

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

SDGs and Climate Action: Promoting synergies on the ground- learning from NDCs and VNRs

11:15-12:30 | 1 April 2019 | UN City, Copenhagen

Room- TBC

Concept Note

Background

Implementation towards the Paris agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is advancing through commitments, policies, programmes and partnerships. Negotiated and agreed to in different fora, both are deeply interconnected. On the one hand, SDG 13, on climate action, brings this subject into the heart of the indivisible set of SDGs that characterize the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, the ‘just transitions’ that advance the implementation of the Paris agreement connect to the core SDG principle of ‘leaving no one behind.’ Several studies have pointed out how individual goals and targets from the 2030 agenda correspond to specific adaptation and mitigation measures.

At a practical level, these interconnections imply both opportunities and risks. Providing universal access to clean and affordable energy services can accelerate progress towards SDGs 1 (poverty), 3 (health) and 5 (gender equality), while also reducing green-house gas emissions. On the other hand, pursuing economic growth without transitioning to low carbon pathways may deliver short term benefits, but only at the cost of further exacerbating climate change. Even when policy choices may be clear, effective implementation relies on actions by many non-governmental stakeholders such as businesses, civil society and academia, and incentives to align them may be inadequate or lacking.

Such considerations imply that deliberate choices need to be made in order to secure the benefits that will arise from a coherent implementation of both agendas. Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), through which countries report on their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, capture how some countries are making these choices, in fields such as transport, energy and disaster risk reduction.

Several others have highlighted the challenges, such as difficulties in transitioning away from emissions-intensive economies; and the lack of capacity, finance or access to technologies¹. In many cases, while coordination mechanisms are being set up for SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting, these may not adequately connected to the implementation processes associated with the countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Dialogue, consensus-building and action by multiple stakeholders may also require more attention.

Objective

The aim of this session is to demonstrate, through practical examples and discussions, how the connections between the 2030 Agenda and climate action can be operationalized the country level. It will also seek to identify areas where more needs to be done, and strategic interventions could have catalytic effects.

Illustrative guiding questions:

1. Where are the opportunities in your country to connect climate action to SDG implementation?
How is SDG implementation being influenced by climate action?

¹ Synthesis Report, Voluntary National Reviews (2018). UN-DESA, Division for Sustainable Development.

2. Where are the opportunities and challenges in terms of doing things differently from usual?
3. What have been effective ways to mobilize stakeholders for joined-up action?
4. How can we coordinate actions at the regional level, and/or facilitate effective knowledge sharing across countries in similar circumstances to promote such synergies in implementation?

Format

The event will be conducted in a 'Davos-style' debate format, with an emphasis on short interventions and lively interactions between audience and panel.

Two plenary presentations of about 7 minutes each will be made from a lectern.

The moderator will then direct a question to each panelist in turn, with panelists responding for 3-5 minutes from their seats (**no power point**). Panelist interventions are expected to be brief and focused - if needed, they can be elaborated later during the interaction with the audience.

The moderator will then facilitate a lively exchange between audience and panelists through short questions and answers.

Moderator

Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee, Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, UN-DESA

Presentation

Mr. David O'Connor, Sustainable Economist, SDG Delivery Team, World Resources Institute (WRI)

Ms. Leena Srivastava, Vice Chancellor, TERI School of Advanced Studies

Panelists

- H.E. Mr. Ian Fry, Ambassador for Climate Change and Environment, Tuvalu

-Mr. Alexis Munungi Leki, Head, Division for Sustainable Development, DR Congo

- Ms. Khin Thida Tin, Director, Yangon Regional Environmental Conservation Department, Secretary of Yangon Region Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Supervision Committee, Myanmar

-Mr. Carlos Fuller, International and Regional Liaison Officer, Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

Background documentation:

1. Synergies between the 2030 agenda and Paris agreement: an overview.
2. Leveraging climate change and SDG interlinkages: country experiences.