

Fifth Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet

5-6 September 2024 | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Concept Note

(Draft as of 30 July 2024)

“We must solve the climate emergency and sustainable development challenges together, or we will not solve them at all.”

Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies

(Synergy Solutions for a World in Crisis: Tackling Climate and SDG Action Together, 2023)

Urgent Action Needed in Crucial Two Years Ahead

The evidence is clear. The world community is far off track for meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement thereunder. Some progress has been made, but the benefits are spread unevenly, with many left behind, and the risks and threats are also unevenly felt, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable. The [Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#) has warned that only 17 per cent of SDG targets are on track, and progress on over one third has stalled or even regressed. Extreme poverty and hunger are currently on the rise again in many parts of the world. Global emissions are at their highest levels in human history, as are levels of human displacement. According to the [latest assessment report of the IPCC](#), continued greenhouse gas emissions will lead to increasing global warming, with the best estimate of reaching 1.5°C in the near term in considered scenarios and modelled pathways. Every increment of global warming will intensify the impacts of storms, wildfires, droughts, melting ice and other hazards.

The next two years are of critical importance if we hope to change course. The next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – national climate action plans that every country must submit by early 2025, ahead of COP30 – will influence greenhouse gas emissions for the coming years. They must align with limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

A key focus in 2024 leading up to COP29 in November and COP30 next year will be on finance, as a new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on finance is expected to be agreed by countries, to succeed the previous climate finance goal of \$100 billion. We need an outcome that builds trust and confidence, catalyses the trillions needed, and generates momentum for reform of the international financial architecture. All estimates show that trillions of dollars are required by developing countries to meet their crucial climate and development goals.

In September 2024, the Summit of the Future will re-examine our collective response in addressing the interconnected challenges of climate, conflict, food security, inequality within and among countries,

weapons of mass destruction, pandemics, and health, recognizing that multilateral governance, designed in simpler, slower times, is not adequate to today's complex, rapidly changing world. The Summit is expected to call upon all policymakers and stakeholders to present course-changing solutions for mobilizing political and financial actions to combat the climate crisis and achieve the SDGs.

Seeking Synergy Solutions: Unlocking Progress in a Multi-crisis World

Amid unprecedented global disruption and polarization -- adding to the already slow pace of progress vis-à-vis the global sustainable development and climate goals -- seeking synergies and integrated solutions that deliver both climate and development co-benefits is of critical importance. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UNFCCC Paris Agreement on climate change are intrinsically linked, and one cannot be achieved without the other. The Paris Agreement positions its own purpose of strengthening the global response to climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. Profound economic, social and environmental transitions are needed to overcome the interconnected crises of poverty and hunger, biodiversity loss and climate change, among others.

The United Nations Secretary-General has repeatedly called upon countries to step up action, stressing that *“Climate action is the 21st century’s greatest opportunity to drive forward all the Sustainable Development Goals.”* He noted that with integrated planning, coherent policies and economic stimulus investments, the achievement of the SDGs can be advanced. Trade-offs can be avoided, social disparities reduced, and the global climate can be protected at the same time.

A growing body of evidence suggests that addressing climate change and achieving the SDGs are inextricably intertwined, with co-benefits far outweighing trade-offs. By maximizing these synergies, we can also bridge investment gaps worth trillions of dollars. The recently launched 2024 report of the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergy -- co-convened by UNDESA and UNFCCC -- assessed the enormous financial, economic, environmental, public health and employment benefits that are potentially achievable when acting in synergy and cooperation. These are contrasted to the tremendous losses that the experts assess may result from lack of action and political will, fragmentation and uncoordinated decision making when officials act in “silos”.

The expert report -- titled *“[Synergy Solutions for a World in Crisis: Bridging the Ambition Gap for the Future We Want](#)”* -- also highlights the many opportunities for improvements that may arise in connection with the outcome of COP28, the first Global Stocktake (GST) under the UNFCCC, and the conceptualization of the next generation of NDCs. The Expert Group emphasizes that better coordination and integration of climate and SDG policies may indeed help to bridge investment gaps worth trillions of dollars, while optimizing resource allocation to address the immense financial challenges the world faces to meet climate and development needs.

In addition to the growing evidence and scientific study in this field, political momentum is on the rise with clear policy signals to the global community that we must move towards more integrated approaches and synergistic solutions. The SDGs are at the heart of the [GST outcome at COP28](#) in Dubai, where member states agreed upon the need to address climate action in the broader context of sustainable development. Similarly, [UNEA resolution 6/7](#) calls for strengthened global cooperation to maximize co-benefits between environmental action and the achievement of the SDGs. The recent [G7 communique on climate, energy and environment](#) includes a commitment to pursue a synergies approach to the SDGs when addressing the triple global crisis. Many governments are adopting a proactive approach to integrated planning at both national and international levels.

A Roadmap for Action: The Fifth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies

Since 2019, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat have been leading efforts to promote climate and SDG synergies as the linchpin for addressing our current challenges and realizing an equitable future. These efforts include co-convening an annual conference to offer a dedicated platform to policymakers and practitioners for this critical agenda and to elevate the importance of integrated solutions in addressing the interconnected crises the world is currently facing. These annual conferences are part of the capacity development efforts of the co-conveners, aiming to support member states and practitioners in their policy and action plans through the sharing of knowledge and best practices.

In 2024, UNDESA and UNFCCC Secretariat will co-convene the *Fifth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies*. The Fifth Synergy Conference will be hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and will take place on 5-6 September 2024 in Rio de Janeiro at the Museum of Tomorrow.

Coming ahead of some major milestone events, including the Summit of the Future and COP29/COP30, the Conference presents a unique opportunity to reflect on some of the critical issues that cut across these important moments and to chart a better path forward.

The 2024 Synergy Conference will take place in conjunction with G20 related activities. This year's Conference will also contribute to the Roadmap to Mission 1.5 COP Presidencies Troika. During the first two weeks of September, the City of Rio de Janeiro will host four other thematically related meetings: i) the IV Meeting of the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy, from 9 to 11 September; ii) the IV Meeting of the Sustainable Finance Working Group, on 9 and 10 September; iii) the IV Meeting of the Global Mobilization Against Climate Change Task Force, on 12 and 13 September; and iv) the One Planet Network Forum 2024, organized by the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production of the UN Environment Programme, also on 12 and 13 September.

Holding these events back-to-back aims to create the potential for rich exchanges of ideas, experiences, and best practices.

Expected Outcomes

The Fifth Global Conference will convene leading policymakers and distinguished experts to discuss climate and SDG synergies. It will showcase empirical evidence and case studies on climate action and SDG co-benefits, highlighting progress and pathways for just and equitable transitions. Among other issues, the conference will review options for facilitating access to climate finance, mitigating climate risks, and generating more effective adaptation and resilience. Additionally, it will promote wider public participation, with a focus on the inclusivity of all relevant social groups, particularly from the Latin American and Caribbean region, and will offer capacity-building opportunities to further enhance understanding and action on these critical issues.

The Fifth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies will deliver:

- A concise **Conference Summary**, with a set of key recommendations for enhancing synergistic implementation of the SDGs and climate action at the political as well as practical levels.
- A detailed **Conference Report** and other informative documentation which will be made available to delegations attending the upcoming global summits and conferences in 2024 and 2025.

Format and Programme Overview

The Conference is a multi-stakeholder event, with representatives from governments, business, civil society, the private sector and other constituencies. The conference will be held at the Museum of Tomorrow, in Rio de Janeiro. The format of the conference will be mainly in-person. The Conference will be livestreamed. Around 400 participants are envisaged, including from countries and other stakeholders that have substantially advanced win–win solutions for climate action and the SDGs.

The Conference will be held over a period of two days, to allow time for leadership engagement. Alongside a programme of **roundtables and thematic sessions** throughout the two days, the Fifth Synergy Conference will host a **high-level segment** at its opening on 5 September, featuring senior policymakers and prominent representatives from governments and from international organizations and civil society.

The Conference will be conducted in English. The full programme with a list of speakers will be developed and made available on the conference website in due course.