



**GLOBAL CLIMATE
& SDG SYNERGY
CONFERENCE** ►►

**NEW YORK
16 JULY
2023**

THE FOURTH GLOBAL CONFERENCE

Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

**Delivering a Just Transition through
Climate and SDG Synergies**

UN HEADQUARTERS | 16 JULY 2023

CONFERENCE REPORT



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change

About the Conference



ABOUT

The Fourth Global Conference was held on **Sunday, 16 July 2023 at the UN Headquarters in New York**, from 10:00 to 16:45 in the Conference Rooms 4, 5, 6 and 7.



SPECIAL EVENT

The Conference has been organized as a **Special Event to the High-Level Political Forum 2023** aiming to integrate climate discussions into the SDG review process and thereby enhance alignment between these two crucial agendas.



SPEAKERS

The Conference brought together **more than 60 speakers**, including 20 Ministers, heads of UN organizations and agencies, as well as other High-level Representatives from business, youth, local governments, academia and other sectors.



PARTICIPANTS

The Conference was held in person and broadcasted on UN WebTV. The Conference was attended in person by some **400 participants**, and **additional 4000 participants joined the discussions live virtually**.



REPRESENTATION

The Conference brought together speakers and participants from diverse technical and geographical backgrounds, collectively **representing 140 countries across the globe**.

Co-conveners Messages



Mr. Li Junhua

*Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Economic and
Social Affairs*

"We must make the next seven years count. We must get the SDGs on track and keep the goal of 1.5 degrees alive. We must deliver a Rescue Plan for People and Planet."

"An integrated approach that seeks to strengthen synergies between two global agendas is critical to that end."

"The prospects for achieving every SDG are impacted by climate change. And meeting the SDGs will strengthen climate action. We must scale up ambition in climate action and strengthen synergies across all sustainability goals."

"A strong outcome at COP28 will support both climate action and the sustainability agenda."



Mr. Simon Stiell

*Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change*

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Conference Summary



The Conference was co-convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 16 July 2023. It was held as a special event associated with the 2023 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The Conference brought together 20 Ministers, heads of UN organizations and agencies, as well as other High-level Representatives, including from business, youth, and academia. The Conference was attended in person by 400 participants, with over 60 speakers from diverse technical backgrounds, representing all together 140 countries around the world. In addition, close to 4000 participants joined virtually.

At the High-level Segment, Ministers, High-level Representatives and Heads of United Nations organizations noted with great concern the immense global challenges and the growing sustainable development gaps faced by the world today. They called for higher levels of ambition to achieve both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the targets under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change by 2030. They recognized that profound transformation was not only needed and urgent, but also possible, and that – if done well – transition may offer significant benefits for all.

Participants noted key outcomes of previous conferences on Climate and SDG synergies, including [a set of recommendations](#) that emerged from the 3rd Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies.

Participants also noted outcomes of intergovernmental processes with recognition of the importance of integrated approaches and synergistic implementation of climate action, environmental protection, and sustainable development. This included the [2019 SDG Summit Political Declaration](#), 2023 [G7 Climate, Energy, and Environment Ministers' Communiqué](#) and the 2023 [G20 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs](#).

The Conference placed its thematic focus on Delivering a just transition through climate and SDG synergies. It also featured three substantive roundtables focusing on: (1) A just, equitable and net-zero transition – how to get it right? (2) Climate action as an avenue for social and economic change – how to get all stakeholders on board? (3) Unlocking finance and partnerships for climate and SDG action – how can it be done?

The following highlights key messages and recommendations emerging from the day-long deliberations. The present summary and a full report of the Conference will be published on the Conference website in due course.

Key Messages

Breaking down silos and strengthening synergies between climate action, environmental protection and the SDGs are critical to accelerating transitions urgently needed for a just, inclusive and net-zero future.

There is an increasing recognition by many countries around the world that integrated and synergistic approaches to climate action, environmental protection and the SDGs can help ensure that principles of equity, inclusiveness and leaving no one behind are built into global, national and local efforts for advancing climate-resilient and net-zero development pathways.

Growing evidence indicates that pursuing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement in concert can significantly advance both agendas. A strong synergistic relationship exists between addressing climate change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, whereby advancements in one can lead to improvements in the other. The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for example, recognizes the close linkages between climate change adaptation and mitigation, ecosystem health, human well-being, and sustainable development. It also demonstrates that many mitigation and adaptation actions have multiple synergies with the SDGs. In this regard, the Conference noted the ongoing work on the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies and deepening analysis of potential synergies and trade-offs between climate action and the SDGs.

Enhanced policy coherence is fundamental to maximizing synergies and navigating potential trade-offs. A strategic vision for achieving climate and development co-benefits must be underpinned by a clear political commitment and institutional leadership to enhance policy coherence and integrated approaches. Effective and inclusive institutional and governance mechanisms to address policy interaction across sectors and align actions between levels of government are critical.

Stakeholder engagement is a core element of a just transition towards climate resilient and net-zero pathways. A just transition demands an inclusive and transparent planning process that takes into account voices of all sectors of society, including those who are impacted the most. This will ensure that the benefits and costs of the transition are distributed in a just and equitable manner, reducing inequalities rather than exacerbating them.

Pursuing just transitions towards a net-zero and climate-resilient future is a challenge for countries at all stages of development. Developing countries, however, face distinctive difficulties and require support in ways that take their realities into account. Meeting the capacity needs of developing countries is critical. International financial and technical support for transition should prioritize those regions with low capacity, lower responsibilities for historical emissions, or high dependence on carbon-intensive economic activities.

The Way Forward

Renew leadership and political commitment to accelerated action on the SDGs and the Paris Agreement goals in the next decade. Halfway to the deadline for the 2030 Agenda, just 12 percent of the SDG targets are on track and climate catastrophe is just around the corner with global temperature rise already at 1.1 degrees Celsius.

Strong political leadership to close the ambition gap on climate action and the SDGs while leaving no one behind is a must. Upcoming milestones later this year, including the SDG Summit, the Climate Ambition Summit and the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement to be finalized at COP28, are important opportunities to showcase leadership and commitment on advancing these two critical agendas.

Deepen the evidence base and analytical work related to synergies and trade-offs across sectors.

The conference benefitted from the participation of members of the Expert Group entrusted to prepare the *Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies*. Their report can be seen as an opportunity to compile a broad and convincing evidence base showcasing the advantages of synergistic approaches and policy making. The report will also provide an analytical framework, fill existing knowledge gaps, and provide scientific underpinnings for accelerated synergistic action towards 2030 and beyond.

Ensure integration of just transition in development and implementation of countries' national climate plans and development strategies. National planning instruments and processes related to climate and the SDGs can be used to harness the benefits and opportunities of transitions and ensure just and inclusive policies in support of the workforce and others who may be adversely impacted.

Take into account existing inequalities in providing financial and technical support to enable just transitions. Social equity and the empowerment of vulnerable social groups must be an explicit goal in designing support measures, evaluating economic opportunities, assessing impacts, and prioritizing transition support outcomes. Investment gaps can be significantly reduced if development and climate targets are pursued together.

Strengthen multi-stakeholder cooperation and dialogue at all levels. All stakeholders have a role to play in enabling transitions towards a climate-resilient and net-zero future. Multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation must be strengthened globally, as well as at regional and local levels. The annual Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies as well as the UNFCCC Regional Climate Weeks provide unique platforms to further enhance integration of climate and SDG synergies into global and regional fora.

Leveraging intergovernmental processes to enhance integrated approaches and synergistic action. Relevant intergovernmental milestones, including the SDG Summits (2023, 2024), the High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (UNFCCC COPs), the Convention of Biological Diversity Conference of Parties (CBD COPs), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), International Conference on Small Island Developing States (2024) must be leveraged to mainstream and strengthen synergistic action at all levels.

Conference Proceedings



1. Conference Opening and High-level Segment

Accelerating action towards the 2030 Agenda and a just transition to a carbon neutral economy through greater synergies

The High-level Segment of the Conference was moderated by **Ms. Annette Richardson**, Founder and Managing Partner of Ricardson Partners LLC.

1.1 Co-Conveners Opening Statements



Mr. Li Junhua
Under-Secretary-General
United Nations Economic and Social Affairs



Mr. Simon Stiell
Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

The Conference was opened by the co-conveners with statements by **Mr. Li Junhua**, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), and by **Mr. Simon Stiell**, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Welcoming the participants to the Fourth Global Climate and SDG Synergies Conference, the co-conveners emphasized the urgency of raising ambition in climate action and the need to strengthen synergies across all SDGs.

Speaking also on behalf of the Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Li Junhua, emphasized that maximizing synergies between climate action and the SDGs has never been more critical. Since their adoption in 2015, the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement provided a firm foundation for the coherent implementation of climate action and sustainable development objectives at all levels.

Climate action and sustainable development are seen as inseparable and as two sides of the same coin. In his statement, Mr. Simon Stiell, pointed out that both agreements envisaged important milestones to be achieved by 2030.

Yet, half way to the deadline, development remains off-track on both climate action and the SDGs. He noted that the first [Global Stocktake](#) and the upcoming [28th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC](#) provided opportunities to course-correct, re-align political priorities, step-up climate and SDG action, improve transparency, enhance just transition processes, and advance win-win solutions.



Ms. Annette Richardson,
*Founder and Managing Partner of Ricardson
Partners LLC*

1.2 Special message by the President of the 77th Session of the General Assembly



Mr. Csaba Kőrösi
*President of the 77th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly*

In his special message, **Mr. Csaba Kőrösi**, President of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, underscored that the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), the [Paris Climate Agreement](#), the [Addis Ababa Agreement on Financing Sustainable Development](#), the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#), the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)](#), and the newly agreed [Treaty of the High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction \(BBNJ\)](#) are a set of closely interlinked goals that form the backbone of the

transformation we need, a transformation that offers chances for human civilisation to survive, and basic conditions for humanity to prosper. Implementation of the aforementioned agreements must be as integrated as the challenges are interlocked.

Referring to the [“Science Day”](#) at the High-level Political Forum as an example, the President of the General Assembly called for more exchanges between the policy makers and the scientific communities. Engaging with science makes it possible to better inform our cultures of consumption and production, and to improve management of resources, monitoring of progress, and validation of the implementation of the SDGs.

Mr. Csaba Kőrösi also underlined the benefits of integrated systems analysis producing integrated results. At the [United Nations 2023 Water Conference](#), participants recognized the multiple interlinkages between water and climate systems. Analysing synergies is equally important in other areas, including in agriculture and food production, energy systems, or public health. Policies that disregard obvious synergies in any of these areas can often lead to waste of time and money.

The President of the General Assembly reminded participants that the world is facing climate change as a clear and present danger. Noting that transformation is happening anyway, he called upon all policy makers to take bold climate and development action, so that humanity may master the transition process, and prevent becoming its victim.

1.3 A. Statements of Ministers, High-level Representatives, and Heads of UN Organizations

As part of the High-level Segment, Ministers, High-level Representatives and Heads of UN Organizations delivered statements on ***Synergistic action on SDGs and climate, reflecting on harnessing co-benefits and avoiding trade-offs.***



(Right to left) **H.E. Ms. Lotte Machon**, State Secretary for Development Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark; **H.E. Mr. Akira Yanagimoto**, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, Japan; **Mr. Csaba Kőrösi**, President of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly; **Mr. Li Junhua**, Under-Secretary-General, UNDESA; **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana**, Executive Secretary, ESCAP; **Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**, Executive Director, UN-Habitat

Speaking on behalf of the Government of Japan, **H.E. Mr. Akira Yanagimoto**, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, emphasized the recognition and importance given by the administration to synergistic policy making. As host of the [3rd UN Climate and SDG Synergies Conference](#) in Tokyo, Japan, in July 2022, and also as host of the [G7 Climate, Energy, and Environment Ministers Meeting](#) in Sapporo, Japan, in April 2023, the Government and the Ministry of Environment of Japan have shown leadership in this area.



H.E. Mr. Akira Yanagimoto,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, Japan

Mr. Akira Yanagimoto also referred to several practical examples, including local biomass-based power generation, improved forest management, use of seaweed as seabed carbon sinks, re-development of previously used agricultural land as wetlands, and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction projects. All of these projects can contribute to greenhouse gas emission reductions, reductions in biodiversity loss, whilst at the same time offering economic and social benefits, which are particularly important for the re-vitalization of local communities. Mr. Akira Yanagimoto welcomed the establishment of the [Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies](#) and offered support of the Ministry of Environment of Japan for a meeting of the Expert Group to be held in Tokyo in spring 2024.



H.E. Ms. Lotte Machon
*State Secretary for Development Policy, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs, Denmark*

H.E. Ms. Lotte Machon, State Secretary for Development Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark, spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries of Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark. She reiterated the need for coordinated, concerted and integrated policy action on climate and the SDGs at local, national, and international levels. The Nordic countries see taking nexus approaches to policy making as a top priority, and have made organizational and institutional realignments in this regard. Ms. Lotte Machon also noted that Denmark was pleased to have hosted the [1st UN Climate and SDGs Conference](#) in Copenhagen in 2019.

Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), pointed out the importance of the Asia-Pacific region, both as a major contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, as well as an important source of solutions. Countries of the Asia-Pacific region are making increasing use of renewable sources of energy, energy efficiency investments, and regional power grid interconnections to advance achievement of both SDG 7 and SDG 13.



Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana,
Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)



Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif,
Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements
Programme (UN-Habitat)

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), addressed the topic of strengthening synergies between the Paris Agreement and SDG 11. She noted that achievement of SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities is off-track and unlikely to be achieved by 2030 if business as usual continued. Homelessness is on the rise globally. There is a continuing global housing deficit, and slums have expanded to 1.1 billion people by 2020. Access to basic urban services remain limited.

Only 51.6 per cent of the global population have access to public transport. 660 million lack access to electricity. 2.2 billion people lack access to clean drinking water, and 3.4 billion people lack proper sanitation services. Maimunah Sharif called for global action on human settlements to be scaled up and for the necessary resources to be committed to address the global urban and the global climate challenge in an integrated manner.

In her statement, **Ms. Rabab Fatima**, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), focused on the situation in the 92 most vulnerable countries, including the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, which are already confronted with the impacts of climate change without having contributed to the cause of the problem. Most LDCs are facing a serious fiscal and debt crisis. In 2020 and 2021, many African countries owed debt service payments often twice



Ms. Rabab Fatima,
High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island
Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)

that of what was received in official development assistance (ODA). For many SIDS and African countries climate change is an existential issue. Early warning systems and national adaptation plans remain entirely inadequate. Early operationalization of the UNFCCC Loss and Damage Fund should alleviate the situation. Much greater technical and financial assistance is urgently needed.

Ministers, High-level Representatives, and Heads of UN Organizations also reflected on ***Synergistic action on SDGs and climate: Policy options for the way forward.***



(Right to left) H.E. Mr. Majid Al Suwaidi, Director-General of the COP28 and Special Representative of the UAE; H.E. Mr. Antonio Augusto Junho Anastasia, Minister at the Federal Court of Accounts of Brazil - Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of Brazil; H.E. Ms. Verónica Tomei, Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Germany; H.E. Ms. Romina Khursheed Alam, Member of Parliament, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan; H.E. Ms. Martha Wangari, Member of Parliament, Kenya; Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP; Ms. Fatou Haidara, Deputy Director-General, UNIDO

In his statement, **H.E. Mr. Majid Al Suwaidi**, Director-General of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP28) and Special Representative of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), also stressed the importance of climate and SDG synergies, which fundamentally informed the approach of the UAE to the upcoming UNFCCC Conference. The world needs sustainable social and economic growth coupled with accelerated climate action. One cannot come at the expense of the other. The COP28 Presidency recognizes the inevitable phase down of fossil fuel in a responsible just manner, and it established four priorities in its approach to the upcoming Conference:



H.E. Mr. Majid Al Suwaidi,
Director-General of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP28) and Special Representative of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

(1) We must fast-track the energy transition. The COP Presidency calls for a tripling of renewable energy and a doubling of hydrogen by 2030. It also calls for greater efforts to de-carbonize industry and heavy emitting sectors. (2) Action on either climate or the SDGs is entirely dependent on resources. The COP Presidency aims to help fix climate finance by helping to deliver 100 billion US\$ per year, and by attracting more private capital through de-risking investments and unlocking concessional loans (3) Lives and livelihoods. The COP Presidency is committed to concluding the global goal on adaptation, and to advancing programmes on adaptation, the operationalization of the loss and damage fund, and the operationalization of the just transition work programme. (4) The COP Presidency will seek to advance inclusivity at all levels.



H.E. Mr. Antonio Augusto Junho Anastasia,
*Minister at the Federal Court of Accounts of Brazil /
"Tribunal de Contas da Uniao" (TCU) - Supreme Audit
Institution (SAI) of Brazil*

H.E. Mr. Antonio Augusto Junho Anastasia, Minister at the Federal Court of Accounts of Brazil / "Tribunal de Contas da Uniao" (TCU) - Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of Brazil, emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in the implementation of public and private programmes, including environmental programmes. The International Association of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) is a non-governmental organization accredited with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

In her statement, **H.E. Ms. Verónica Tomei**, Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection, Germany, underscored three important points: (1) Policies need to deliver advances on multiple goals at the same time. (2) Decision making needs to be based on participatory Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Stakeholder approaches. (3) Climate and SDG collaborative action needs to be implemented at national and at international levels. Germany's Ministry of Environment places great emphasis on mitigating pollution and on the development of a national circular economy strategy. In September 2023, Germany will host the Fifth Meeting of the International Conference on Chemical Management (ICCM5).



H.E. Ms. Verónica Tomei,
*Commissioner for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development, Federal Ministry for the Environment,
Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer
Protection, Germany*



H.E. Ms. Romina Khursheed Alam,
Member of Parliament, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and Convener of the SDGs Task Force of Pakistan

In her statement, **H.E. Ms. Romina Khursheed Alam**, Member of Parliament, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and Convener of the SDGs Task Force of Pakistan, expressed the appreciation of the Parliament and the people of Pakistan for the support provided by the United Nations. In 2022, Pakistan suffered extreme losses, when one third of the country was flooded, affecting 33 million people, with 1700 lives lost, and causing more than 6.4 trillion Rupees in damages. Pakistan contributed less than 1 per cent to global greenhouse as emissions, but suffered great losses as a consequence of climate change.

H.E. Ms. Martha Wangari, Member of Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Caucus on SDGs, First Chairperson of the Speaker Panel, and Vice-Chairperson of the Liaison Committee, speaking on behalf of the Government of Kenya, noted that according to recent studies, Africa may be more affected by climate change than any other continent.

Annual losses and costs associated with climate change were estimated at some 50 billion US\$ annually. In order to cope with the challenge, Kenya has adopted a National Adaptation Plan 2015-2030 and updated its NDC in December 2020. In addition, Kenya has formulated and is implementing sector specific strategies. In collaboration with the African Union Commission, the Government of Kenya will host the Africa Climate Summit in September 2023, in preparation for the UN Climate Ambition Summit 2023 and the UNFCCC COP 2023.



H.E. Ms. Martha Wangari,
Member of Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Caucus on SDGs, First Chairperson of the Speaker Panel, and Vice-Chairperson of the Liaison Committee, Kenya



Ms. Inger Andersen,
Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), warned that by 2030, hundreds of millions of people may still remain hungry, remain in poverty, and remain without electricity if no significant action is taken on climate and the SDGs now. The international community must act to stop nature and biodiversity loss. It must reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase the use of renewable energy, phase out coal and other fossil fuel use, and optimize the use of nature-based solutions.

If more social approaches are implemented and if low-carbon nature-positive investment and finance is provided, the world community can realize many benefits and can deliver across the entire sustainable development agenda.

Ms. Fatou Haidara, Deputy Director-General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), noted that only 7 years remain to achieve the envisaged climate and SDGs. Progress on both fronts is mixed and challenges remain immense.

UNIDO works to advance decarbonisation of end use sectors, including heavy industries, and promotes dissemination and use of renewable energy. UNIDO's development support strategy builds on innovation, infrastructure, and new emerging technologies. UNIDO also supports the building of local skills, including among women and youth groups. UNIDO's local green tech innovation programme, its industrial decarbonisation initiative, and its promotion of green public procurement are all elements that can support the transition to a low-carbon future.



Ms. Fatou Haidara,
Deputy Director-General, United Nations Industrial
Development Organization (UNIDO)

This concludes the Statements by Ministers, High-level Representatives and Heads of UN Organizations. Video recordings of the complete statements can be accessed on the [Conference Webpage](#).

1.4 Scene Setting Presentations

Presentation of the latest IPCC findings on climate and sustainable development

Professor Youba Sokona, Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), presented a keynote address summarizing the main findings of the Sixth Cycle of IPCC Assessment Reports. IPCC reports are warning that the present pace and scale of climate action are insufficient to tackle climate change. The IPCC observed that climate change has already caused widespread and substantial losses to almost every aspect of human life on this planet and the impact on future generations will depend on the choices we make now. Every bit of warming matters. The warmer the planet gets the more widespread and pronounced the changes in both average climate and weather extremes become.

IPCC Reports also give reasons for hope. Mainstreaming effective and equitable climate action now will reduce losses and damages for nature and people. Climate action provides co-benefits.

Multiple, feasible and effective options are available to reduce emissions and adapt to human-caused climate change. Our choices matter and the faster we act the better off we will all be.

IPCC Reports point to the need to increase financing for climate action. We need 3-6 times the current climate investment. There is enough global financing to reduce emissions. However, developing countries will require external funding to meet their adaptation needs. Options are available to scale up financing.



Mr. Youba Sokona,
Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The key enablers for effective climate action include political commitment, inclusive governance, international cooperation, effective environmental stewardship, and the sharing of our knowledge

Professor Youba Sokona's slide presentation can be accessed [here](#).

Presentation and summary report on 3rd Climate and SDG Synergies Conference in Tokyo, Japan (2022)

Professor Kazuhiko Takeuchi, President, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan presented a brief summary of the 3rd Climate and SDG Synergies Conference, which was held in Tokyo, Japan, in July 2022, and was attended by more than 2000 participants, including some 130 speakers, and 30 Ministers and High-level Representatives.

Main Findings of the Conference:

- Synergies are urgently needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement,
- All parts of Government and all parts of society can inject momentum into synergies,
- Just transition and leaving no one behind are critical to synergies and limiting trade-offs
- Enhancing capacity to pursue implementation is also crucial.

Main Recommendation of the Conference:

- Strengthen the evidence base
- Convene stakeholder dialogues at all levels
- Enhance integrated planning
- Build partnerships for transformation
- Inform key inter-governmental processes on climate and SDGs



Mr. Kazuhiko Takeuchi,
President, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

Many initiatives have already been implemented in Japan at local and national levels to apply these findings and recommendations in practice. The countrywide programme named “100 leading decarbonization areas” can be seen as one example. Under this programme, a variety of local initiatives have been implemented with the participation of corporations and citizen groups aimed at reducing local resource use and CO2 emission through increases of efficiency and other measures. Japan has also placed great emphasis on capacity building and on involving the youth in these programmes.

Detailed information on the 3rd Global Climate and SDG Synergies Conference can be obtained from the [Conference Report](#).

Presentation on the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies

Following up on recommendations of the Tokyo Conference of last year, UN DESA and UNFCCC have formed an **Expert Group to prepare the First Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies**.

CO-LEADS



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Tolullah Oni
 Clinical Director of Research, University of Cambridge & Founder, UrbanBetter



Youba Sokona
 Vice Chair
 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



Barbara Buchner
 Global Managing Director,
 Climate Policy Initiative

Mr. Luis Gomez Echeverri, Co-lead of the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and **Ms. Diana Ürge-Vorsatz**, Director, Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Development Policy and Member of the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, made a joint presentation at the Conference to introduce the panel shown above, its emerging programme of work, and some of the preliminary findings and recommendations.



Ms. Diana Ürge-Vorsatz,
*Director, Center for Climate Change and Sustainable
Development Policy and Member of the Expert Group on
Climate and SDG Synergies*

As part of the scope of work, the Expert Group was tasked to review materials of previous Conferences and to conduct a comprehensive review of the pertinent literature and case studies. The objectives of the report include the development of an analytical tool for decision makers to increase the consideration of synergies. It is planned to make the report of the Expert Group available at relevant upcoming meetings, including the United Nations SDG Summit later this year, the UNFCCC COP 28, and at the United Nations Summit of the Future in 2024.

IPCC Reports point to the need to increase financing for climate action. We need 3-6 times the current climate investment. There is enough global financing to reduce emissions. However, developing countries will require external funding to meet their adaptation needs. Options are available to scale up financing.

As outlined by the speakers, the Report of the Expert Group would need to deal with a number of challenging questions. How can a national and/or international platform to share evidence look like? Could synergistic policy making on climate and the SDGs be part of the ongoing debate on reforming the financial architecture that supports climate and sustainable development action? How adequate or inadequate are the existing reporting mechanisms, such as the NDC and VNR Reports? How can concerns related to just transition be better included?

The Expert Group has already reviewed many case studies relating to climate action and the SDGs and is preparing an inventory of the most relevant best practices. As part of their comparative review of the existing reports, the Expert Group found that only 23 of the 173 NDC Reports make an explicit reference to SDGs. These references relate to SDGs 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, and 17, whereas SDG, 1, 5, 10, and 16 are practically never mentioned. The Expert Group also observed that NDCs submitted by high-income and by low-income countries tend to differ in their cross-references to the SDGs. Whereas NDCs submitted by low-income developing countries include references to SDGs 2, 7, 15, and 17, NDCs submitted by high-income developed countries include references to SDGs 7, 9, 11, and 15.

The presenters noted that, at this stage, the work of the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies is still in progress. However, **preliminary findings indicate following key messages:**

- **Synergistic approaches can offer and lead to multiple benefits:** Considerable co-benefits can be derived from increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness during implementation.
- **Systems approaches are not regularly used for planning and evaluation:** There appears to be a lack of standardized methods for mapping and quantification of co-benefits and trade-offs.
- **Interlinkages between fuel use and air quality frequently recognized in NDCs:**
 - 16.9% of the NDCs recognize the interlinkages between fuel/energy use and air quality.
 - NDCs of low-income countries place more emphasis on SDGs and Synergies.
- **Climate action and achievement of SDGs would need increased financing and political will:**
 - Large investment and financing gaps and lack of political continue to hinder progress in SDG and climate actions.
 - Social and distributional impacts of policies need greater consideration.
- **Lack of sufficient interaction between science and policy making processes:**
 - There continues to be a significant disconnect between scientific evidence and applied policy action. There is also a shortage of skilled practitioners who can adopt systems thinking.
 - Complex governance and institutional arrangements prevent sharing of information and collaboration.
- **Attention to synergies can be context-dependent:** The nature and magnitude of synergy may change depending on the context. In the global south, GHG mitigation actions are frequently focused on land use and related SDGs. In the global north, countries are frequently focused on clean energy and cost-effectiveness.
- **Local initiatives can have global benefits:** External benefits are typically not included in project evaluations,
- **Overarching framework for reporting is missing:** There could be scope for an overarching framework for reporting and monitoring (e.g. NDCs, VNRs, co-benefits and SDG synergies reporting).
- **Integration is the key:** Climate and development objectives must be effectively integrated financially and budgetarily across sectors.

The full presentation of the Expert Group representatives can be accessed [here](#).

1.5 Panel Discussion with distinguished stakeholder representatives: Delivering a just transition by tackling the climate and SDG agendas together

The panel discussion brought together distinguished experts from different organizations and regions to share their experiences and views on how development and climate action can best become more synergistic and coordinated. The session aimed to shed light on key enablers, areas of progress and success towards ensuring fair, inclusive, and equitable transitions towards a climate resilient and net-zero future. The panel discussion was moderated by **Mr. James Grabert**, Director, Mitigation Division, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).



(Right to left) **Mr. Ahmed Owda**, Major Group of Children and Youth; **Mr. Martin Whittaker**, Founder and CEO, JUST Capital; **H.E. Ms. Nawal Al-Hosany**, Permanent Representative of UAE to IRENA; **Mr. James Grabert**, Director, Mitigation Division, UNFCCC; **Mr. Tulio Andrade**, Head for Climate Negotiations, Climate Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil; **Ms. Doreen Harris**, President and CEO, NYSERDA; **Mr. Huang Guohui**, Executive Vice President, Xiamen Airlines

Mr. Ahmed Owda, Member of Coordination Team SCP Youth Platform, spoke on behalf of the Major Group of Children and Youth. In his statement, he pointed out that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement would be incomplete without meaningful engagement of young people. He reminded participants that the Major Group of Children and Youth has already issued several statements and declarations relating to climate change and sustainable development.



Mr. Ahmed Owda,
Member of Coordination Team SCP Youth Platform

He observed that with this Conference, Climate and SDG Synergies were for the first time discussed at HLPF. He called for reporting the recommendations of the Conference to the UN General Assembly and to the UN Climate Summit, and for their implementation without delay. He called for additional resources to be made available to support the concerns of the Youth, and called upon the United Nations Organizations not to associate themselves with any industries which may be responsible for the planetary environmental destruction.



H.E. Ms. Nawal Al-Hosany,
*Permanent Representative of United Arab Emirates (UAE)
to International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)*

H.E. Ms. Nawal Al-Hosany, Permanent Representative of United Arab Emirates (UAE) to International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), highlighted a number of relevant and successful programmes and initiatives taken by the Government and the private sectors of the UAE, aimed at realizing climate and SDG synergies. The UAE is committed to enhance the achievement of the SDGs, increase the use of renewable energy, and achieve a net-zero carbon economy by 2050. In addition to its National Climate Change Plan 2017-

2050, the UAE has also adopted a National Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NCCAP), which seeks to advance SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 14 (Life below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

Mr. Tulio Andrade, Head for Climate Negotiations, Climate Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil, underlined that the Government of Brazil is giving renewed priority to the protection of the global climate, whilst it is also committed to combat hunger and poverty. He recalled that the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change were born together in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Earlier this year, the Government of Brazil re-established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change and Green Growth, and it published its plans for reducing deforestation in the Amazon. One of the challenges faced by the authorities in Brazil is that the protection of the environment and the management and the reduction of deforestation must go hand-in-hand with the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and the promotion of the bio-economy in the concerned regions.



Mr. Tulio Andrade,
*Head for Climate Negotiations, Climate Department,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil*

In Brazil, the transition processes will need to also take care of the concerns of the indigenous people. With policy approaches based on the values of empathy, solidarity and trust, Brazil is also seeking to support and advance regional and international cooperation, including through the hosting of the Summit of the Amazon in Belem later this year. Brazil is also looking forward to the opportunity of hosting the UNFCCC COP30 in 2025. At that time a new round of NDCs will be submitted that will hopefully close the ambition gaps.



Mr. Martin Whittaker,
Founder and CEO, JUST Capital

Mr. Martin Whittaker, Founder and CEO, JUST Capital, called upon participants to seek greater cooperation with the private sector and the business community. In his statement, he drew the attention of the Conference to the corporate leadership of companies based in the United States which pays more attention to environmental concerns, including climate change, than may commonly be expected. Market research undertaken by JUST Capital suggests that over 80 percent of the world's largest corporations support the SDGs, and some 40 per

cent of the 200 largest publicly traded companies in the United States have set themselves measurable emission reduction targets. Many companies have also voluntarily committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The business community has recognized the positive ground swell of growing public support for climate action. The G7 Impact Task Force was initiated to mobilize private capital at scale for people and planet. With regard to advancing processes of just transition, conference participants may also be interested to learn more about the Business Commission to Tackle Inequality, an Initiative of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) launched in 2021.

Ms. Doreen Harris, President and CEO, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) pointed out that the New York State economy is the 10th largest economy in the world. New York established the State Climate Action Council and adopted the goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 per cent by 2050. In order to facilitate this profound energy transition, New York State established an institutional framework that places justice at the center by forming a Climate Justice Working Group and a Just Transition Working Group. In the transition process, decision makers face both hard and soft challenges.



Ms. Doreen Harris,
President and CEO, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)

Hard challenges refer to the necessary investments and changes in the infrastructure. Soft challenges include the social, political and psychological barriers in the State-wide and in the local decision-making processes. New York State seeks to mobilize community participation in the planning of its energy sector investments. In order to ensure social outcomes, the law requires that at least 35 per cent of benefits accrue to underserved communities. In this manner investments should be directed to where people want them. The institutional arrangements and the regulatory framework established in New York State can be expected to advance the envisaged energy transition in a just, equitable and timely manner, and could be seen as a model that can be replicated elsewhere.



Mr. Huang Guohui,
Executive Vice President, Xiamen Airlines

Mr. Huang Guohui, Executive Vice President, Xiamen Airlines, informed participants that Xiamen Airlines was the first commercial Chinese airline company committed to support the United Nations and its efforts to promote the Sustainable Development Goals. Xiamen Airline Company is committed to promote the transition to a green economy in the transport sector. In the airline industry, it is particularly difficult to reduce carbon emissions. However, Xiamen Airlines has implemented many initiatives on the ground and in

the air, and as been able to significantly reduce carbon emission in its operations. Among other measures, Xiamen Airline encourages passenger to reduce the weight of their luggage, offering frequent flyer miles as a reward. Furthermore, Xiamen Airlines and its passengers regularly purchase carbon offsets, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of air travel. Xiamen Airlines is also among the first airline to use sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) in its commercial flights.

This concludes the panel discussion. Video recordings of the complete statements can be accessed on the [Conference Webpage](#).

Lunch break and networking



2. Conference Parallel Sessions

Breaking down silos and building synergies through shared evidence and scalable action

The [2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development](#) and the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#) were both adopted in 2015. Today, we are already at the half-way mark in implementing the [SDG targets](#) and at the [first global stocktake](#) of climate action. Where did we make progress? Where do we remain off-track? How can synergistic climate and SDG action be stepped up? How can we harness co-benefits of coordinated climate and SDG action? And how can we minimize trade-offs?

2.1 Parallel Session 1: A just, equitable and net-zero transition – how to get it right?

This year, the [High-Level Political Forum](#) considered progress on SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. In this session, invited experts pointed out practical options for maximizing co-benefits and minimizing trade-offs in achieving the SDGs and the goals of the Paris Agreement. Experts shared viewpoints, experiences, evidence, and case studies. Invited experts also identified and described the conditions under which economic and net-zero transition processes are inclusive, fair, and leave no one behind.



Photo of the conference room during the Parallel Session 1

Guiding questions:

- Economic prosperity and climate protection are often still seen as a “trade-off”. How can nexus approaches to harnessing climate and SDG synergies facilitate win-win solutions for all? What are some best practices?
- What are key enablers at global, national, and sub-national levels that can help achieve progress on both climate mitigation and adaptation while also reduce poverty and enhance social inclusion?
- How can social inclusion and just transition be insured as countries and other stakeholders embark on turning their net-zero goals and commitments into reality?
- What are some sector-specific challenges and opportunities for alignment and integration of equity and ‘leaving no one behind’ principles in net-zero transition plans?

Moderator:

Ms. Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Director, Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Policy

Special statements and presentations:

- Message of **Mr. David Cooper**, Acting Executive Director, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), delivered by Ms. Sakhile Silitshena, Head of Science, Policy and Governance, UNCBD
- **Mr. Nebojsa Nakicenovic**, Member of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, European Commission, former Deputy Director of International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) (*Presentation available [here](#)*)

Moderated discussion with invited panelists:

- **Ms. Shinobu Yume Yamaguchi**, Professor, Director of United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), Tokyo, Japan
- **Mr. Paul N. Mbuti**, Senior Deputy Director Renewable Energy, Ministry of Energy, Kenya
- **Ms. Hannah Janetschek**, Director, Sustainable Development Policies, Office of German Council for Sustainable Development
- **Mr. Christopher Dekki**, Director, Global Advocacy and Engagement, Partnership for Sustainable Low-Carbon Transport (SLOCAT)
- **Ms. Fiona Tregenna**, South African Research Chair in Industrial Development, University of Johannesburg
- **Mr. Gabriel Ferrero de Loma-Osorio**, Ambassador at Large for Global Food Security (of Spain) and Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- **Ms. Sonja Koepfel**, Secretary, Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, and Co-Secretary, Protocol on Water and Health, Environment Division, UNECE
- **Mr. Nagesh Kumar**, Director of Indian Institute for Studies in Industrial Development
- **Ms. Mirjam Reiner**, Associate Programme Officer, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)
- **Mr. Paul Adepelumi**, Executive Director, African Center for Advocacy and Human Development

Salient points

Participants observed that the world is at a crossroads. There are enormous challenges stemming from multiple crises, but there are also great opportunities to achieve a just and safe future for all. Participants pointed out that the science on climate change was already clear 50 years ago. However, emissions are still increasing even today, instead of decreasing.

Participants reported and shared recommendations of recent reports and statements of the [International Science Council \(ISC\)](#), which called for integrated in lieu of fragmented approaches, more action instead of rhetoric on “leaving no one behind”, and more local action. Members of the ISC identified six integrative areas for transformations to advance progress towards the 2030 Agenda, including human capacity, demography and health; sustainable consumption and production; decarbonization and energy; agriculture, food, biosphere and water; smart cities and mobility; and the digital revolution.



Mr. Nagesh Kumar,
*Director of Indian Institute for Studies in Industrial
Development*



Ms. Sakhile Silitshena ,
*Head of Science, Policy and Governance, United Nations
Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)*

Participants discussed the practical obstacles to achieving integrated solutions. It was observed that “The world has problems, science has disciplines, governments have ministries, ministries have departments, and businesses have business units, all with segmented and specialized tasks”. Hence, integrated decision making will remain a challenge for some time to come.

Participants noted that the protection of biodiversity should be considered as an integral part of synergistic solutions. [The Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) and the recently adopted [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) call for cohesive approaches that enhance the use of eco-system services and nature-based solutions whilst protecting biodiversity. Protection of biodiversity can and should be seen as complementary to climate protection, but not as an alternative.

Participants cautioned against approaches that may solve one problem, but possibly create another. In spite of the urgency to find solutions to the looming climate crisis, participants warned against some proposed geo engineering interventions which could have a massive impact on biodiversity.

Participants reflected on the various interlinkages between water and energy and the many opportunities for reducing GHG emissions through improvements in resource conservation and efficiency. Significant synergies can be achieved by greater international and transboundary cooperation in water and energy planning. [The Global Water Data Portal](#) supported by FAO is one important new tool in this regard.

Participants reflected on the challenges of translating knowledge on sustainable development into practical projects and solutions on the ground. In this context, participants emphasized that the “context matters”. Situations differ between countries and locations, and site-specific conditions always need to be taken into account.

Participants observed that several developing countries have already successfully embarked on policies and projects addressing climate and development in an integrated way, but many other developing countries remain constrained by limited capacities and a lack of resources.

The representative of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) highlighted the many benefits that can be derived from an accelerated energy transition. Greater investment in renewable energy could create up to 85 million new jobs between now and 2030. Studies suggest that GDP growth could also be accelerated significantly. However, it was also observed that renewable energy industries are not distributed evenly around the world. Whereas European and Asian countries would likely benefit from such a transition, many African countries may lag behind.



Mr. Paul N. Mbuti,
Senior Deputy Director Renewable Energy, Ministry of Energy, Kenya



Audience in the Conference Room

It was observed that countries that are late-comers in their industrialization endeavours, such as India, have a benefit of leaping directly onto new “green” processes and products. In India, as well as in South Africa, public and private sectors are embarking on ambitious programmes to develop and use new renewable energy technologies. In order to advance the transition to new and sustainable technologies in developing countries, participants called for greater facilitation of technology transfer as envisaged under [Article 66.2 of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights \(TRIPs\)](#).

Synergistic approaches are also needed in agriculture and food production which are, of course, essential for human livelihoods, but can also contribute significantly to GHG emissions and biodiversity loss.

Climate smart agriculture can contribute to climate solutions, but social and distributional aspects always need to be considered. Agricultural policies need to support smallholder farmers with a view to ensure local food production and food security. Displacement of small-scale farming by large-scale commercial biofuel production must be avoided.

Participants also flagged the importance of synergistic approaches to transport of goods and passengers which accounted to an estimated 22 per cent of global climate emissions in 2019. Like energy, transport is crucial enabler for the achievement of all other SDGs. Members of the Partnership for Sustainable Low-Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) call for policies and measures that (a) seek to avoid potentially unnecessary trips, (b) shift trips from individual private motorized transport to public transport, where available, and (c) seek to improve transport technologies by making them more fuel efficient. SLoCaT members call for a drastic reduction in fossil fuel subsidies to mobilize funding for the investment in public transport.



Ms. Sonja Koeppel, Secretary, Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, and Co-Secretary, Protocol on Water and Health, Environment Division, UNECE



Audience in the Conference Room

Participants shared experiences on possible institutional arrangements that can facilitate multi-stakeholder participation in decision making processes. As an ad-hoc and temporary Body, the German Government in 2018 established the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment, also known as the Coal Commission. This multi-stakeholder Commission looked at all the environmental, economic and social implications of the exit from coal and, as far as possible, facilitated a consensus. Similar multi-stakeholder consultation processes may also provide a useful framework for other countries faced with challenges in the socio-economic structural transition processes. Other arrangements include independent permanent standing advisory committees that advise governments on environmental, climate, and/or other sustainable development issues.

Participants also heard a statement by a representative of the Children and Youth Major Group calling for greater national and global social justice and a more rapid transition to a low carbon future, including discontinuation of extractive industries and a fair compensation of communities in developing countries for environmental losses and damages.

Delegates attending the Roundtable Discussion also recalled Article 4 of the Paris Climate Agreement stating that countries define their own Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), taking into account their different national circumstances.

Similarly, countries should independently define their needs and options regarding just transition, taking into account prevailing national and local economic circumstances. Participants also articulated their concerns that transition processes can lead to lost incomes, job losses, high capital costs, and new and unknown commercial and other risks.

2.2 Parallel Session 2: Climate action as an avenue for social and economic change – how to get all stakeholders on board?

In this session, invited speakers highlighted examples and best practices of integrated approaches to planning, coordination, and implementation of climate action and SDGs at national, regional and local levels. Invited speakers gave particular attention to inclusive processes that bring on board all levels of government, as well as participatory approaches that include voices of multi-stakeholders including youth, indigenous communities, civil society, and the private sector.



Photo of the conference room during the Parallel Session 2



Mr. Kaveh Guilanpour,
Vice-President for International Strategies, C2ES



H.E. Ms. Giovanna Valverde Stark,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to UNEP and UN-Habitat

Guiding questions:

- How can Governments enhance integrated decision making on climate and SDGs?
- Public support for climate action has been growing widely. However, in many areas vested interests continue to oppose transition. What are some ways to overcome resistance to transitions and ensure ownership and accountability?
- How can un(der)represented stakeholder groups be empowered? How can their participation in decision making processes on climate action and SDGs be facilitated?
- How can reporting on NDCs include better consideration of SDGs? How can VNR reporting more systematically include considerations on climate change?
- What can cities and local authorities do to address climate change and SDGs integration?

Moderator:

Mr. Kaveh Guilanpour, Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Vice-President for International Strategies, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES)

Special statements and presentations:

- **H.E. Ms. Giovanna Valverde Stark**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to UNEP and UN-Habitat, Nairobi, and Co-Chair of the Board of the 10 YFP
- **Mr. Moustapha Kamal Gueye**, Director, Priority Action Programme, Just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies, International Labour Organization (ILO) (*Presentation available [here](#)*)
- **Mr. Norichika Kanie**, Professor, Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University (*Presentation available [here](#)*)

Moderated roundtable:

- **Ms. Wu Changhua**, Senior Global Fellow, Institute for Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE), Beijing, and Chief Executive Officer, Beijing Future Innovation Center
- **Ms. Doris Edem Agbevivi**, Senior Officer, Energy Efficiency Coordinator, Drive Electric Initiative, Energy Commission of Ghana
- **Ms. Toni-Shae Freckleton**, Chief of New York Office, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
- **Mr. Nicolas Franke**, Coordinator and Programme Officer, Hydrology, Water Resources and Cryosphere Branch, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- **Mr. Diego Lopez Gonzalez**, Development Cooperation Policy Coordinator, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Representative of Workers and Trade Union Major Group
- **Mr. Edward Thomas Porokwa**, Executive Director, Pastoralists Indigenous NGO (PINGO) Forum - Tanzania, Representative of Indigenous Peoples Major Group
- **Mr. Pär Liljert**, Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM), New York Office
- **Mr. Ivaylo Valev**, Head of Eastern Europe Section, Subdivision for Maritime Development, International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Salient Points

In the outset, it was pointed out that 2023 was a very important year for climate and SDS action. With the *First Global Stocktake* coming up at the COP28, countries will have opportunities not only to review and increase their climate action, but also reflect on the SDGs in the formulation of their *Long-term Strategies*, their next *Nationally Determined Contributions*, their *Adaptation Plans*, and their reports under the *Enhanced Transparency Framework*.

The moderator also pointed out that existing mandates under the UNFCCC provided several fora where advancements on SDGs could also be discussed. These included the ongoing consultations on new *Financial Targets*, the new *Mitigation Work Programme*, the *Just Transition Work Programme*, the consultations on the framework for the new *Global Goal on Adaptation*, as well as the various mandates pertaining to *Loss and Damage*.



Mr. Moustapha Kamal Gueye,
Director, International Labour Organization (ILO)



Mr. Norichika Kanie,
Professor, Graduate School of Media and Governance,
Keio University

Participants were informed of the [10 Year Framework of Programmes of Sustainable Consumption and Production \(10 YFP\)](#), which is supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and which has recently been extended to the year 2030. Under this programme, consumer and producer representatives as well as other stakeholders can come together to explore opportunities for advancing environmental protection and sustainable development.

The need for continuity in political decision making on climate and the SDGs was underlined. Costa Rica is one of the developing countries that has defined long-term plans to guide public and private sectors in their decision making. Plans include the National Decarbonization Plan 2018-2050, a National Strategy to promote a circular economy, and the National Strategy for Blue Carbon, which protects the country's coastal and marine ecosystems.

The representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasized that synergies can lead to a positive narrative on jobs and social issues. This is particularly important as global unemployment is still estimated at 208 million, and the world is still facing a persistent job crisis. The ILO estimates global economic transition processes as potentially adding 100 million jobs by 2030, whilst some 80 million jobs may be lost due to the restructuring. He also emphasized that social aspects are indispensable, as climate action is not about numbers, but about people.

With capacity building, training, and the right set of skills, workers can advance the transition to more climate and environment friendly processes. He also stressed that additional financing will be required to support just transition processes. The aforementioned key points were also echoed by the representative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Participants reflected on the discussion of transition processes in the new [Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#) released in 2023. The Report observes that transition is possible, even inevitable. It describes important tools and levers available to policy makers to steer and to advance dynamic transformation processes. Innovation, foresight capacity, stakeholder engagement, and positive support by vested interest groups are all important aspects that can impact transition processes.

Participants also stated that many developing countries and their economic planning authorities have already anticipated synergies between the various SDGs in their integrated planning processes. However, in some cases, keeping all reporting up-to-date and presenting big data to the public in a transparent, simplified, and easily comprehensible manner may still be a challenge that needs to and can be addressed. It was also noted that supporting and strengthening national reporting capacities in developing countries will be crucial, given the agreed new reporting formats and requirements.

Participants pointed out the importance of localizing climate action plans. In this manner, the need for climate action and its benefits will be better understood by the public. Participants also shared information on efforts in disaster risk reduction (DRR), recalling the [Sendai Framework on DRR](#) that was also adopted in 2015. It was observed that many of the disasters that have occurred since were likely aggravated by factors related to climate change.

Participants underscored the need for the Secretary-General's initiative of [Early Warnings for All](#) which took off from UNFCCC COP27 and is implemented by UNDRR in cooperation with WMO, particularly for the benefit of LDC, LLDC, and SIDS countries.



Ms. Doris Edem Agbevivi,
Senior Officer, Energy Efficiency Coordinator, Drive
Electric Initiative, Energy Commission of Ghana



Mr. Diego Lopez Gonzalez,
Development Cooperation Policy Coordinator,
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Participants also stressed the role and the importance of water in the global climate system. Participants observed that references to water and SDG 6 were almost entirely missing in the NDC reporting, even though water plays such an important role for human life and economies. WMO, together with UNECE and UNESCO, co-convened the [UN Expert Group on Water and Climate Change](#) to raise awareness and improve understanding in this area. Participants underlined the usefulness of the Global Water Information System that is expected to be developed as an outcome of the United Nations Water Conference.

Participants noted the need to support and empower local governments, including city administrations, not only to cope with climate change impacts, but also to manage issues related to migration.



Mr. Edward Thomas Porokwa, Pastoralists Indigenous NGO (PINGO) Forum; **Mr. Pär Liljert**, International Organization for Migration (IOM); **Mr. Nicolas Franke**, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)



Speakers and audience in the Conference Room

The representative of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) informed participants of the work of the IMO as the United Nations Specialized Agency on international shipping. He also briefed participants of the recent decisions of IMO member states. The revised IMO GHG Strategy includes an enhanced common ambition to reach net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping close to 2050, a commitment to ensure an uptake of alternative zero and near-zero GHG fuels by 2030, as well as indicative check-points for 2030 and 2040. This recent decision of the IMO Committee on the Marine Environment can be seen as a new chapter in the efforts of maritime decarbonization. It is intended to also reform the necessary mechanisms to support LDCs and SIDS.

Attention of participants was also drawn to the concerns of indigenous people and their communities, which can be negatively affected by climate change, as well as by climate action.

Collective and individual rights of indigenous people are often ignored, and people have been displaced without adequate or even any form of compensation. Programmes aimed at financing climate action and/or SDGs should include financing for indigenous people, if indeed no one is to be left behind.

Reiterating the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in decision making processes related to climate and the SDGs, participants also pointed to the advantages and the new opportunities opened up by digital technologies.

Modern means of communication can make information sharing and participatory decision-making processes faster, easier, and cheaper. Participants also offered and expressed interest in forming new partnerships to facilitate cooperation and follow up to the 4th Climate and SDGs Synergies Conference.

2.3 Parallel Session 3: Unlocking finance and partnerships for climate and SDG action – ow can it be done?

In this session, invited experts reflected on important means of implementation for advancing climate action and SDG synergies and enabling just transition. These include access to and use of public and private finance, technological innovation, as well as capacity development for sound data collection and analysis at local and national levels. This session also highlighted key elements, lessons learned and success stories of robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms for synergistic action.



Photo of the conference room during the Parallel Session 3



Ms. Meagan Fallone,
Founder Step-Up Advisers Ltd. and CARE Entrepreneur-in-Residence and Executive Advisor Climate Justice



Ms. Åsa Persson,
Research Director, Deputy Director, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

Guiding questions:

- How can resource mobilization for synergistic climate and development action be strengthened? Are there existing financing instruments that can help achieve that? Or is there a need to create new financing mechanisms for joint-up action and just transition plans?
- How does your organization contribute to local, national, or international cooperation on climate and SDG synergies? How can existing partnerships be further strengthened?
- How to create the enabling environment needed to enhance private sector's engagement and alignment with climate and development compatible pathways?
- What are good tools, methods and systems for data collection and analysis, and reporting mechanisms on climate and SDG synergies?
- What are some capacity development gaps that can be addressed to better harnessing climate and SDG synergies at all levels?
- What is the role of science, technology, and innovation in unlocking finance and partnerships for climate action and SDGs synergies?

Moderator:

Ms. Meagan Fallone, Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Founder Step-Up Advisers Ltd. and CARE Entrepreneur-in-Residence and Executive Advisor Climate Justice

Special Statements and Presentations:

- **Mr. Youba Sokona**, Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- **Ms. Åsa Persson**, Research Director, Deputy Director, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) member of Independent Group of Scientists preparing Global Sustainable Development Report (Presentation available [here](#))

Moderated roundtable:

- **Ms. Dima Al-Khatib**, Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
- **Mr. Zitouni Ould-Dada**, Deputy Director, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Environment, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- **Ms. Amanda McKee**, Director, Knowledge and Learning, NDC Partnership Support Unit
- **Ms. Frances Fuller**, Head of Global Offices and Director of Climate Analytics North America
- **Mr. Jorge Laguna Celis**, Head, One Planet Network, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi (Secretariat 10YFP)
- **Mr. Amir Dossal**, President and CEO, Global Partnerships Forum
- **Mr. Junichi Fujino**, Principal Researcher and Programme Director of Integrated Sustainability Center, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan
- **Mr. Kancheepuram N. Gunalan**, Co-Chair of UN STC MG, Chair WFEO UN Relations Committee, Senior Vice President AECOM
- **Mr. Zhang Xiaohua**, China Country Director, Beijing Office, Climateworks Foundation

Salient Points

At the outset, the moderator observed the frequent misalignment of financing, which is often drawn to short-term investments and extractive processes, whilst many opportunities for meaningful socio-economic development are not realized due to financial constraints. However, with social entrepreneurship, transition processes can be initiated and successfully advanced, helping the urban and rural poor in developing countries to support themselves. The [Women Barefoot Solar Initiative](#) is one such example. This initiative is supported by respective national governments and some international organizations, including the UN and the WWF. It empowers rural illiterate women in creating their own small-scale solar electrification schemes. Until now, the initiative has worked with some 200 partner organizations in 93 countries benefitting some 2 million people in rural and urban areas. The success of this programme shows that if the banking and financial sector re-defines risk and lending procedures, and if more supportive regulatory frameworks are put in place, transformation and more equitable outcomes are possible.

Innovative and new types of financial instruments are needed if persistent poverty is to be addressed more effectively. It was also stated that the road to better progress on synergies between the SDGs and climate, to more stable geopolitical situations, and the ability to address complexity, consequential thinking and unlocking economic prosperity is clearly linked to gender equity, diversity, and inclusion. Greater gender equity is urgently needed. A recent study of the Gates Foundation found that only 1 per cent of climate finance is distributed to women, women-owned businesses, and women at a community level.



Ms. Dima Al-Khatib,
United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

Several participants noted that in many developing countries, most notably in LDCs, LLDCs and in many SIDS, the growing debt burden directly and indirectly constrains the domestic mobilization of finance for climate action.

Participants reflected on several key points articulated in the [Global Sustainable Development Report 2023](#). In order to advance climate action and SDGs, the existing NDCs need to be implemented in a credible manner. It was pointed out that a variety of useful tracking, modeling, and impact assessment tools are available for policy makers and planners. All tools need to be used wisely and in a transparent manner.



Speakers and audience in the Conference Room

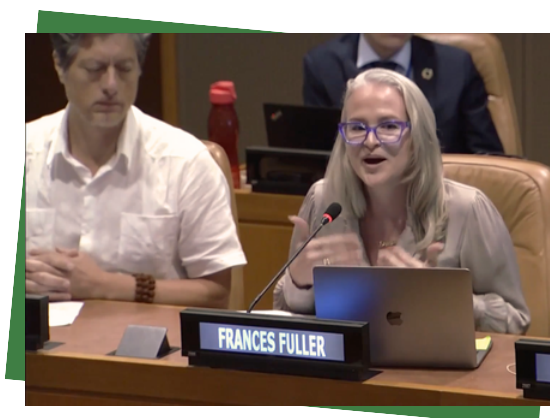
Participants also highlighted following important points: (a) we need greater coherence and coordination between different initiatives, (b) we need to be able to measure the results of our action on a regular basis, (c) we need more investment in synergistic programmes, and (d) we need to build capacities at the local levels. In order to attain the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement FAO has developed a road map showing the importance of the reduction of food loss and food waste, promotion of healthy diets, reduction of methane emissions, reduced global meat consumption, and more efficient applications of fertilizers.

The NDC Partnership brings together governmental and non-governmental organizations from some 115 countries and 80 international institutes and organizations with the aim to support climate action. Mobilization of financing for climate action is the main concern. Therefore, in addition to facilitating country-level and global partnerships, the NDC partnership seeks to mobilize more private sector engagement. With improved local regulatory frameworks and conditions for investments, risks can be re-assessed and more resources for blended financing can become available.

Similarly, the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, which was established in 1974, promotes the sharing of knowledge and technical know-how among developing countries. A variety of Trust Funds have been made available to support collaborative projects, including projects related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The South-South Galaxy is a web-based platform that has greatly facilitated the exchange of experiences among developing countries.

Another initiative has been highlighted by the representative of Climate Analytics, a global not-for-profit organization that also supports developing countries in formulating their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Strategies and in implementing envisaged climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Climate Analytics also assists clients in identifying potentially viable financing options for their respective projects.

Participants observed that climate science is still rapidly evolving and they reiterated the need to include the most recent scientific findings in the respective modeling and climate action planning.



Ms. Frances Fuller,
*Head of Global Offices and Director of Climate Analytics
North America*



Mr. Zhang Xiaohua,
*China Country Director, Beijing Office, Climateworks
Foundation*

Participants recalled the environmental and climate-related benefits of a circular economy and also underlined that reuse of materials and recycling can also have significant operational advantages and commercial benefits. The [One-Planet-Network](#) supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) facilitates the cooperation among actors coming together to advance achievement of SDG 12.

Similarly, the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) brings together national engineering institutions from more than 100 countries. In addition to providing guidance on the sustainable development of infrastructure, WFEO experts also issued publications on disaster risk management. WFEO also mobilizes the engineering community with a view to enhance decarbonization in energy-intensive industries, including cement and steel industries.



Speakers and audience in the Conference Room

Like in Parallel Session 2, participants attending Roundtable 3 also expressed their interest to take part in existing and/or new partnerships. The President of the Global Partnerships Forum put forward concrete proposals for facilitating international exchanges of experiences and cooperation.

Participants shared information on the institutional development for providing finance to climate-related projects. In Japan, the Ministry of Environment (MoEJ) recently upgraded its

“Green financing institution” into the “Japan Green Investment Corporation for Carbon Neutrality”, expanding its capital to the equivalent of 150 million US\$. In addition, the special MoEJ programme to establish up to 100 carbon-neutral business zones provides direct and indirect support to companies that are pioneering in the transition process.

The representative from Climateworks Foundation, a US-based philanthropy which works in various developing countries to support and scale up climate action, highlighted the work of the Foundations in advancing practical solutions, including in the area of renewable energy and its proliferation. In China, renewable energy development has been particularly fast and successful, because the country has invested in the entire value chain. Chinese companies are also working with African partners to help establish their own manufacturing capabilities. It can be observed that the economic transition to low-carbon processes and products occurs much faster when the concerned businesses have found their respective business model and market niche.

Leveraging financing for implementing new synergistic climate and SDG projects and initiatives will require a combination of mobilizing funding support from existing sources and the creation of new funding mechanisms. New funding mechanisms should be designed to enhance inclusivity, equity, and just transition. Funding mechanisms should pay particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable groups.

3. Conference Closing and the Way Forward

Breaking through to a better future for all

This segment has been moderated by **Ms. Bahareh Seyedi**, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA.

3.1 Presentation of Sessions and Conference Summaries

Moderators of three Parallel Sessions presented brief oral session summaries

Ms. Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Director, Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Policy, noted that Parallel Session 1 was very well attended and participants had very rich discussions. The session was entitled *A just, equitable and net-zero transition – how to get it right?* The Roundtable included views from both industrialized and developing countries, and experts representing many economic sectors contributed to the conversation. At the session, participants agreed that both climate and SDG action was insufficient and left many people behind. Participants identified more inclusive policy decision making as an important potential solution. Greater participation of all concerned stakeholders was important, particularly at the local level. Participants recommended exploring new methods and technologies, such as online consultations in situations in which in-person participation in stakeholder dialogues was not possible. Participants also recommended that decision makers make greater use of independent advisers, where possible. It was suggested to develop and apply new tools, such as infographics, to make complex issues and interlinkages better and easily understood. Participants also emphasized the importance of monitoring of progress, particularly on matters concerning vulnerable social groups. They also noted that the United Nations and other organizations still use Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the main and often single metric to measure well-being. It was also recommended that future Conferences on Climate and SDG Synergies also give greater consideration to biodiversity and to the use of chemicals.



Ms. Diana Ürge-Vorsatz,
Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Director,
Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Policy



Ms. Bahareh Seyedi,
Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA

Mr. Kaveh Guilanpour, Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Vice-President for International Strategies, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) moderated Parallel Session 2 entitled *Climate change as an avenue for social and economic cane – how to get all stakeholders on board?* In this session, all participants benefited from the opportunity to contribute with their views and shared experiences. In this session, participants emphasized the importance of just transition. Policy interventions in support of climate action can be expected to lead to the creation of new jobs, but other jobs, especially in fossil fuel intensive industries, might be lost. Thus, participants underscored the importance of social action, and the importance of the Just Transition Work Programme being developed under the auspices of the UNFCCC. Participants also called for inclusive approaches to policy making and programme implementation taking all groups on board, including urban as well as rural population, the elderly and the youth, and in particular all vulnerable social groups. Participants also noted the need for more and better data, as well as the need for additional capacity building as UNFCCC member states move forward and implement the Enhanced Transparency Framework from 2024 onwards. Participants saw the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Reports due in 2025 as an important opportunity to review and strengthen climate and SDG action plans, including new initiatives to advance just transition.



Mr. Kaveh Guilanpour,
Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Vice-President for International Strategies, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES)



Ms. Meagan Fallone,
Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Founder Step-Up Advisers Ltd. and CARE Entrepreneur-in-Residence and Executive Advisor Climate Justice

Ms. Meagan Fallone, Member of Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies, and Founder Step-Up Advisers Ltd. and CARE Entrepreneur-in-Residence and Executive Advisor Climate Justice, moderated Parallel Session 3 entitled *Unlocking finance and partnerships for climate and SDG action – how can it be done?* It can be observed that the panelists of Parallel Session 3 shared many of the same concerns and assessments that were articulated in the other two groups. Following its thematic focus, the discussion noted the persistent shortfalls in providing resources. Financing is often lacking where it is most needed. Participants shared suggestions on opportunities for mobilizing additional private sector financing for climate protection and social development. Participants also reflected on the importance of risk(s): on the need to redefine risks, and on opportunities for sharing risk. Participants also presented and discussed opportunities for strengthening resource sharing and circular economy.

Participants also took note of successful projects implemented in some countries that helped to improve local living conditions, reduce emissions, and generate new employment opportunities.

Like in the other panel, the importance of data collection and analysis was recognized as an important pre-requisite for monitoring progress. Concerns related to gender equity were also discussed prominently, given the continued difficulties of many women groups in many countries to access the necessary finance. Participants recommended capacity building programmes to be expanded, and to include more and greater components seeking to enhance financial literacy.

Presentation of co-conveners' conference summary

Ms. Bahareh Seyedi, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA, presented the draft co-conveners' conference summary. The Conference Summary is included on the page 5 of this report.

3.2 Closing remarks



Mr. James Grabert, Director, Mitigation Division, UNFCCC; Mr. Minoru Takada, Team Leader (Energy), UNDESA

In his closing remarks, **Mr. James Grabert**, Director, Mitigation Division, UNFCCC, thanked all speakers and moderators for their respective contributions to the proceedings. He noted that with only seven years remaining until 2030, we are in a critical decade. Action taken or not taken now will have considerable impact for present and future generations. At present, pledges of Governments and their implementation are still far from what is required. In order to meet climate and SDGs, we urgently need investments, capacity building, national and international cooperation, and the collaboration of all stakeholders. The 4th Climate and SDG Synergies Conference has shown many opportunities where action can be scaled-up.

The [SDG Summit](#) and the [Climate Ambition Summit](#) will provide important opportunities to course-correct. At the upcoming [UNFCCC Regional Climate Weeks](#) and at the [Conference of the Parties in Dubai](#), the UNFCCC Secretariat will continue to stand ready to facilitate the collaboration of all state parties, private sectors, international organizations, and other concerned stakeholder to accelerate and advance climate and SDG action in a synergistic manner.

In his closing remarks, **Mr. Minoru Takada**, Team Leader (Energy), UN DESA, thanked all speakers, moderators, and participants for their dedication. He expressed his appreciation of the generous support of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the Management of the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in providing lunch for all participants. Furthermore, he expressed the thanks of the co-organizers for the participation and the continued collaboration of colleagues from UN Organizations and Agencies, including, among others, UNU, FAO, UN South-South Center, UNEP, UNORLLS, UN-Habitat, UN ESCAP, UNECE, UNIDO, ILO, UNCBD, Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, and IRENA. He also thanked all colleagues working within and supporting the co-convenor community for their respective contributions.

Annex



1. Resources

Enclosed within this annex are a selection of supplementary resources that complement the comprehensive insights provided in the Conference Report.



Conference Programme

The Conference Programme can be accessed [here](#) - PDF version available [here](#).



Conference Concept Note

The Conference Concept Note can be accessed [here](#).



Conference Website

Additional information about the Conference, including recordings, photos, documentation, and more can be accessed [here](#).



Social media

Social media assets are made available for public distribution [here](#).

We extend a warm invitation to all stakeholders interested in the Climate and SDG Synergy initiatives to stay informed about the latest developments through the **[Harnessing Climate and SDG Synergy website](#)** and by **[subscribing to our newsletter](#)**, ensuring access to up-to-date information.

Photogallery



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed partners, distinguished speakers, and dedicated participants for their unwavering support towards advancing the Climate and SDG Synergy initiatives.



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