

A publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Saturday, 31 May 2025 | Online at: [enb.iisd.org/global-climate-sdg-synergies-conference-6](https://enb.iisd.org/global-climate-sdg-synergies-conference-6)

## Summary of the Sixth Global Conference on Climate & SDG Synergies: 27-28 May 2025

The crises facing the world are interconnected; climate change, inequality, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and financial instability are closely intertwined and require coordinated action. Over 80% of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are linked to climate action, illustrating that synergistic actions can help enable co-benefits across both agendas. Yet not only are existing approaches to addressing these often mutually reinforcing goals fragmented, but countries are also seriously off track in achieving global targets on climate change and the SDGs. With only five years left to meet the goals under the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, mobilizing for impactful and meaningful action is more important than ever.

Against this backdrop, the Sixth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies convened under the theme “Unleashing Synergies Towards an Equitable, Climate-Resilient, and Sustainable Future.” Throughout, participants repeatedly highlighted the importance of linking with work at the upcoming Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, taking place over the summer in Seville, Spain, which is set to address the financing gaps for the SDGs, climate change, and biodiversity. The Synergies Conference also sought to feed into the upcoming third iteration of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, where countries express their climate action plans for achieving the goals of the Agreement.

During the High-level Segment on the first day of the conference, speakers highlighted national efforts to meet climate and sustainable development targets. Participants were reminded that climate change goes beyond only an environmental crisis and is also a social, political, and economic crisis requiring equitable responses. Several ministers stressed that least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS) feel the impact of climate change most severely. One noted that the financing needed to address climate change exists but is in the wrong place. Speakers from UN agencies underscored the importance of international cooperation and multilateralism for reinforcing national ambition and supporting implementation and urged countries to draw on existing tools.

Throughout the first day, participants were presented with a preview of key findings from the Expert Group’s upcoming 2025

Global Report and thematic reports, on: action on biodiversity/nature and development synergies; closing the insurance protection gap; and achieving greater health impacts through synergistic action in cities. During roundtables, participants discussed how to close the finance gap and leverage funding to enable greater synergistic action, and ways to integrate sustainable development action into their NDCs. Examples highlighted the role of ministries of finance, and the importance of cross-ministerial collaboration for both planning and implementation.

During multi-stakeholder dialogues, participants gained insight into the co-benefits arising from addressing climate change and development needs through a human rights-based approach, the importance of recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples rights related to Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), ways to enhance youth inclusion, and the significance of intersectionality.

### In This Issue

A Brief History of the Synergies Conference . . . . .	2
Report of the Meeting . . . . .	2
Statements of Ministers, High-level Representatives and Heads of UN Agencies . . . . .	3
Scene-Setting: The Benefits and Challenges of Tackling Climate and SDG Actions in Synergy: From Global to Local Levels . . . . .	3
Roundtable 1: Financing the Future We Want: Unlocking Synergies between Climate Finance and Development Finance . . . . .	4
Roundtable 2: Leveraging NDC 3.0 to Advance NDCs and Co-Invest in Climate Action and the 2030 Agenda . . . . .	5
Synergy Voices: Multi-stakeholder Dialogue . . . . .	5
Parallel Thematic Sessions . . . . .	7
Closing Plenary . . . . .	10
Upcoming Meetings . . . . .	11
Glossary . . . . .	11

Parallel sessions on the second day covered six topics, including the role of country platforms, linkages between climate-SDG synergies and energy action, and the use of nature-based solutions (NbS) for enabling synergistic approaches to water, food, and biodiversity action. In the session on country platforms, the audience heard how these can help enable bottom-up, whole-of-society, and whole-of-government approaches, and, through diverse funding, can bring meaningful support to meet local needs. On NbS, one example highlighted how support for community-driven small-scale hydropower solutions had helped turn negative feedback loops into positive ones.

In the closing plenary, the organizers shared key messages from the Conference, including the importance of having accelerated action on climate and development go hand in hand, and the need to move away from fragmented, short-term, project-based approaches and towards long-term and nationally-driven strategies. In closing remarks, speakers urged bringing these messages back to their governments, constituencies, and organizations, and have them inform upcoming conferences and domestic action.

The [2025 Global Climate and SDG Synergies Conference](#) convened from [27-28 May at the UN City](#) in Copenhagen, Denmark. It was co-convened by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat. More than 375 people attended the Conference in person, with an estimated of 1000 participants attending online. Approximately 50 countries were represented.

### **A Brief History of the Synergies Conference**

The 2015 adoption of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change established a foundation for coherent implementation of climate action and sustainable development objectives. The many interlinkages between them suggest that integrated and synergistic implementation of both would lead to many benefits.

In recognition of this, UN DESA and the UNFCCC Secretariat jointly organized a global conference on strengthening synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement in Copenhagen, Denmark, in April 2019. It sought to illustrate the co-benefits of synergistic and interlinked approaches, as well as analyze gaps and challenges. It also aimed to provide recommendations for strengthening synergies, increasing ambition, stimulating multi-stakeholder partnerships, and advancing implementation action.

After a successful first event, the conference became a regular occurrence. Speakers at the event include high-level representatives from UN bodies, academia, governments, and key stakeholders such as youth. The programmes include interactive panel discussions, roundtable discussions, and thematic sessions focused on climate change and its impact on other areas linked to the SDGs. Examples of focus sessions at prior conferences include:

- options for synergistic policy interventions across sectors;
- including principles of just transition in integrated planning for the implementation of climate action and the SDGs;

- bridging the financing divide in addressing climate change;
- framing climate challenges through the lens of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda – leaving no one behind;
- combating hunger and poverty; and
- restoring forests.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Second Global Conference took place over 2020 and 2021 through three online webinars and the launching of an e-learning course on the theme “Harnessing Climate and SDGs Synergies.” The [Third Global Conference](#) took place in Tokyo, Japan, from 20-21 July 2022, focusing specifically on synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. [The Fourth Global Conference](#) took place in New York, US, on 16 July 2023, as a special event of the 2023 session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and prior to the SDG Summit and UNFCCC COP 28. [The Fifth Global Conference](#) convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 5-6 September 2024, under the theme “Building a Just World and Sustainable Planet.”

### **Report of the Meeting**

In welcoming remarks on Tuesday, Jeppe Bruus, Minister for Green Transition, Denmark, underscored the mutual co-benefits that emerge from strengthening synergies between climate action and sustainable development. He called for greater integrated and holistic country-led solutions underpinned by long-term whole-of-society approaches. He highlighted Denmark’s efforts to bring together sectors and stakeholders in developing the world’s first greenhouse gas emissions tax on agriculture. Apart from targeting emissions, it also enables the protection and restoration of biodiversity, benefits water quality, and reduces nitrogen use, while taxation revenue is reinvested in the sector. He said that the upcoming NDC submissions are a key opportunity to ensure closer integration and synergies between policies.

Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General, UN DESA, noted that: the world is off track to meet goals and targets; emissions continue to rise; climate change is having increasingly devastating impacts; and most SDG targets will not be achieved by 2030. He said he is always “at a loss” on why countries have separate NDCs and sustainable development strategies, arguing instead for more closely aligned targets. He said policymakers need clear, quantifiable evidence to pursue inclusive outcomes.



**Jeppe Bruus**, Minister for Green Transition, Denmark



Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General, UN DESA



View of the room during the high-level opening segment

He stated that if partners are serious about delivering the SDGs and climate goals, “we need to break out of our silos and turn our ambition into action, to deliver results for people and planet.”

Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC Secretariat, via video message, stressed that climate action and sustainable development are inextricably linked, stating that “climate action done right is development done right”. He underscored the importance of achieving finance commitments made at COP 29 to triple finance to developing countries to USD 300 billion by 2035. He celebrated that global investments in green energy in 2024 exceeded USD 2 trillion, double the amount invested in fossil fuels. He underscored that synergies are not just about efficiency, but also about scale, impact, and justice.

### ***Statements of Ministers, High-level Representatives and Heads of UN Agencies***

Jaime de Bourbon de Parme, Climate Envoy, the Netherlands, pointed to SDGs 7 (affordable and clean energy) and 12 (sustainable consumption and production) as key to climate action, as they will lead to decarbonization and advancements in the circular economy, and noted the EU has decoupled growth from carbon emissions.

In a video message, Keiichiro Asao, Minister of the Environment, Japan, highlighted his country’s support and promotion of the synergies between climate and the SDGs.

Leonardo Luís Gorgulho Nogueira Fernandes, Brazilian Ambassador to Denmark, reminded participants that climate change goes beyond the environment and is also a social crisis, and noted responses must consider social equity. San Vanty, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia, spoke of the alignment between their national climate change and sustainable development strategies.

Maina Vakafua Talia, Minister of Home Affairs, Climate Change and Environment, Tuvalu, recalled that while LDCs and SIDS feel the impacts of climate change most severely, they are among those with the clearest commitments on climate change. He urged against business as usual, reminding attendees that 2030 is only five years away.

Ralph Regenvanu, Minister for Climate Change, Energy, Meteorology, Geohazards, Environment, and Disaster Management, Vanuatu, noted during a time of watching the most

powerful global players rip up multilateralism, cut life-saving aid, and expand their oil, coal, and gas infrastructure, sustaining our wellbeing is becoming impossible for the planet. He said the money needed to address climate change exists but is in the wrong place.

Hans Olav Ibrekk, Special Envoy on Climate and Security, Section for Energy, Climate and Food, Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, stressed the need to reform the international finance infrastructure for greater streamlining, and called on countries to work with the UN to achieve this. Bader Omar Ismail al Dafa, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Climate Change and Sustainability, Qatar, mentioned his country’s efforts to meet climate and sustainable development targets.

Astrid Schomaker, Executive-Secretary, UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), noted that climate change and biodiversity loss are accelerating while inequalities are widening, with short-term competitiveness and security risks distracting attention. She called for international cooperation to reinforce national ambition and urged partners to use existing tools.

George Gray Molina, Chief Economist and Director of Inclusive Growth, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), highlighted synergistic UNDP actions, including: joining forces with partners to make the business case for climate action; diving deeper into breakthrough areas at the intersection of climate action and the SDGs; and continuing to advocate for climate finance. He stressed that in 2025, 61 developing countries are at risk of debt distress, shrinking the space for development action.

Anne Olhoff, Interim Director of the UN Environment Programme Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC), underscored the importance of the next round of NDCs. Noting that based on current commitments, the world is looking at 2.6 to 2.8°C temperature rise, she said the “time for climate procrastination is over.”

### ***Scene-Setting: The Benefits and Challenges of Tackling Climate and SDG Actions in Synergy: From Global to Local Levels***

During this session, members of the Climate and SDG Synergy Expert Group provided concrete examples from their work and regions on how bringing climate and SDG actors together can



(L-R): **Luis Gomez Echeverri**, Emeritus Research Scholar, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA); **Diana Ürge-Vorsatz**, Vice-Chair, IPCC, and Director, Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Policy (3CSEP); **Ma Jun**, Director, Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE), China; and **Mercedes Bustamante**, Professor, University of Brasilia, Brazil

lead to significant benefits. Expert Group members also provided a preview of key findings from its upcoming 2025 Global Report and three thematic reports on: action on biodiversity/nature and development synergies; closing the insurance protection gap; and achieving greater health impacts through synergistic action in cities.

Luis Gomez Echeverri, Emeritus Research Scholar, IIASA, spoke about making existing data more digestible and accessible. Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Vice Chair, IPCC, emphasized the need to empower local decision-makers as they will increasingly play a role in addressing the climate crisis. Ma Jun, IPE, China, elaborated on ways that coordinated investments in climate and the SDGs give governments a stronger business case to make the necessary investments.

Mercedes Bustamante, Professor, University of Brasilia, Brazil, noted cutting harmful subsidies as critical to climate action and tackling biodiversity loss. Yannick Glemarec, Director of Research, International Center for Research on Environment and Development, spoke on the importance of closing the climate and disaster insurance protection gap, highlighting that annual climate-related uninsured losses today amount to USD 170 billion and are projected to double by 2030.

Felix Creutzig, Bennett Institute Chair and Head of the Working Group on Cities, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, highlighted how climate action in cities can provide significant health benefits. He noted four key pathways: addressing air pollution to enhance air quality; encouraging active travel; promoting shifts in food habits towards plant-based diets; and investing in green infrastructure and climate-smart city planning.

### ***Roundtable 1: Financing the Future We Want: Unlocking Synergies between Climate Finance and Development Finance***

Amar Bhattacharya, Senior Fellow, Global Economy and Development Program, Brookings Institution, stressed that a core reason for why the world is behind on achieving goals and targets is that “we’re not investing enough at the pace needed.”

Noting that the cost of inaction is exorbitant, he called for a big investment push in human capital, health, and education, and in climate-related and physical infrastructure.

Mads Dalum Libergren, Senior Advisor and Deputy, Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, Ministry of Finance, Denmark, highlighted the important role of finance ministries in coordinating among ministries and overseeing expenditure and revenues and regulating markets. He underscored that these core functions are being impacted by climate change and the green transition, and highlighted the need for finance ministries to increase their capabilities to address emerging challenges. Nick Godfrey, Distinguished Policy Fellow, Grantham Research Institute, London School of Economics, provided insights into preliminary findings from a survey looking at whether and how ministries of finance are considering the green transition, noting room for further progress.

During the panel discussion, Sam Mugue Koojo, Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, Uganda, explained that their climate and development action plans are the same, which has helped to streamline financing. He also noted that more finance ministers must be involved in climate action and climate-related discussions.

Norma Salomé Munguía Aldaraca, Director General for Global Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, underscored the importance of ensuring finance is aligned with national priorities, and encouraged the participation of finance ministries. She noted her own country’s domestic fiscal reforms to counteract challenging international finance structure leading to significant external debt.

Ole Thonke, Climate Ambassador and Under-Secretary for Development Policy, Denmark, highlighted the idea of rebranding NDCs as green growth plans to encourage interest from finance ministries. Satu Santala, Managing Director, Nordic Development Fund, spoke about their Fund as the embodiment of the nexus between climate and development, and noted their ability to reduce and absorb risk through blended financing.

Dewi Dylander, Senior Director, Investment Mobilization Collaboration Alliance, stressed that private investments are not happening fast enough and encouraged pooling capital from governments like the Nordic countries to derisk investments.



View of the panel during the Roundtable 1

Måns Nilsson, Executive Director, Stockholm Environment Institute, noted there is no shortage of private capital looking for viable projects, but there is a shortage of domestic resources, and called for urgent decarbonization of heavy industry.

Questions from the audience touched on: the connection between gender and climate/development finance; how to move from “brain drain to brain gain” in developing countries; ensuring support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and recognizing the contributions from ecosystem services and calculating developing country’s natural capital.

### **Roundtable 2: Leveraging NDC 3.0 to Advance NDCs and Co-Invest in Climate Action and the 2030 Agenda**

Facilitator Daniele Violetti, Senior Director, Programmes Coordination, UNFCCC Secretariat, outlined that only 27 NDCs have been received, but expressed hope that many more will be submitted ahead of September so a synthesis report can be produced without delay.

Ana Toni, National Secretary for Climate Change, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Brazil, noted her government’s hope to build on the successes and other achievements from CBD COP 16, especially in looking at co-benefits of reforestation.

Josep Gari, Head of Climate, UNDP, highlighted milestones of 2025, including the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, alongside the third round of NDCs. He also called for investments in adaptation action, highlighting significant long-term benefits, in light of World Bank estimates that every dollar invested in adaptation will result in four dollars in savings.

Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the UN, stressed that national efforts on development are by default related to climate action. He stated that the elephant in the room is external debt and debt distress, since debt repayment could wipe out an opportunity to invest in adaptation action.

Elchin Allahverdiyev, Deputy Director of Regional Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Azerbaijan, underscored the importance of implementing targets under the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, and said their government is prioritizing implementation.

Özlem Gülay, Climate Change Expert, Ministry of Environment, Türkiye, pointed to national efforts to leverage

their NDC as an opportunity to strengthen SDG action, offering examples from the energy and agricultural sectors.

Pablo Vieira, Global Director, NDC Partnership Support Unit, highlighted avenues for developing plans that are actionable and capable of attracting investment, including: adopting a whole-of-government approach for moving beyond institutional silos; promoting a whole-of-society approach for ensuring engagement with actors outside of government; and investing in the capacity of ministries for gaining tools, knowledge, and financial resources that can drive implementation.

Anne Olhoff, Director ad interim and Chief Climate Advisor, UNEP-CCC, argued that NDCs can provide an opportunity for countries to specify both technical and financial needs for implementation, and help attract support from outside the UNFCCC system. She called for greater linkages between long-term zero emission targets with short-term implementation.

Kaveh Guilanpour, Vice President for International Strategies, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, reminded participants that the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement was not only to enhance the ambition of the NDCs, but also to enhance international cooperation for action. He said it was staggering to see how few NDCs mention development work, and called for mainstreaming development work, especially to support future NDCs.

### **Synergy Voices: Multi-stakeholder Dialogue**

In a video message, Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization, recalled that every fraction of a degree matters, noting also that science tells us that 2024 was the warmest year on record. She underscored that no country will be spared as climate impacts worsen and inequality widens.

**Options for Maximizing Co-benefits of Climate and SDG Action:** Facilitator Irene Ngunjiri, Director, Water Governance and Innovation Hub, Strathmore University, called 2025 a critical window for course correction and synergistic action on climate and the SDGs ahead of UNFCCC COP 30. She provided examples of climate action on energy contributing to SDG 7, and NbS to address SDGs 2 (zero hunger), 6 (clean water and sanitation), and 15 (life on land).

Lene Bjørn Serpa, Head of Corporate Responsibility & Environmental, Social and Governance, A.P. Moller-Maersk,



View of the panel during Roundtable 2



Irene Ngunjiri, Director, Water Governance and Innovation Hub, Strathmore University

explained that her company's main business is global trade which has tremendous social and economic benefits, but the trade-off is carbon emissions. She highlighted work on a global regulatory framework to decarbonize the industry.

Sebastian Groh, CEO, SOLshare, shared that Bangladesh has around six million solar home systems, yet solar energy still only makes up 2.5-3% of the country's energy source. He explained how they have even installed solar panels in the Rohingya refugee camp, which has led to a thriving barter trade.

Sille Stidsen, Department Director, Danish Institute for Human Rights, explained how climate action contributes to human rights, and the co-benefits that arise when adopting a human rights-based approach for addressing climate change and development needs. She highlighted participation as key to identifying and addressing human rights challenges.

Ina Lykke Jensen, Senior Advisor, Disabled People's Organization of Denmark, stressed that the principle of leaving no one behind in the SDG framework applies to the inclusion of people with disabilities. She explained how 20% of NDCs mention people with disabilities, yet only 1% talk about their involvement or contribution to NDCs. She urged countries to view people with disabilities as agents of change, rather than as simply a group to be cared for.

Questions from the audience touched on: making the business case for climate action and financing ambitions; ways to leverage a human rights-based approach for addressing the issue of land-grabbing for climate action; avenues for giving communities a real voice and control over clean energy solutions; and supporting human rights holders in data collection.

**Mobilizing a Whole-of-Society Participation in Climate and SDG Action:** Facilitator Meagan Fallone, Founder, Step Up Advisers, highlighted that engaging all of society is paramount, noting that responsibility for climate and SDG action goes beyond governments.

Tom Mitchell, Director, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), explained that one significant flaw



L-R: Facilitator **Meagan Fallone**, Founder, Step Up Advisers; **Tom Mitchell**, Director, IIED; **Xiaohua Zhang**, Senior Director, China Programme, ClimateWorks Foundation; **Zarifa Zulfugarova**, Head of International Relations Department, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Azerbaijan; **Daniela Sota Valdivia**, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Corruption and Economic Crime Branch, UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and **Rodion Sulyandziga**, Chair, Indigenous Peoples Global Coordinating Committee

in the current global financial architecture is the challenge of getting money to the local level where communities already have systems for protecting themselves from the impacts of climate change, but need more resources.

Xiaohua Zhang, Senior Director, ClimateWorks Foundation China Programme, spoke about their efforts to help grantees draw on synergies in their work, and highlighted blended financing as an important way forward for philanthropic efforts.

Zarifa Zulfugarova, Head of International Affairs Department, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Azerbaijan, called for more youth to contribute to negotiations as experts with lived experiences.

Rodion Sulyandziga, Chair of the Indigenous Summit on Just Transition, cautioned against perpetuating existing colonial structures in development efforts, and underscored the importance of recognizing and respecting Indigenous Peoples' right to FPIC. He recalled the shared global ambition of leaving no one behind as being key to development that does not further marginalize groups like Indigenous Peoples.

Daniela Sota Valdivia, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, UNODC, stated that corruption is another elephant in the room, which diminishes efforts on climate action. She urged governments to consider bolstering conflict of interest regulations, their public procurement practices, and the UN Convention Against Corruption, especially Article 13 on the participation of society.

Ensuing interactive discussions touched on: whether big-emitting States are adopting commitments to off-setting as part of their mitigation strategies; avenues for including Indigenous Peoples and other stakeholders in the green transition; whether and how to engage with consumers as important stakeholders for driving change; and the importance of building trust and responsibility in representation in decision-making processes.

**Youth Dialogue:** Francis Bofo Asamoah, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Youth Caucus and Major Group for Children and Youth, stressed that only 17% of the SDGs are on track with only five years to go. He called for young people to take action and claim the space they need, whether it is given to them or not.

Helena de Castro Dias, a human rights lawyer and researcher at Leuphana University Lüneburg, reminded participants that the category of youth is not a monolith. In highlighting that youth have different experiences across the world, she stressed the importance of intersectional approaches. She highlighted the threats to territorial justice stemming from green transition projects, and noted that youth from some countries require protection from the governments and corporations they are speaking against.

Mette Lundgaard, Danish Youth Delegate, reiterated de Castro Dias' calls for more discussion on intersectionality and how it looks different coming from different parts of the world. She also called for participants to consider issues in interconnected ways.

Genaro Matías Godoy, Youth Climate Finance negotiator at UNFCCC COP 29, stated that 49% of Parties included education in their NDCs and encouraged an increase in that number. He also recalled discussions with multilateral banks and corporations

about why youth-led initiatives account for only 0.76% of climate finance, and on how to change this.

Riham Helmy, Founder, EnviroX Egypt, called for meaningful youth participation in NDCs and spoke about storytelling as a tool to help local communities get access to financing. She noted that most SDGs treat young people as recipients of training or benefits. She urged that they instead be meaningfully engaged in policy and decision-making, to help share solutions and stories from the grassroots level.

In ensuing interactive discussions, panelists answered questions about: the role of media; ensuring the inclusion of less-privileged youth in decision-making spaces; the importance of addressing education; and the sometimes-challenging relationship with governments in being generous with their funding of projects, but not adopting youth policy suggestions.

### Parallel Thematic Sessions

On Wednesday, two rounds of three parallel sessions took place in the morning and after lunch.

#### Country Platforms for Climate Action and Adaptation: Making Them Work for the Most Climate-Vulnerable:

Facilitator Tom Mitchell, Director, IIED, explained that country platforms are about adopting a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, ensuring bottom-up models of decision-making, and engaging with several finance sources to bring meaningful support to the most vulnerable communities.

In his keynote address, Ralph Regenvanu, Minister for Climate Change, Energy, Meteorology, Geohazards, Environment, and Disaster Management, Vanuatu, noted that the traditional funding system is broken due to fragmentation, being hard to access, and imposing priorities that countries do not choose. He explained that his country's platform is built on trust and helps distribute funds that respond to local needs. He explained that, thus far, provided adaptation support for farmers, schools, clinics, and local communities has been provided.



(L-R): Facilitator **Tom Mitchell**, Director, IIED; **Iva Detelinova**, Senior Advisor, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, African Climate Foundation; **Christopher Bartlett**, Special Climate Adviser, Vanuatu; **Florence Shako**, Founder and Executive Director, Centre for Education Policy and Climate Justice; **Sung-Ah Kyun**, Associate Director, Head, Policy, Research and Partnership team, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; and **Sam Mugume Koojo**, Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda

Anaa Hassan, Researcher in Climate Finance, IIED, offered insight into key lessons from country platforms, including the importance of them being country-led and-owned to help safeguard and scale climate finance.

Panelists then reflected on experiences in setting up or supporting country platforms. Christopher Bartlett, Special Climate Adviser, Vanuatu, explained that their country platform has been built from the ground up over a long period of time. He noted its close connection to the country's NDC, which is based on sectoral policies, ensuring connectedness between action. On modalities, he highlighted that they have established funds for green projects and loss and damage, and experimented with direct financing and micro insurance.

Florence Karimi Shako, Founder and Executive Director, Centre for Education Policy and Climate Justice, stressed that local communities can act as bridges between international climate goals and local realities, and that their exclusion from processes serves to undermine country platforms. She elaborated on the various roles of civil society, for instance to assist with transparency and accountability.

On challenges, Bartlett noted funding as a main one, explaining that only 5% of their NDC has received funding. He explained that some funders try and bypass the system, but highlighted important support from New Zealand through flexible financing. Iva Detelinova, Senior Advisor, African Climate Foundation, noted capacity gaps across ministries as a barrier, requiring medium-term thinking from funders.

Sam Mugume Koojo, Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda, stressed the importance of strengthening institutions that look at transparency.

Sun-Ah Kyun, Associate Director, Head of Policy Research and Partnership Team, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, stressed the importance of tailoring platforms to national contexts and highlighted tools, such as country diagnostics and dialogues, to help assess appropriate modalities.

#### Turning Climate Pledges into Development

**Breakthroughs:** This session looked at climate pledges and how they are linking NDC actions to development. In a presentation on investing in climate for growth and development, Babatunde Abidoye, Chief Economist and Director of Inclusive Growth, UNDP, highlighted preliminary insights from the joint OECD-UNDP report on the topic, sharing that we are due to surpass 1.5°C of warming while national ambitions remain low out of fears regarding the impacts on their economies.

He noted the following recommended strategic priorities for Parties as part of the 2025 NDC cycle:

- political leadership from finance and planning ministries;
- climate goal integration in development strategies;
- private sector engagement with predictable policies;
- strengthening of public banks and simplification of access to climate financing; and
- designing equitable and inclusive transition plans to get the public on board.

Speakers explored how to make a business case for investment in climate actions not only for economic growth, but also for



**Farrukh Sattarov**, Director, National Climate Change Center, Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, Uzbekistan

achieving the SDGs. They also spoke about the differences between the UNFCCC climate meetings versus meetings on the SDGs, comparing the respective regional diversity and rotation of the climate meetings, in contrast to the limited geographic presence of the HLPF focused on the SDGs, which only takes place at UN Headquarters in New York.

In a video message, Farrukh Sattarov, Director, National Climate Change Center, Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, Uzbekistan, called for NDCs to be integrated into development planning rather than considered an add-on.

Norma Salomé Munguía Aldaraca, Director General for Global Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, spoke about their successful efforts in bringing the country's largest oil company to the table to make commitments on climate action and the SDGs. She called for maintaining the pressure despite struggles with multilateral cooperation.

Questions from attendees focused on strategies to engage the private sector in climate action, decoupling emissions from growth, and whether we need to look at climate action beyond the environmental sector to successfully take on climate and sustainable development hand in hand.

#### **Promoting Climate-SDG Synergies Through Energy**

**Action:** Morten Blomqvist, Chief Consultant/Office for Green Diplomacy and Climate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark, highlighted that the energy sector is responsible for around 70% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In his keynote address, Hans Olav Ibrekk, Special Envoy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, noted that energy is a geopolitical issue which has moved up on countries' agendas. He quoted UNFCCC Executive-Secretary Simon Stiell, who said that "energy action done right is climate and development action done right." He shared that while investments in clean energy were effectively double the investments made in fossil fuels, only USD 100 billion of the 2.1 billion invested in renewable energies were invested in Africa and called for stakeholders to "take a hard look" at what needs to be done to increase investments in Africa.

Panelists discussed energy action examples, with a few emphasizing the need to invest more in renewable energy on the African continent. Many claimed that renewable energy



Participants during the session on "Promoting Climate-SDG Synergies Through Energy Action"

investments are here to stay and have made renewables the cheaper option in most cases.

Aleena Majeed, Second Secretary-II, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN, spoke about the various policies supporting Pakistan's position as a country with significant solar panels and solar power uptake. She cautioned how this is also unfortunately leading to growing inequality in some cases, as off-grid solar power becomes cheaper than on-grid power.

On regional collaborations, Gloria Alvarenga, Director of Integration, Access and Energy Security, Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), spoke about how cooperation has allowed for them to pool power, access the knowledge of technical groups and business councils, and even develop alignments on national investments and policies on renewable energy.

Gonzalo Saenz De Miera, Director of Climate Change and Alliances, Iberdrola, stated that we are seeing the revolution of clean technologies in real time as we have reached a tipping point where renewables are fully competitive and often the cheapest way to produce electricity. He continued by explaining that we now have most of the technology needed to reduce 80% of emissions, mainly by decarbonizing the power sector and electrifying industries to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

**Nature's Connections: Synergistic Approaches to Water, Food, and Biodiversity:** Rosa Montañez Gallego, Executive Director, Foundation for the Conservation of Natural Resources, took the audience on a journey to the Eastern Tropical Pacific Seascape, highlighting international collaborative efforts between Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, and Ecuador for its protection. She gave examples of NbS, including mangrove plantations to help mitigate natural disasters, promote carbon capture and provide crucial habitats for species. She noted that possible futures depend on today's actions and stressed the need to urgently mobilize action to protect and restore ecosystems for future generations.

Panelists provided insights on a range of topics, including experimentations with NbS interventions to enhance climate mitigation and adaptation, national strategies for integrated action, and supporting communities in turning negative feedback loops into positive ones through decentralized and local solutions.



**Pepetua Election Latasi**, Director of Climate Change Policy and Disaster Coordination Unit, Office of the Prime Minister, Tuvalu

Pepetua Election Latasi, Director of Climate Change Policy and Disaster Coordination Unit, Office of the Prime Minister, Tuvalu, highlighted the threats posed by coastal erosion to water and food security. She stressed that coral planting had been successful in countering coastal erosion, but that NbS need to be complemented by other technologies and solutions. Hama Ichiro, Assistant Director International Strategy Division, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, stressed that policymaking should be science-based.

Dipti Vaghela, Network Facilitator and Manager, Hydro Empowerment Network, shared experiences of supporting communities to implement and run small-scale, sustainable hydropower solutions. She underscored the importance of using local knowledge to inform decisions on infrastructure and electricity use, and stressed this helps ensure that solutions are customized for local contexts and local environments. She noted that these local solutions have led to multiple benefits, such as providing income, enhancing inclusiveness in decision-making, strengthening food security, and incentivizing the protection of watersheds.

**Climate and Security in SIDS: Challenges and Perspectives:** In a keynote speech, Maina Vakafua Talia, Minister of Home Affairs, Climate Change and Environment, Tuvalu, explained that development is not a policy option for his country, but rather an existential matter of survival. He underscored that for many, climate change still sounds futuristic, but for the people of Tuvalu it is today's burden and not tomorrow's worries. He spoke about people being forced to relocate further from shorelines, of aquifers which once served communities for generations as now being undrinkable, and of declining fisheries as coral reefs are bleaching. He added that these factors are disproportionately impacting Indigenous Peoples. He called climate change the most significant threat to his country's security, livelihoods, and sovereignty. He concluded by underlining that what is happening to SIDS today will happen to others tomorrow.



**Ali Naseer Mohamed**, Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the UN

Panelists covered a broad range of topics, including a variety of angles surrounding security, climate-induced displacement, and the development of “pacific knowledge and pacific solutions to pacific problems” through educational programs, as stated by Edvard Hviding, a Professor at Norway's University of Bergen.

Ali Naseer Mohamed, Permanent Representative of the Maldives to the UN, spoke about his efforts to have climate change recognized as a security threat by the UN, and explained that his country, like other SIDS, has been experiencing many of the same challenges as Tuvalu over the last 50 years.

Janine Coye Felson, Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of Belize to the UN, spoke about the importance and strength of the [Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS](#) as a tool for developing climate resilience. She spoke about the various and diverse financial access challenges experienced by SIDS as they are treated in fragmented ways and with different expectations.

Questions from the audience focused on the barriers and challenges of climate finance, and on climate refugees. Facilitator Sainivalati S. Navoti, Chief, SIDS Unit, UN DESA,



Facilitator **Sainivalati S. Navoti**, Chief, SIDS Unit, UN DESA

concluded that the climate threats facing SIDS today will impact everyone if sufficient action is not taken.

**Advancing the SDGs in Coastal Cities: Integrated Approaches to Climate Resilience and Sustainable Development:** This session explored how integrated development and climate strategies can benefit coastal cities by addressing mitigation and adaptation to climate risks.

In a scene-setting presentation, Sharon Gil, UNDP, highlighted examples of restoration in various cities around the world, with actions, including canal, dune, and wetland restorations, creating coastal parks for natural buffers and urban cooling zones, and invasive alien plant removal to manage fire risks.

Felix Creutzig, Bennett Institute Chair and Head of the Working Group on Cities, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, stressed the linkage between urban planning, environmental sustainability, and citizens' wellbeing and health.

Nobue Amanuma, Fellow, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, highlighted persistent trade-offs between environmental and economic development, and underscored the need for solutions to institutional challenges and ensuring inter- and cross-ministerial dialogue. She urged that closer attention be paid to trade-offs in decision making, and encouraged moving beyond just talking to people who agree that synergies are important.

Faisal Alfadl, Secretary-General, Saudi Arabia Green Building Forum, stressed the importance of place-based solutions seizing the opportunities of coastal habitats.

Peter Vangsbo, Associate Director of Climate and Sustainability Service, Arup,, highlighted the environmental footprint of the building sector, and called for paying more attention to developing sustainable building materials. He listed examples of such materials, like the use of naturally fire-retardant eel grass for roofing in certain parts of Denmark, but stressed that materials need to be made into usable products.

Lykke Leonardsen, Programme Director, Resilient and Sustainable City Solutions, City of Copenhagen, spoke about integrating aspects of secure public transport and cycling infrastructure prior to building phases, while also recognizing ongoing challenges in finding the right balance. She noted that long-term citizen engagement in decision-making had been an important avenue for engendering a sense of ownership over certain areas and projects, leading to greater civic care and project



**Lykke Leonardsen**, Programme Director, Resilient and Sustainable City Solutions, City of Copenhagen

success, and reflected on whether it can help reduce the risk of conflict.

Ensuing discussions touched on: accessing finance for small and medium sized enterprises in cities, and the role of the private sector in supporting these in low-income countries; equitable solutions for managed retreat along coastlines; and how city planners are engaging with young architects.

### Closing Plenary

Ralph Wahnschafft, Independent Senior Advisor on Sustainable Development Policies, UN DESA, presented key messages from the Conference, including:

- that accelerating climate action and development must go hand in hand;
- ministries of finance must play a central role in driving climate action;
- the importance of leveraging enhanced NDCs to promote synergies;
- the need to move away from fragmented, short-term, project-based approaches and instead promote long-term and nationally-driven strategies;
- that integrated climate and sustainable development initiatives should seek to mobilize greater private investments;
- that synergistic development and climate action must prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable people and countries, and leave no one behind; and
- climate change is not just an environmental issue; it also threatens peace, security, and regional stability.

Morten Blomqvist, Chief Consultant/Office for Green Diplomacy and Climate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark, encouraged participants to bring messages from the Conference to the Financing for Development Conference in Seville, and to UNFCCC COP 30. He invited two youth delegates to provide concluding remarks.

Helena de Castro Dias, a human rights lawyer and researcher at Leuphana University Lüneburg, recognized that synergies are important, but stressed that we will not reach a just transition without intersectionality and critical thinking. Kinga Szalaba, Youth Representative - Education and Life Skills, World Scouting, called for the meaningful inclusion of youth in policy and



**Helena de Castro Dias**, human rights lawyer and researcher on Sustainability Governance and Global Supply Chains, Leuphana University



**Daniele Violetti**, Senior Director, Programmes Coordination, UNFCCC Secretariat

decision making, saying that it is the only way to ensure just and sustainable outcomes.

Daniele Violetti, Senior Director, Programmes Coordination, UNFCCC Secretariat, thanked Denmark for their hospitality, and extended thanks to UN DESA, partners, and all participants. He reiterated the importance of synergies, highlighting the crucial role of youth, and called on partners to continue working together on the shared agendas. The meeting concluded at 4:10pm.

### Upcoming Meetings

**Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Coalition Summit:** This special event will convene elected representatives and officials from major coastal cities and regions, as well as from island States threatened by rising sea levels. The Summit will mark the official launch of the Ocean Rise and Coastal Resilience Coalition, aimed at supporting coastal cities by planning and implementing the transformations required to address sea level rise. **dates:** 7 June 2025 **location:** Nice, France **www:** [sdgs.un.org/events/unoc-2025-special-event-ocean-rise-and-coastal-resilience-coalition-summit-56788](https://sdgs.un.org/events/unoc-2025-special-event-ocean-rise-and-coastal-resilience-coalition-summit-56788)

**Third UN Ocean Conference:** The overarching theme of this Conference is “Accelerating action and mobilizing all actors to conserve and sustainably use the ocean”. The Conference aims to support further and urgent action to conserve and sustainably use the Ocean, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development and identify further ways and means to support the implementation of SDG 14. **dates:** 9-13 June 2025 **location:** Nice, France **www:** [sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025](https://sdgs.un.org/conferences/ocean2025)

**Global NDC Conference 2025:** The 2025 edition will foster the rapid and effective translation of NDC commitments into implementation and investment plans. With the aim of catalysing ambition and easing access to financial flows from a broad donor landscape, a particular focus lies on the private sector to bridge the climate finance gap. **dates:** 11-13 June 2025 **location:** Berlin, Germany **www:** [globalndcconference.org/](https://globalndcconference.org/)

**62nd Sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB 62):** The SBSTA and SBI will meet for their regular intersessional gatherings, taking up a range of issues, including follow up from

**COP 29. dates:** 16-26 June 2025 **location:** Bonn, Germany **www:** [unfccc.int/sb62](https://unfccc.int/sb62)

**2025 SDG Investment Fair:** The 2025 SDG Investment Fair will bring together leading business actors and senior government officials to co-create win-win solutions and to mobilize SDG-aligned investment in emerging markets. The programme will feature high-level, solution-driven dialogues, thematic investment roundtables, innovation labs, and networking spaces to foster impactful partnerships. **dates:** 30 June - 4 July 2025 **location:** Seville, Spain **www:** [financing.desa.un.org/what-we-do/other/SDG-investment-fair/sdg-investment-fair-home](https://financing.desa.un.org/what-we-do/other/SDG-investment-fair/sdg-investment-fair-home)

**Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development:** The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development provides a unique opportunity to reform financing at all levels, including to support reform of the international financial architecture and address financing challenges preventing the urgently needed investment push for the SDGs. **dates:** 30 June - 3 July 2025 **location:** Seville, Spain **www:** [financing.desa.un.org/ffd4](https://financing.desa.un.org/ffd4)

**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2025:** HLPF 2025 will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals). Some states will also carry out voluntary national reviews (VNRs) of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **dates:** 14-23 July 2025 **location:** New York City, US **www:** [hlpf.un.org/2025](https://hlpf.un.org/2025)

For additional upcoming events, see [sdg.iisd.org/](https://sdg.iisd.org/)

### Glossary

COP	Conference of the Parties
CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
NbS	Nature-based solutions
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small island developing States
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UN DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNEP-CCC	UN Environment Programme – Copenhagen Climate Centre