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**GLOBAL CLIMATE  
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CONFERENCE** ▶▶

**TOKYO**  
20-21 JULY  
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# **Third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Building the evidence base for synergistic action in support of  
raising climate and SDGs ambition

Tokyo, Japan

July 20-21, 2022

## **Concept note**

### **Co-convened by:**

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat (UN Climate Change)

### **Hosted by:**

Ministry of the Environment, Japan

### **In partnership with:**

United Nations University (UNU)

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

## CONTEXT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement provide a firm foundation for the coherent implementation of climate action and sustainable development objectives at all levels. The energy transitions envisaged in SDG 7 serves as an excellent example for the interconnectedness, as sustainable energy is key to contribute significantly to lowering greenhouse gas emissions relative to ‘business as usual’ pathways. Similarly, more sustainable industrialisation under SDG 9, sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices under SDG 2, and changing patterns of consumption and production in line with SDG 12 can all contribute to low-emissions pathways, the creation of new kinds of jobs and long-term progress towards eradicating poverty and other deprivations.

Conversely, progress made towards limiting global temperature increase would significantly ease the path to many other SDGs, such as those related to poverty, hunger, access to water, and terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Many of the SDGs and their targets can also be achieved in ways that would enable adaptive responses to climate change, for example those related to resilience in SDGs 9 and 11, respectively relating to infrastructure and urban settlements.

The multiple interlinkages between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement indicate that integrated and synergistic implementation of both would lead to many benefits. Such an approach would considerably enhance the effectiveness and the quality of outcomes, besides contributing to more efficient use of resources, greater coherence across sectors and actors, and the formation of novel partnerships.

The relative strength of these interlinkages between climate impacts and the SDGs varies across countries and regions, as do the actions needed to ensure that co-benefits are maximized at all levels. A better understanding (including their quantification, wherever possible) of these co-benefits in national, regional and global contexts can spur more deliberate action and collaboration towards realizing them. Such actions and collaborations could result in, for example, improving the design and implementation of policies, directing finance and resources to critical nexuses, supporting specific private sector initiatives and promoting well-identified science, technology and innovation initiatives.

Despite increasing efforts and commitments over the past few years, we are not on track to achieve the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals by. Regrettably, the SDGs were already off track even before COVID-19 emerged. Progress had been made in poverty reduction, maternal and child health, access to electricity, and gender equality, but not enough to achieve the Goals by 2030. In other vital areas, including reducing inequality, lowering carbon emissions and tackling hunger, progress had either stalled or reversed. On the climate goals, we are off track as well, 1.2 degrees Celsius of warming above pre-industrial levels already reached. Powerful progress was made at COP26 in Glasgow in keeping the 1.5 degrees goal alive. The vast majority of world GDP is now covered by net zero commitments. Most countries put forward new 2030 emissions targets in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). But there is still a huge gap between these efforts and an emission reduction level necessary for achieving the 1.5 degree goal, as the total GHG emission in 2030 is expected to be about 14 per cent above the

2010 level<sup>1</sup> even if all the latest NDCs are implemented, including their components that are conditional on the receipt of support.

An integrated approach that seeks to strengthen synergies between these two global agendas is critical to speed up progress. Focusing on concrete measures for synergistic implementation at all levels would help dramatically increase the pace of implementation and ramp up ambition.

### **First Conference**

In April 2019, UN DESA and UNFCCC organized the first annual Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. Hosted by the Government of Denmark, it took place in Copenhagen with several hundred participants from diverse communities, bringing together practitioners, experts and policymakers from both developing and developed countries; international resource persons from academia, think tanks, the private sector and non-governmental organizations; and representatives of relevant United Nations organizations.

The focus of the conference was promoting coordinated implementation of climate action and the SDGs at the global, regional and country level. Participants identified examples that specifically illustrate the potential of synergistic and interlinked approaches to realizing the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement (including through analyses of, for example, national development plans, nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans and national risk reduction strategies). Participants also analyzed gaps and challenges (including trade-offs), and in an expansive conference outcome summary made recommendations for strengthening synergy, increasing ambition, advancing implementation action, maximizing co-benefits and stimulating multi-stakeholder partnerships, including directing means of implementation to more coordinated action; scaling up and enhancing the mobilization of resources that could benefit sustainable development at large, including climate action; and ensuring the effective use of resources while avoiding duplication of effort.

### **Second Conference – Online Consultations on Synergies**

The success and impact of the first global synergies conference led to a decision to make this an annual event. The pandemic, however, forced a change in plans for 2020. Rather than an in-person conference, a virtual Global Synergies Consultation took place over the course of May and June in 2020, consisting of three separate online events. The consultations kept the community together and even expanded it despite the difficulties presented by the online format. The series resulted in a technical summary report, outlining key messages, best practices and lessons learnt.

In addition, between December 2020 and February 2021, UN DESA, UNFCCC and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) co-convened a series of three webinars on the theme of ‘Harnessing Climate and SDGs Synergies’. The webinars explained the benefits of integrated climate and SDG action. The webinars pointed to a variety of options for synergistic policy interventions in different sectors using an integrated nexus approach. Ways to overcome constraints in implementation, including issues related to capacity development, financing

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<sup>1</sup> See UNFCCC message to Parties and observers on 4 November 2021, available at [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/message\\_to\\_parties\\_and\\_observers\\_on\\_ndc\\_numbers.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/message_to_parties_and_observers_on_ndc_numbers.pdf).

strategies, as well as challenges in monitoring and reporting. The synthesis report of the webinars provided a summary of the deliberations made during the above-mentioned learning series, along with a conceptual and methodological information on how to achieve better synergies and overcome constraints.

## FOCUS OF THE THIRD CONFERENCE

Building on the outcomes of the first Global Climate-SDG Conference held in 2019 and the virtual consultations in 2020/2021, the third global conference on Synergies provides a unique opportunity to take stock of practical measures that are being implemented to advance climate and SDG synergies in regional, national and subnational efforts, including through COVID recovery plans and the NDCs.

The overall focus of the conference will be on the progress made over the last few years, with a particular focus on building the evidence base for synergistic action in raising climate ambition towards the 1.5 degrees goal of the Paris Agreement while putting the world on the right track for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The discussions will highlight, among others:

- recent examples of integrated policy measures, tools for identifying synergistic opportunities, coordination and planning mechanisms, financing instruments, and other critical elements linked to a more joint up approach to achieving these two critical agenda. The conference will also provide a unique opportunity for peer-to-peer exchange of information and experiences and identify shortfalls and opportunities in the context of pandemic recovery,
- key policy measures and specific actions in the areas that can help deliver both climate and SDGs co-benefits, such as in the areas of food and agriculture, energy, economic growth, jobs, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, circular economy, water etc, and that can help embed inclusiveness into climate actions, such as supporting measures for the poor and disadvantaged groups in accessing to clean energy.
- robust synergistic action platforms and multi-stakeholder partnerships that promote the synergistic implementation of SDGs and climate action, including actions for climate empowerment.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

It is expected that the Third Global Synergies Conference will significantly contribute to a better understanding and more effective promotion of synergies between climate action, sustainable development, and pandemic recovery efforts.

More specifically, the Conference will have the following deliverables:

- 1) Conference background materials: developed as part of the preparatory process to inform the discussions. It will build on the most recent documentation and analysis related to harnessing climate and SDGs synergies.

- 2) Forward-looking Conference Summary with key recommendations on scaling up joint implementation of climate actions and SDGs. This aims to inform deliberations ahead of major 2022 global processes, including through advocacy and other practical engagements (such as virtual means) in support of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2022, UN General Assembly session in September 2022, the UNFCCC COP27 in November 2022, and other relevant platforms.
- 3) A network of knowledge partners that contributes to codification and dissemination of knowledge on climate and SDGs synergies using the [Climate & SDGs Synergies Knowledge Platform](#) as a digital platform. The network will be composed of organizations (such as those involved in the technical advisory group) who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing this topic. This will act as a one-stop shop on topics related to harnessing climate and SDGs synergies and providing.

## FORMAT

The conference will be held at the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan. The format of the conference will be hybrid, with both in person and virtual presence.

A total of about 500 participants are envisaged, either in-person and/or online, including from countries that have substantially advanced implementation of their NDCs and/or submitted ambitious NDCs before or at COP26 in Glasgow; and have deployed win–win solutions for climate action and the SDGs at scale through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The Conference will be held over a period of two days, allowing for opening and closing sessions, several thematic sessions, as well as additional sessions and side events to showcase multi-stakeholder engagements. High-level/ministerial sessions will be included for leadership engagement. Thematic sessions will be expert panels/roundtables followed by interactive dialogue.

The Conference language will be English. Japanese interpretation services will be provided as much as possible to facilitate participation of host-country audience.

## ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

An organizing committee will be established with members from UN DESA, UNFCCC, the Minister of Environment of Japan supported by UNU and IGES. The Organizing Committee will be responsible for organizational aspects of the Conference.

The Organizing Committee will work closely with a technical Advisory Group on the substantive elements of the Conference.

## **TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP**

A technical Advisory Group will also be put together to provide substantive inputs to the organization of the Conference, including providing inputs to the background papers. The Advisory Group will also actively engage in the knowledge platform prior to and following the Conference.

The Advisory Group will be composed of about 15-20 entities who have been heavily engaged in previous consultations on this topic and/or have a track record of promoting climate and SDGs synergies. The suggested list of Technical Advisory Group is attached to this concept note as a separate document (draft as of 14 of February).

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Online platforms and social media will be utilized to disseminate key messages during the Conference. The outcomes of the Conference will be highlighted on the Climate and SDGs synergies knowledge platform website. The UN Information Centre in Tokyo will also assist with communications to Japanese stakeholders and audience.

