our website: https://country-ambition.cgs.umd.edu/.

Summary

This assessment shows that Kenya's 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) allows for significant increases in emissions relative to current levels, which is plausible in the absence of dedicated mitigation efforts. Kenya's NDC commits to a 35% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (including Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)) relative to a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario of 215 $MtCO_2e$ by 2035. Of this, 15 $MtCO_2e$ is unconditional and a further 60 $MtCO_2e$ reduction is conditional on international support. These targets translate into a 76% and 23% increase in emissions from 2022 levels by 2035, respectively.

In April 2025, Kenya released its 2035 NDC, which commits to a 35% reduction of its GHG emissions (including Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF)) from a BAU scenario of 215 $MtCO_2e$ by 2035,[1] corresponding to an abatement of 75 $MtCO_2e$ and resulting in an emissions level of about 140 $MtCO_2e$. Of this total abatement target, 15 $MtCO_2e$ is set to be reached unconditionally, while the remaining 60 $MtCO_2e$ is conditional on international support. Additional targets in Kenya's 2035 NDC include achieving 100% on-grid renewable energy by 2035 and net-zero GHG emissions by 2050.[1,2] The country aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.[2]

According to the national emissions inventory reported to the UNFCCC, Kenya's emissions have been rising from 108 $MtCO_2e$ in 2020 to 113 $MtCO_2e$ in 2022 (including LULUCF, using the IPCC AR5 GWP-100).[3] Kenya's emissions have roughly doubled between 2010 and 2022, with most emissions coming from land-use CO_2 (42%), CH_4 (34%), and only 19% from fossil CO_2.[3]

However, power sector emissions have been declining, with the low share of fossil CO_2 reflecting the country's substantial clean power sector. As of 2024, 92% of Kenya's on-grid generation came from renewable sources, with hydro contributing 28%, geothermal 43%, and wind 14%.[4]

According to our analysis, Kenya's **2035 NDC target allows for significant increases in emissions from current levels.** Based on the country's national inventory, the conditional target of 75 $MtCO_2e$ reduction from BAU translates into a 23% increase by 2035 relative to 2022 levels, while the unconditional target of 15 $MtCO_2e$ reduction from BAU translates into a 76% increase.

Based on recent historical trends, a BAU scenario in which emissions nearly double by 2035 relative to 2022 levels appears plausible in the absence of dedicated mitigation. However, the extent of future emissions growth remains uncertain, particularly given projected population and GDP trends. In the SSP2 scenario, Kenya's population increases by 20% from 2025 to 2035, while its GDP grows 67% over the same period.[5] **This uncertainty means that the unconditional target of 15 $MtCO_2e$ abatement from a 215 $MtCO_2e$ BAU baseline could be met, or even exceeded, without dedicated mitigation efforts.**

At the same time, if land-use CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O emissions continue to rise rapidly, Kenya could reach its conditional target of 140 $MtCO_2e$ by 2035 based solely on these emissions, leaving no remaining space for fossil CO_2 emissions under the conditional NDC target. The 2035 NDC provides limited detail on emissions by gas or sector, restricting deeper analysis. While the NDC mentions support for transport electrification, no quantitative information is available to assess the level of ambition. The power sector target, however, appears achievable given Kenya's solar potential. Further efforts should focus on mitigating emissions from land-use change and agriculture, including halting deforestation and adopting sustainable livestock practices

References

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4. Ember. Electricity Data Explorer - Open Source Global Electricity Data. Ember (2025).
5. IIASA. SSP Scenario Explorer - SSP 3.0. International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) (2024).