



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Review of SDG implementation and interrelations among goals

Discussion on SDG 13 – Climate action

Friday, 12 July 2019, 9:00 AM–12:00 PM, Conference Room 4

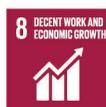
Background Note¹

Introduction

Climate change threatens many of humanity's biggest achievements as well as its future goals - goals reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Progress on SDG13 is falling short of what is needed to meet the targets of the global agenda by 2030. According to the World Meteorological Organization, 2018 was the fourth warmest year on record, with the past four years (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018) being the four warmest years on record. The world continues to experience rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions and increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases. Climate change is a cross-cutting and immediate threat to the achievement of the SDGs, and to the survival and well-being of island nations and coastal communities. This calls for urgent and accelerated action by countries as they implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and their commitments to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Climate action requires efforts on mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation – climate finance, technology and capacity building.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement in 2015, the interlinked relationship between both Agendas has come to the fore. This also provides our biggest opportunity for positive, systemic change -change that will ensure resilient societies, productive economies, and healthy environment for present and future generations. With the finalisation of the Paris Agreement rule book at COP24 in Katowice, Poland in

¹ This background note is prepared based on the Expert Group Meeting on SDG 13 review, entitled “Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Maximizing Co-Benefits by Linking Implementation across SDGs and Climate Action,” that took place in the UN City in Copenhagen, Denmark, between 1-3 April 2019.





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December 2018, the world has entered a new era of enhancing ambition to implementation of climate action towards reaching the global objective of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, including through new/updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs) by 2020, and by scaling up climate action towards both adaptation and mitigation.

Synergistic implementation is vital. Achieving all other SDGs will be much more challenging without urgent climate action, including those related to poverty, hunger, access to water, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, health, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, among others. Conversely, many of the goals and targets can also be achieved in ways that would enable adaptive responses to climate change. The energy transitions envisaged in SDG 7 would contribute significantly to lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions relative to business-as-usual pathways.

Similarly, more sustainable industrialization under SDG 9, sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices under SDG 2, and changing patterns of consumption and production in line with SDG 12 can all contribute towards low-emission pathways, the creation of new kinds of jobs and long-term progress towards eradicating poverty and other deprivations.

This year offers an unprecedented opportunity to address both climate change ambition and the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in September aims to raise ambition for climate action. We must effectively leverage the in-depth review of SDG13 at HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC in July and all SDGs at HLPF under the auspices of the UN General Assembly at the heads of state and government level in September, as well as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May, the high-level review of the SAMOA pathway in September, UNFCCC COP25 in Chile in December.

Status and trends

Climate change is happening right now, and its effects are clearly visible. The global mean temperature for 2018 is estimated to be 0.99 ± 0.13 °C above the preindustrial baseline, arctic temperatures exceptionally high relative to long-term average, and many countries



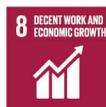


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experienced their warmest year on record. The impacts are being felt all over the world and addressing these require a robust two-pronged approach—reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions, and adaption planning.

- Close to a million people have died or gone missing due to disasters and hazards between 1990 and 2017. While geophysical hazardous events such as earthquakes and tsunamis account for about 40 percent of these, the rest are caused by meteorological and hydrological events, which are exacerbated by climate change.
- Countries are making efforts to adopt and implement national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 by 2020, which is stipulated under the target (e) of the Sendai Framework. As of October 2018, about 50 countries reported the status of national and local strategies through the online Sendai Framework Monitoring system.
- Increasing levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere, due to human activity, are the key driver of climate change. In 2017, GHG concentrations reached new highs, with globally averaged mole fractions of CO₂ at 405.5 ± 0.1 parts per million (ppm). These values constitute, respectively, 146% of pre-industrial level.
- As of February 2019, 185 parties had ratified the Paris Agreement. Parties to the Paris Agreement are expected to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs). As of 27 February 2019, 182 Parties (181 countries plus the European Commission) had communicated their first NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC), one Party has communicated their second NDC.
- Global climate finance flows increased by 17% in the period 2015–2016 compared with the period 2013–2014.
- As of 20 May 2019, 28 countries have accessed Green Climate Fund (GCF) grant financing for the formulation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and other





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adaptation planning processes, with a value of USD75 million. Of these, 67% are for LDCs, SIDs, and African States. Proposals from an additional 7 countries are in the final stage of approval, with a value of USD 17 million. In total, 75 countries are seeking support from the GCF for NAPs and other adaptation planning processes, with a combined value of USD191 million.

Guiding questions

- How can we urgently lift the level of ambition for exponential climate action across all sectors, levels and regions?
- What are the key focus areas for synergistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement together and taking advantage of the related opportunities?
- What are concrete initiatives and successful actions at global, regional and local levels to accelerate climate action and achieve the SDGs in tandem?
- How can these actions be scaled up? What further action needs to be taken to deliver concrete results, making the most of innovative, people-centered and cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships to protect the planet for current and future generations?
- Where are the gaps in our focus? What are “low hanging fruits” at the global, regional and local levels that enable the exponential increase in ambition for climate action in order to make a real difference in the lives and livelihoods of people?

