CLIMATE AND SDG SYNERGIES

Virtual Learning Series

Summary of Webinar 3:

Overcoming Constrains to Realize Climate & SDG Synergies: Ensuring Means of Implementation

2 February 2021

"Overcoming Constrains to Realize Climate & SDG Synergies: Ensuring Means of Implementation" was the third webinar in a Learning Series aimed at providing practitioners from the Global South with tools they can use to apply climate and SDG synergies. In keeping with the recommendations of the 2020 Climate & SDG Synergies Consultations the Learning Series has been organized jointly by UNDESA, UNFCCC and UNITAR to facilitate practitioner learning and inform the development of training modules to be rolled out in 2021.

Webinar 3 focused on the re-occurring challenges of realizing climate/SDGs synergies in practice. Speakers spoke to the implications of integrated Climate/SDGs action for national capacity, financing, and monitoring. They offered tools, resources, and advice to help participants address each implementation challenge. Participants shared relevant examples and made forward-looking suggestions.

Guiding Questions:

- **What capacity or institutional constraints prevent countries or localities from integrating climate and SDG action? What strategies have been effective to overcome capacity gaps?**
- **What does an integrated climate/SDGs action mean for financing? Considering the COVID-19 Pandemic, how can countries identify financing for integrated climate/SDGs action?**
- **How can the synergies be monitored for transparency & accountability? What steps are countries taking to capture the impacts of policy multipliers, including across sectors?**

Key take-away message:

- The SDGs, economic recovery and climate ambition go hand in hand. One cannot be achieved without the other. Aspects of policy, finance and capacity building are the key factors of the enabling environment that is often referred to as the energy ecosystem for decentralized renewable energy. It is very important to put all these factors and processes together in a discussion on implementing climate/SDD synergies.
- The energy ecosystems itself is referred broadly as technology/innovation, policy and regulatory guidelines, skill development and capacity building, and unlocking the right kind of finance for entrepreneurs and end users.
- When thinking of climate finance, there is of course the larger picture of what are the international sources of climate finance, but it is also worth thinking of how to unlock existing local financing

mechanisms with government budget allocations that could enable local actors to have stronger climate resilience strategies for climate mitigation options.

- Capacity building in the global south is important – there has been increase capacity and methodology over the years to classify financing for climate mitigation, adaptation, and financing for the SDGs, and how synergies can be created between them when financing programmes.
- It is a challenge to accelerate the learning around the complexities faced by development financing institutions – climate financing does not always fit the traditional templates for those people coming out of traditional financing sectors. Therefore, it necessary to focus capacity building not only on technology but also innovative financing options and mechanisms.
- More work is needed in building capacities in development countries on the means of implementation from knowledge on tracking climate finance to good governance and the flow of innovation and technology transfer to empower national governments.
- Public financing is limited - there are opportunities in trying to unlock and mainstream financing from the private sector for sustainable development and integrate climate actions into internal local processes.
- Usually, local financing institutions might not see the benefits in the immediate short-term but for the longer-term they need to understand that unlocking finance by identifying and mapping out the kind of opportunities that exist for decentralized renewable energy for lighting, for enhanced livelihoods, for healthcare, and looking at the most climate resilient and climate mitigation strategies and unlocking funding for them.
- It is critical that donors and international development financing institutions direct sufficient financial resources and human expertise to project managers and other project personnel to have the right capacity to know the current state of financing mechanisms.
- There are cost benefits in implementing interventions with climate/SDGs focus. For example, it is much cheaper and quicker to power a healthcare facility in remote rural areas (last mile connectivity) with decentralized and clean renewable energy with energy efficient climate friendly equipment than with traditional grid extension.
- Given the urgency of the situation as reported in various IPCCC reports and other documentation, we have a small window to learn very fast – accelerated learning for implementation is the key and this needs to happen now and quickly.
- Land ownership/ land tenure is critical for the gender dimension with respect to women empowerment. Those who have access to land benefit the most.
- Context matters for learning/capacity building – and learning between contexts and when shifting from one context to the other is critical and a hash awakening.
- Capacity building must happen at so many different levels – amongst organizations working in these different sectors; with government agencies highlight costs and/or benefits in the economic sense; as well as for financial institutions so that local financial institutions are able to release funds and realizing that what they are giving out has both a climate action angle and a development angle.
- Shifting from the “good old way” to new ways of thinking and doing is key - capacity building helps government officials to understand why a specific intervention makes a difference and needs a different approach in terms of their economics and costs as well.
- A major requirement for the work on achieving synergies is to break down silos. A key part of the is knowing what others are doing in their respective silos to breakdown the silos.
- UNITAR to deliver an e-learning programme/courses by the first trimester of 2021 jointly with our colleagues at UNDESA. The e-learning series will comprise all the materials and information that have been developed through these series of webinars. The e-learning series will be modular and

personal learning platforms formations for every participant interested in the learning series, with a quiz to text the learning capability of participating learners to advance to the next module.

Summary of presentations made by speakers

Moderator: Prof Mark Swilling, Co-Director, Stellenbosch Centre for Complex Systems in Transition, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

This webinar is the third in a series of ongoing learning webinars hosted by UNDESA and organised jointly by UNITAR and UN Climate. The webinar will address implementation challenges, e.g., access to finance, capacity building, technology, policy and regulation, for climate/SDGs synergies is key for climate action and sustainable development.
I am very grateful and delighted to have been invited to moderate this webinar on implementation. Although as an academic we are always asking the why question, however, the how question is really what matters in the world we are living today. On the one hand we have the ecclesiologists who are saying that it is all doom and gloom, that we are not going to change rapidly enough, while on the other hand we have those who focus on incremental change that may not be accelerating fast enough. Therefore, we need to attach much greater value to those who are at the forefront doing this type of implementation work so that when we act we unpackage all the elements as we have done in this conversation.

Speaker: Baysa Naran, Senior Analyst, Climate Policy Initiative
[Slide Presentation] - Overview of the global climate finance landscape and opportunities for climate/SDG synergies.
The presentation was an overview of the climate finance flows through concrete examples from CPI climate finance tracking work.
CPI is an analysis and advisory organization with deep expertise in finance and policy. CPI helps governments, businesses, and financial institutions drive economic growth while addressing climate change.
CPI has been tracking global finance since 2011.
The Global Landscape of Climate Finance is the most comprehensive assessment of climate finance flows. It helps to inform policy makers and investment decisions for several entities, including UNFCCC, IPCC, G7 and others for the identification of opportunities for scaling up climate finance. It helps to create a baseline against which progress can be measured for financing climate action and progress on the SDGs.

- Provides a six-year trend analysis for a period between 2013 and 2018

- The initial estimate by the Climate Policy Initiative suggests 2019 climate finance flows will amount to USD 608–622 billion

This year's report includes six years of consecutive data, including the first major wave of investments following ratification of the Paris Agreement, in 2017 and 2018.

For the first time annual tracked climate finance in 2017 and 2018 crossed the USD half-trillion mark for the first time. Annual flows rose to USD 579 billion, on average, over the two-year period of 2017/2018,

representing a USD 116 billion (25%) increase from 2015/2016. The rise reflects steady increases in financing across nearly all types of investors.

- A vast majority of climate finance flows went to mitigation activities, representing about 93% of total finance flows. Only 5% is directed to adaptation finance. However, there was a twofold increase in adaptation finance between 2017 and 2018 and this was directed to non-OECD countries. It is worth noting that there are some data gaps the make it extremely difficult to measure adaptation finance.
- The good news is that climate finance has seen an increasing trend over the years. However, we are still far short of what is needed to achieve the climate goals and the related sustainable development goals. The ongoing COVI-19 pandemic and resulting socio-economic consequences makes it even more challenging.
- Greater collaboration is needed among various actors raise ambition and commit financial resources.

- Climate finance tracking at CPI on climate action and synergies with SDG has been focused mainly on the Global Landscape - overview of global climate-related primary investment for [SDG13 & SDG17]. However, CPI analysis has documented financial flows for several other SDGs through a selected list of projects and programmes where climate/SDG synergies have been reported:
    - Tracking finance on energy access [SDG7, SDG5 & SDG13] – undertaken jointly with SE4ALL: Energizing Finance financial flow targeting transmission and distribution, mini-grids and off-grids, grid connected renewables, grid connected fossil fuel, energy efficiency, market support/linkages.
    - Tracking climate finance flows for small scale agriculture in 2017/18 [SDG1 SDG2, SDG5, SDG9, & SDG15] - undertaken jointly with IFAD: key finding is the less the 2% of climate finance goes to small-scale agriculture - Small Scale Agriculture Climate Finance -— all sectors – $569,000M; Agriculture, forest, land-use, and natural resource management - $8,140M; renewable energy generation – 711M; sustainable transport – $442M; water and wastewater management – $263M; others – $299M
    - State of Cities' Climate Finance (Upcoming) - Cities Climate Finance tracking; Urban adaptation finance [SDG11].
    - National landscapes & tool kits - targeted support to developing countries - more than 22 countries are using our methodology to track financial progress on NDCs, with CPI supporting on analysis in others, including: Brazil, China, Kenya, South Africa, India, Indonesia, Cote d'Ivoire [SDG17].

Contact – CPI: www.climatepolicyinitiative.org; The Lab: www.climatefinancelab.org; Global Landscape of Climate Finance: www.climatefinancelandscape.org

Speaker: Héctor Arce Benavides, Ing., Director, National REDD+ Strategy, Costa Rica National Forestry Finance Fund (FONAFIFO)

[Slide Presentation] - Payments for ecosystem services (synergies between Forests & climate action)

- Relationship between forest and poverty.
- The Sustainable Development Goals [SDG1 SDG5, SDG13, & SDG15]
- Costa Rica's strategy
    - Forest Incentives during the 90s
    - Development of a robust protected area system

    - Development of PES program
- Forest Cover Recovery
    - Costa Rica adopted an ambitious carbon neutrality goal under its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement and its Decarbonization Plan 2050, showing the country's strong commitment to the global goal to mitigate climate change.
    - This target relies on the country's ability to maintain and further expand its PES Program to maintain 60% of its forest cover.
- Emission reduction trend (ER) in Costa Rica
    - Decreasing trend of average deforestation of primary forest observed during different terrestrial satellite monitoring events carried out in Costa Rica from 1986 to 2015.
    - Growth of the secondary forest area that provided forest carbon removals due to the improvement of carbon stocks, from 1986 to 2015 in Costa Rica.
- REDD + Process
    - Costa Rica has been a pioneer in the REDD+ international process
    - Two agreements - FCPF US$ 60; GCF US 54,1
- Indigenous People Participation 1997-2018 - US$ 59 M
    - Reforestation - 190,40 ha, $ 32.640,00
    - Natural Regeneration - 3.986 ha, $ 382.002,00
    - Agroforestry Systems - 1,668,780 trees - $ 1,210,119
    - Forest protection - 16,211.0 ha, $ 33,789, 408
- Loans to rural women
    - The objective of this programme is to foster economic democratization with the aim of promoting economic development and improvement in the quality of life of rural women
    - Financing conditions - Term up to 10 years, fiduciary guarantee
    - Productive development, Working capital infrastructure
- OBJECTIVE Promote the participation of women in the Payment for Environmental Service Program. Legal Framework Modification of the Regulation to the Forestry Law, Executive Decree 25721-MINAE and its reforms, of October 17, 1996. FINANCING LINES Inclusion in the estate valuation matrix for the prioritization of the PSA, the granting of 25 additional points to those forests that it owns or owns
- Challenges
    - Legal limitations of some land holders to join the programs
    - Better measure the impact of PES.
    - Lack adequate accounting to record GDPPES and the importance of the forestry sector in general.
    - More resources are required to meet all the demand
    - Incorporate the concept of landscape
- Conclusions
    - Although it is true that programs such as REDD+ and PES cannot solve all poverty in rural areas, the lessons learned indicate that they can mitigate it.
    - At the same time, they contribute to maintaining forest ecosystems and their environmental services

Speaker: Shehnaz Moosa, PhD., Director, Climate Development & Knowledge Network
[Slide Presentation] - Capacity building challenges and opportunities for climate/SDG synergies in the Global South

- Relationship building Learning from South Asia:
  - Local government training is used as a way for city officials to meet each other.
  - They form relationships and begin collaborations outside of official capacity building activities.
- Learning from South Asians:
  - The manner and frequency and period of interactions is more important than the information being shared.
  - Use local champions.
- Learning from the global South:
  - Rich capacity exists in the global South but there are challenges
  - Southern experts have the knowledge, expertise, context, and relationships to lead capacity building efforts.
  - But they often do not have access to international conferences, donors, networks
  - It takes more effort and time to source such experts.
- Learning from Africans:
  - Awareness of context specificity - this can change significantly even between neighbouring countries.
  - Openness to being wrong, admit errors and make corrections.
  - Seek advice, be humble, have a diverse team
  - Check facts thoroughly.
  - A single training/capacity building event is unlikely to allow for the depth of knowledge, collaboration and trust building for relevant and useful support to implementation. Learning should be embedded within existing processes
- Learning from Latin Americans:
  - Thorough identification of areas of interest and the way and frequency of training through a survey.
  - Differences in priorities between the global North and the global South can lead to capacity building activities that are not fully taken up within countries.
  - Understand the existing expertise so that activities are relevant and respectful.
- Lessons from COVID-19 experience
  - The online space can be effective
  - Innovation and collaborations are important. “We are in it together”

On the downside, relationship building activities have been significantly hampered. There are no longer any corridors for participants to bump into each other during break-up sessions. This cannot happen with virtual events – there are no virtual corridor to bump into people, and no virtual coffee stands either. The existing power dynamics between those who have internet access and those who do not have has further strengthened the digital divide. Usually there are technical challenges that make virtual learning platforms a nightmare and the power play between the audience and chair has been further strengthened. Finally, there are issues with language.

Speaker: Surabhi Rajagopal, Senior Program Manager, SustainPlus Energy Foundation
[Talking Points Presentation] - Climate/SDG synergies: Overcoming challenges on means of implementation

Sustain-Plus Energy Foundation provides sustainable energy access solutions for poverty alleviation and initiatives on improved wellbeing in India. The foundation creates a platform that scout for sustainable energy programmes, support and scale up the programmes and technologies by addressing the ecosystem that needs to be in place to make decentralized renewable energy solutions sustainable and scalable.

Example 1– solar water pumping solution: a typical multisectoral example where the needs of multiple sectors are being addressed through a single intervention, i.e., an agriculture issue with the needs for pumping water for irrigation, but at the same time using decentralized renewable energy for pumping to address climate action by reducing emissions. Emission reduction may not be the priority of the farmer, but it is feeds into the larger objective and agenda on climate action. It takes conversations with the farmers and NGOs on the ground that are working with the farmers to understand that solar water pumps cannot be installed in isolation. In certain locations, solar water pumps are installed better alongside borehole recharge, farm ponds and other water conservation measure, and efficient water savings technologies such as drip irrigation. This is one example where capacity building is not restricted to how we talk to communities but also how we talk to ourselves for organizations working on energy issues to convey the kind of message that organizations working on agriculture and climate need to be able to push that message forward that the development and climate agenda could go together.

Unlocking climate finance – We also found that there is an existing government programme within India to subsidize solar water pumping solutions and other existing funds to subsidize borehole recharge or programmes to support farmers to building farm ponds and other watershed management techniques through the horticulture department of the department for soil and water conservation.

Example 2– decentralized renewable energy for healthcare solutions: the initial goal is obvious – how do we enable access to reliable electricity in remote areas particularly for primary healthcare, e.g., labour rooms, basic energy access for lighting, for immunization, for delivery. Designing that entire system requires an understanding that there is an energy efficiency component attached to it, where appliances need to be made more efficient knowing that that affects the cost of decentralized solar energy, as well as how do you look at the building design such that natural ventilation, lighting and cooling can become part of the solution.

Basic modifications, insulation on the roof, opening out of windows, and simple techniques of built environment design can reduce costs as well as improve comfort and wellbeing for the patients and staff working in that healthcare facility. This is particularly problematic for areas that are hot and arid, heat prone and deal with heat stress situations. This is a combination of mitigation and adaptation coming together but what it did require was building the capacity of masons on the ground to identify the right kind of built environment that works for the locality and context, what is the kind of building design that is best suited for an area that is heat stress prone or which kind of design that will fit better in an extremely cold climatic condition. Building solar systems for healthcare facilities also helps with how to approach capacity building with the responsible departments in government and how to work with them.

Communities have limited resources and governments operates on limited budgets, and being able to say that the cost of diesel or the expenditure on diesel to ensure reliable availability of electricity in the these healthcare facilities to power the baby warmers, to power the suction pumps, to power the spot light and basic lighting and fans so that the staff can function, the diesel cost for making sure that those appliances and services functions effectively is much higher than what you will spend if you pivot to using decentralized energy and adding a long-term maintenance fund. This is another example how to unlock finance because a lot of government agencies and departments have resources for a diesel generator of for power backup, but that power backup is not defined.

Other examples: The same applies for relief shelters in cyclone prone areas and flood prone areas – looking at school buildings and converting them as emergency shelters. Again, working with the disaster management authority to be able to able to say how do you look at the longer term more sustainable disaster shelters. It may be a school but a multi-purpose school that is used as disaster relief shelter but in that case brining in DRE can ensure that during disaster, there is a backup of power and access to safe shelter at the same time.

Similarly, for cooling and cold storage solutions, there are existing funds within financial institutions as well as government bodies to look at agriculture infrastructure or rural infrastructure development. We need to able to start unlocking those funds to be able to finance those initiatives that can address both climate adaption and mitigation, as well as basic development whether it is about livelihoods, basic energy access or healthcare.

Speaker: Bahareh Seyedi, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UNDESA
[Slide Presentation] - Closing of the webinar series

This was a great conversation and very information session. Putting what was done in the learning series into context, the webinars were launched in December 2020 by UNDESA together with our partners UNITAR and UNFCCC following the climate ambition summit that took place on December 12, 2020, which marked the fifth-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement and kicked off the next year which is s critical year for the climate community countries strive to come to the COP26 with a raise ambition and their updated NDCs. Along with the ambition, countries continue to plan and implement the SDGs and that work should not stop. In the meantime, all countries continue to face the health, economic and social challenges of the global pandemic. The question for us is that how does implementing synergies between these critical agendas (climate and SDGs) affects what is happening right now in terms of raining global ambition on climate and accelerating action on the SDGs, and at the same time building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.
Summary of key take-aways from the three webinars

- Webinar 1 - The 'why' question: making the case for climate-SDGs synergies
    - The SDGs, post-covid-19 pandemic economic recovery and climate ambition go hand in hand. One cannot be achieved without the other.
    - Get 'factual' and build a narrative that bring facts to life by going beyond silos
    - Collaboration and leadership are key. No one organization can solve big interlinked and complex problems. Government leadership is necessary to bring all sectors and parts of society on board.
- Webinar 2 - The 'how' question: how to maximize opportunities and navigate trade-offs

  - Modelling tools & scenario-building provide evidence-based assessments that enable and encourage ambitious plans and implementation.
  - Recent country experiences on the NDC update process demonstrate the importance of integrated planning to enhance/raise ambition of national climate plans.
- Webinar 3 - The 'what' question: what barriers need to be overcome to realize synergies
  - Unlocking barriers to means of implementation is key to maximizing synergies.

Next steps and upcoming opportunities to engage in 2021-2022

1. E-Learning course on Harnessing Climate and SDGs synergies (Coming soon!)
2. UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2021 - The UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the central global platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda including SDGs
3. UNFCCC/COP 26 November 2021 - COP26 will mark five years since the Paris Agreement, and timeline for countries to submit updated NDCs.
4. Regional Dialogues - Latin America Climate Week (11-13 May 2021); Africa Climate Week (15-18 June 2021); Asia Pacific Climate Week (6-9 July 2021); Middle East and North Africa (2-3 March 2022)
5. Global Conference on Harnessing Climate and SDGs Synergies (Q4 of 2021 or early 2022)

For more information visit our website: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/climate-sdgs-synergies
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Speaker: Amb. Marco Suazo, Head of New York Office, UNITAR
[Talking Points Presentation] - Closing of the webinar series – Next steps

UNITAR is a capacity building institution for government officials and diplomats around the world. With the sustainable development agenda, UNITAR has developed a set of training materials and methodologies not only to enhance the work of the specialized agencies but also to address the substantive topics of the agenda on sustainable development.

Climate change and environmental issues are not face away from human right. For example, actions on combating poverty and the wellbeing of human being are issues of human right concern that are of great interest. For example, we have teamed up with UNDESA with whom we work very closely in different areas such as the High-level Political Forum. We have a Learning Centre that is convened a week before the High-Level political Forum. Inviting the participants to subscribe to the service we offer to governments and non-governmental agencies to come and share experiences on implementing the sustainable development goals.

The next steps for the current webinar series came from the idea to institutionalize the learning series so all the information and materials generated are not lost but to come up with an e-learning course that will be open to all interested participants, in particular policy makers, diplomats, working at the UN in New York or others working elsewhere in the specialized agencies.

The e-learning series will comprise all the materials and information that have been developed through the webinars. The e-learning series will be modular and personal learning platforms formations for every

participant interested in the learning series, with a quiz to text the learning capability of participating learners to advance to the next module.

It is anticipated that this will not only create the possibility for participants to learn on their own but to interact with other learners. The recordings of the webinars and the presentations will be part of the e-learning modules.
We hope to deliver and announce these e-learning programme/course by the first trimester of 2021 jointly with our colleagues at UNDESA.
UNITAR is trying to make the e-learning courses very interactive and engaging for what we want to achieve.

We hope to have a good product and we are carefully working on achieving that. It is imperative that implementing agencies and civil society at the grassroot level where actual implementation takes place learning about these processes. That is the goal we want to achieve. Information technology is helping us to get together even with the challenges of COVID-19. Let work together and be resilient to amplify voices and achieve the sustainable development goals in a very comprehensive manner.

Webinar 3 Speakers:

Moderator: Prof Mark Swilling, Co-Director, Stellenbosch Centre for Complex Systems in Transition, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

Speakers:

- Baysa Naran, Senior Analyst, Climate Policy Initiative - **Overview of the global climate finance landscape and opportunities for climate/SDG synergies.**
- Héctor Arce Benavides, Ing., Director, National REDD+ Strategy, Costa Rica National Forestry Finance Fund (FONAFIFO) - **Payments for ecosystem services (synergies between Forests & climate action)**
- Shehnaz Moosa, PhD., Director, Climate Development & Knowledge Network - **Capacity building challenges and opportunities for climate/SDG synergies in the Global South.**
- Surabhi Rajagopal, Senior Program Manager, SustainPlus - **Climate/SDG synergies: Overcoming challenges on means of implementation.**

Closing of webinar series and next steps:

6. Bahareh Seyedi, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UNDESA
- Marco Suazo, Head of New York Office, UNITAR

For speaker bios and a video recording of the webinar visit:
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=7152&menu=2993