



# SDG 7 UPDATE

Tuesday, 23 July 2019

## HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2019 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF ECOSOC

9-18 July 2019, UN Headquarters, New York



Under the theme ‘Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’, the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) concluded its 2019 session last week. This year’s meeting heard 47 countries’ Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), highlighting plans and efforts to implement the SDGs; conducted in-depth review of six SDGs; and convened a discussion on SDG 13, considering the link to the Climate Summit to be convened by the UN Secretary-General on 23 September 2019 to encourage countries to increase their climate ambition.

HLPF 2019 also included a ministerial meeting in conjunction with the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council from 16-19 July. In addition, a HLPF Summit will convene on 24 and 25 September 2019 under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, where Heads of State and Government will review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and conduct the first four-year review of all 17 SDGs. One outcome document will result from the two 2019 sessions.

“We have seen that reaching to the local level, empowering people, giving them voice and including them in decision-making leads to better outcomes, with stronger support to implementation”, underscored the ECOSOC President Inga Rhonda King. “And we have heard that we must commit to, and undertake, deliberate, decisive, transformative actions to accelerate implementation and achieve the SDGs by 2030”.

For more information, please visit: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>  
IISD Report: <http://enb.iisd.org/hlpf/2019/>



## PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING THE 2030 AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Four years after signing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries have taken action to integrate the Goals and targets into their national development plans and to align policies and institutions behind them. According to the The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2019, the global response to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has not been ambitious enough, and a renewed commitment and accelerated action is needed to deliver the SDGs in time. It is abundantly clear that a much deeper, faster and more ambitious response is needed to unleash the social and economic transformation needed to achieve our 2030 goals.

### 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



#### Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

The world is making progress towards Goal 7 with encouraging signs that energy is becoming more sustainable and widely available. Access to electricity in poorer countries has begun to accelerate, energy efficiency continues to improve, and renewable energy is making impressive gains in the electricity sector. Nevertheless, more focused attention is needed to improve access to clean and safe cooking fuels and technologies for 3 billion people, to expand the use of renewable energy beyond the electricity sector, and to increase electrification in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Forum also reviewed, analyzed progress and looked at the influence of, six individual SDGs in supporting empowerment, equality and inclusion.

- **SDG 4 (quality education):** A presentation on the progress made revealed a “global learning crisis”, with a low proficiency rate amongst school children in reading and mathematics despite increased enrollment rates, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Solutions proposed by speakers included not only reforms of the education sector, but a transformation of mindsets to make educational systems more inclusive; integration of the vision of SDGs, including global citizenship and sustainability, in curricula; and “dramatically” improving working conditions for teachers.
- **SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth):** Progress on achieving this Goal was reported as being slow, and somewhat mixed: despite an increase in gross domestic product growth globally, the LDCs are falling short of their 7% target; 22% of the young people around the world are not in education, employment, or training; and the increase in labor productivity shows a high variation across regions.
- **SDG 10 (reduced inequalities):** A statistical snapshot of SDG 10 showed that income and other forms of inequality are on the rise. Globally, the bottom 40% receive less than 25% of overall income, and an increasing share of income going to the top 1% in many countries. Meanwhile, 50% of those affected by extreme poverty are children below 14 years. The principles of “leaving no one behind” and “nothing for us, without us” were evoked as essential for achieving SDG 10.
- **SDG 13 (climate):** Luis Alfonso de Alba, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the 2019 Climate Action Summit, pleaded with governments to bring ambitious plans to the Summit, to deliver a 45% reduction of emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. Carolina Schmidt, Minister of Environment, Chile, and President-designate of the 2019 Climate Conference identified seven priorities for the Conference: ambition in implementation; rules for the carbon market mechanisms; climate finance; science for climate solutions; adaptation and loss and damage; forests and food security; and oceans and climate change. Gender will be a crosscutting theme for all the issues, she said.
- **SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong Institutions):** UN DESA reported no substantial progress on SDG 16 targets in recent years, with thousands at greater risk of intentional murder, aggression, and sexual violence. Women comprise 70% of the victims of violence, and murders of human rights defenders increased by 2 victims per week in 2018 compared to 2017. Speakers called for involving women, youth, and children in policy-making related to SDG 16; promoting non-discriminatory policies; instituting and enacting policies to protect human right defenders; and putting technology at the center of enhancing institutional capacity.

## VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS (VNRs)

47 countries presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) during the Ministerial Segment, with seven countries presenting for the second time. Taken together, the 102 VNR presentations in the past 4 years provide a global snapshot of how countries are implementing the 2030 Agenda and the challenges they face. The VNRs have shown that many countries have reflected the SDGs in their plans and policies or reviewed consistency between the two. Many have mobilized the various parts of government and various institutions around the SDGs or created new coordinating institutions. Many have conducted activities to engage civil society and the private sector in implementing the SDGs. But many challenges persist. Those relate for example to budgeting for the SDGs, systematically mobilizing local actions, engaging parliaments, or building awareness about the SDGs. Conducting integrated policies and engaging all parts of government in implementing the SDGs also remains a challenge. Actions for leaving no one behind also require more attention.

Read all VNRs at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>



## MOVING FORWARD

Since 2015, the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) has established its central role in the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. After four year implementation, in 2019, the HLPF will convene twice for the first time: under the auspices of ECOSOC in July and at the level of Heads of State and Government in September (SDG summit). The conclusion of the first cycle of the HLPF constitutes a critical opportunity to take stock of how the HLPF has delivered on its functions to promote and support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to reflect on how the Forum could be strengthened in going forward.

Results of the survey of 4 years of HLPF:

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/28728Survey\\_presentation\\_English\\_responses\\_only.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/28728Survey_presentation_English_responses_only.pdf)

Messages for the 2019 HLPF Summit:

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/28731Main\\_messages\\_to\\_SDG\\_Summit\\_Final\\_EN.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/28731Main_messages_to_SDG_Summit_Final_EN.pdf)

# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



## FORMAL SESSION

**Review of SDG implementation and interrelations among goals: Discussion on SDG 13 – Climate action including the link to the Climate Action Summit and six action portfolios**

*Date and Time: 12 July (Friday), 9:00 – 12:00*

*Venue: Conference Room 4*

The session reviewed progress towards SDG 13 and addressed the interlinkages of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Luis Alfonso de Alba, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the 2019 Climate Action Summit, pleaded with governments to bring ambitious plans to the Summit, to deliver a 45% reduction of emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. Under the crosscutting theme 'Gender', seven priorities for the Conference are: ambition in implementation; rules for the carbon market mechanisms; climate finance; science for climate solutions; adaptation and loss and damage; forests and food security; and oceans and climate change.

Read more: <http://enb.iisd.org/hlpf/2019/12jul.html>





## SIDE EVENTS

### **From Science to Implementation: Strengthening the Science Policy Interface (SPI) to Integrate Climate Change, resilience, and the SDGs**

*Date and Time: 12 July (Friday), 13:30 – 14:45*

*Venue: S1522/S1523*

*Organizer: IGES*

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C highlights that leveraging synergies and avoiding trade-offs between climate-action and development priorities can help limit global warming to safe levels; Knowledge co-creation is essential to enhance science-policy dialogues and local communities should be included in these dialogues; and Better communication and coordination are vital tools for strengthening the Science Policy Interface (SPI) and combating climate change.

This side event shared recommendations on how to integrate climate change provisions from the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by strengthening SPI.

IISD Photo

## SIDE EVENTS

### **Accelerating clean cooking for all**

*Date and Time: 12 July (Friday), 12:15 – 13:30*

*Venue: S1522/S1523*

*Organizers: WHO, UNDP, WB and UNDESA*

In an effort to radically transform the approaches to the clean cooking challenge, the WHO, UNDP and the World Bank, in collaboration with all stakeholders, are developing a new Global Platform on Health and Energy, aiming to dramatically scale up action and financing for clean cooking services. Currently, 3 billion people rely on traditional, polluting cooking practices, causing 3.8 million premature deaths annually, mostly in Africa and Asia. Recalling last year's HLPF Ministerial Declaration that determined clean cooking access a global priority, participants called for recognizing the situation as a "public health crisis," placing clean cooking a top national priority, and identifying political champions to drive the agenda forward. A stakeholder consultation meeting is being planned in September to further design the Global Platform on Health and Energy.



## SIDE EVENTS

### **Interlinkages between energy and SDG4, 8, 10, 13 and 16**

*Date and Time: 12 July (Friday), 16:15 – 17:45*

*Venue: S1522/S1523*

*Organizer: UNDESA*

UN DESA organized a side event on 'Interlinkages between SDG 7 (energy) and SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16' during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The event took place between 16.15-17.30, Friday, 12 July 2019, featuring senior representatives from IRENA, UNESCWA, UNICEF and Power for All. The side event looked into the interlinkages between SDG7 and SDG 4, 8, 10, 13, and 16, building upon the 2019 edition of the SDG7 Policy Briefs that contains detailed analysis on these interlinkages, as well as the 2019 Tracking SDG7 Energy Progress Report, the work of the SDG7 Technical Advisory Group and UN-Energy, the High-Level Dialogue on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014-2024: A Mid-Point Review, the Climate Summit preparatory meeting in Abu Dhabi, and findings of the first Global Conference to strengthen synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement in April 2019 in the UN City in Copenhagen.

## SIDE EVENTS

### **Scaling up climate action through integrated water and energy solutions: Delivering on the Paris Agreement and the SDGs**

*Date and Time: 15 July (Monday), 14:30 – 16:00*

*Venue: Cervantes Institute in New York 9 (211 E 49th St)*

*Organizer: UNDESA and ITAIPU Binacional with support from the Government of Spain and ASAZGUA*

Water and energy are intricately connected and essential to sustainable development. Recognizing these critical interlinkages, UNDESA and Itaipu Binacional, in collaboration with multi-stakeholder partners, are leading a global network to promote integrated sustainable approaches to water and energy in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. Currently, close to 1 billion people are still having no access to electricity, and 2.8 billion are living in areas of high water stress. Climate change will only exacerbate these issues. Underscoring that "6+7=13", panelists highlighted the importance of SDG6 and SDG7 for climate action (SDG13), and called for strengthened global efforts in identifying policies, technologies and practices capable of addressing these issues in an integrated manner. The panelists included representatives from Spain, the Netherlands, USDOE, ITAIPU Binacional, the International Hydropower Association, the Climate Change Research Institute of Guatemala and UNICEF.



## SIDE EVENTS

### **HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT | Scaling up climate action through clean energy transitions: Delivering on the Paris Agreement and the SDGs**

*Date and Time: 16 July (Tuesday), 18:30 – 20:00*

*Venue: Conference Room 7*

*Organizers: Mission of Ethiopia to UN, EU, IRENA, UNDESA*

The high-level side event on ‘Scaling up climate action through clean energy transitions: Delivering on the Paris Agreement and the SDGs’, held on 16 July 2019 in New York, examined ways to scale up climate action through accelerating clean energy transitions to simultaneously deliver on the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the SDGs. Given the multiple inter-linkages between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, the panelists pointed out that integrated and synergistic implementation of both would considerably enhance effectiveness and the quality of outcomes, besides contributing towards more efficient use of resources, greater coherence across sectors and actors, and the formation of novel partnerships. The event was opened by Mr. Elliott Harris, Assistant-Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and featured keynote remarks by H.E. Sileshi Bekele, Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation & Development, European Commission, Mr Francesco La Camera, Director General, International Renewable Energy Agency, Ms. Roula Majdalani, Director, Sustainable Development Policies Division, UNESCWA, and closing remarks by Mr. Alexander Trepelkov, Officer-in-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations



## HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2019 -- SDG 7 Related Sessions / Events

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### SIDE EVENTS

**Accelerating clean cooking for all**

12 July (Friday), 12:15 – 13:30 // Venue: S1522/S1523

Organizers: WHO, UNDP, WB and UNDESA

**Side event on partnerships for accelerated sustainable energy development and enhanced resilience building to climate change in LLDCs**

12 July (Friday), 13:15 – 14:30 // Venue: Conference Room F

Organizer: UNOHRLLS

**From Science to Implementation: Strengthening the Science Policy Interface (SPI) to Integrate Climate Change, resilience, and the SDGs**

12 July (Friday), 13:30 – 14:45 // Venue: S1522/S1523

Organizer: IGES

**The digital revolution and sustainable development: Opportunities and challenges**

12 July (Friday), 14:45 – 16:00 // Venue: S1522/S1523

Organizer: IIASA

**Interlinkages between energy and SDG4, 8, 10, 13 and 16**

12 July (Friday), 16:15 – 17:45 // Venue: S1522/S1523

Organizer: UNDESA

**Scaling up climate action through integrated water and energy solutions: Delivering on the Paris Agreement and the SDGs**

15 July (Monday), 14:30 – 16:00 // Venue: Cervantes Institute in New York 9 (211 E 49th St)

Organizer: UNDESA, ITAIPU and Mission of Spain to UN

**HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT | Scaling up climate action through clean energy transitions: Delivering on the Paris Agreement and the SDGs**

16 July (Tuesday), 18:30 – 20:00 // Venue: Conference Room 7

Organizers: Mission of Ethiopia to the UN, EU, IRENA, ESCWA, UNDESA

**HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT | Scaling-Up Energy Transition in Small Island Developing States**

17 July (Wednesday), 13:15 – 14:30 // Venue: Conference Room F

Organizer: UNOHRLLS



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Division for Sustainable Development Goals

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

United Nations

Email: [salame1@un.org](mailto:salame1@un.org)