



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

Friday, 3 July 2026 | Online at: enb.iisd.org/global-climate-sdg-synergies-conference-7

Summary of the Seventh Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies: 29-30 June 2026

“What are synergies in practice? Beyond collaborative or integrated approaches, they are mechanisms for achieving greater impact than the sum of their parts.” Compounding global environmental and geopolitical crises, shifting financial priorities, and a fast-approaching 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have amplified the urgent need to increase effectiveness and find integrated solutions to interconnected issues.

With 2026 marked by the arrival of the latest iteration of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to be implemented, the global transition to implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in full swing, and global progress towards achieving the SDGs remaining persistently off track, the Seventh Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aptly convened under the theme, “From Commitment to Delivery: Scaling Integrated Action in a Volatile World.”

Over two days, discussions linked global dialogue on climate and the SDGs with regional policy priorities and implementation challenges in Asia and the Pacific. The first [Asia-Pacific Synergies Report](#) was launched, with speakers noting it will contribute to replicating and scaling best practices related to climate and development synergies throughout the region.

Ministers of the environment, heads of UN organizations, and lead negotiators in attendance called for focusing on scaling up implementation, underscoring that complex global challenges “must be met with cooperation, compromise, and collective action.” They urged acting synergistically, noting that when climate action and development plans unite, public expenditures can be 40% more effective.

Convening under the themes of “Scaling Integrated Implementation and Partnerships” and “Integrated Delivery Systems for People and Planet,” nine thematic roundtable sessions explored cross-cutting implementation issues at the local, regional, and global levels. Participants engaged in peer-learning, delving into the themes of: climate justice; energy resilience; sustainable cities and transportation; a just transition; nature-based solutions (NbS); aligning climate and development pathways; and enhancing international cooperation and regional synergistic approaches.

A multi-stakeholder dialogue provided a platform for representatives of government agencies, Indigenous Peoples, the private sector, women, and youth to share insights on how to advance policy and decision making. Highlighting options for improved participatory approaches to enhance climate and SDG development action, speakers urged connecting local perspectives with national decision-making processes. They further stressed ensuring meaningful rights and stakeholder participation and empowerment and, identifying the links between climate change and conflict, called for diverting financing from war to environmental protection.

In This Issue

A Brief History of the Synergies Conference	2
Report of the Conference	2
Conference Opening	2
Scene-setting: From Fragmentation to Integration: Turning Commitments into Coherent and Integrated Action in a Resource Constrained World	3
High-Level Segment: Recommitting to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda: Regaining Peace, Solidarity, Sustainability, and Prosperity	4
High-Level Segment: Strengthening Resilience in Times of Volatility: Fiscal Policies and Sustainable Financing for Synergistic Solutions	5
Multi-stakeholder Dialogue: Financing in Crisis and Fiscal Policies Under Scrutiny	6
Launch of the Asia-Pacific Synergies Report.	6
Thematic Roundtables: Integrated Delivery Systems for People and Planet	6
Thematic Roundtables: Scaling Integrated Implementation and Partnerships	10
Closing Plenary	12
Upcoming Meetings	13
Glossary	13

Among priorities for the road ahead, participants underscored: the importance of cities in accelerating SDG and climate implementation; people and health-centered climate action; significantly increasing financial resources to scale up action; and continuing to elevate ambition and urgency at all levels.

The Seventh Global Climate and SDG Synergies Conference took place from 29-30 June in Bangkok, Thailand. 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, in collaboration with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The conference was livestreamed and assembled 350 attendees in-person representing over 30 countries.

A Brief History of the Synergies Conference

The adoption of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015 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.

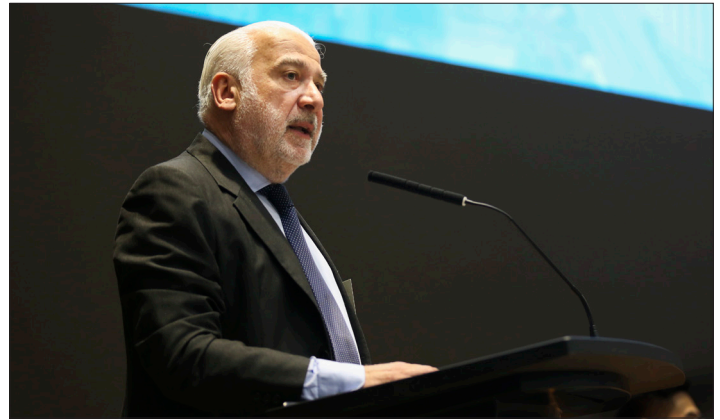
In recognition of this, UN DESA and the UNFCCC Secretariat jointly organized a global conference on strengthening synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement in Copenhagen, Denmark, in April 2019. Seeking to illustrate the co-benefits of synergistic and interlinked approaches, as well as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

The event provides a platform for in-depth, rigorous consideration of synergies. Speakers at the conferences include high-level representatives from UN bodies, academia, governments, and key stakeholders, such as youth. The programmes are comprised of 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 have included:

- 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



Daniele Violetti, Senior Director, Programmes Coordination, UNFCCC Secretariat

Sustainable Development (HLPF) prior to the SDG Summit and the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) to the UNFCCC. 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.” The [Sixth Global Conference](#) took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 27-28 May 2025, addressing the theme “Unleashing Synergies Towards an Equitable, Climate-Resilient, and Sustainable Future.”

Report of the Conference

Conference Opening

“Climate change erodes progress on poverty, food security, health, and ecosystems protection.” In opening remarks, Daniele Violetti, Senior Director, Programmes Coordination, UNFCCC Secretariat, stressed these are “not parallel crises, but the same crisis, one requiring integrated solutions.”

Bahareh Seyed, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA, highlighted that climate action that “keeps development in mind” yields simultaneous progress on other SDGs. She noted the conference is a critical space for collectively exploring climate and development interlinkages and called on delegates to lay the foundations for what comes after 2030.

Noting the conference theme of moving “From Commitment to Delivery: Scaling Integrated Action in a Volatile World,” reflects the reality of countries being “asked to do more with



Bahareh Seyed, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, UN DESA



Lin Yang, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP

less,” Lin Yang, Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP, urged focusing on integrated approaches that achieve co-benefits in today’s constrained fiscal and policy environments.

Emphasizing that “fragmented efforts are no longer viable” when tackling compounding global crises, Phirun Saiyasitpanich, Director-General, Department of Climate Change and Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand, stressed strengthening the alliance between sustainable development policy and economic resilience.

Where We Stand: The State of Climate and SDGs: Heads of UN Agencies and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) provided statements via video message.

Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization, illustrated how changes in the atmosphere, Ocean, and cryosphere directly hinder progress on the SDGs, stressing that El Niño events and glacier loss are development emergencies. She highlighted the need to protect global observation systems, saying “we cannot manage what we cannot observe.”

Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, called for greater coordination across MEAs, underlining healthy ecosystems as the strongest allies for achieving climate mitigation and resilience. She encouraged “connecting the dots” at the intergovernmental level to unlock synergistic national development planning.

Noting conflicts are reversing hard-won gains for sustainable development, Astra Bonini, Chief, Integrated Analysis Policy Branch, UN DESA, emphasized that progress is still possible by scaling up integrated actions. She highlighted the potential of smart policies and coordinated investments, underscoring that climate and the SDGs are not competing agendas.

Scene-setting: From Fragmentation to Integration: Turning Commitments into Coherent and Integrated Action in a Resource Constrained World

On Monday, Ralph Wahnschafft, UN DESA, moderated a panel comprising members of the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies.

Kazuhiko Takuechi, President, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), drew attention to the adoption



Kazuhiko Takuechi, President, IGES

of UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions on climate and SDG synergies as a testament to the importance of the discussion. He stated that effective integration can only occur when scientists, policymakers, and international organizations co-create knowledge.

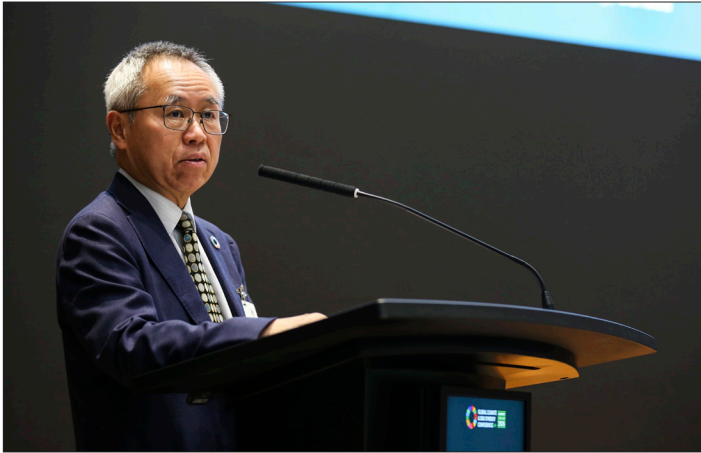
Noting the importance of local governments in closing the implementation gap, Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific (UCLG ASPAC), called for mechanisms that support access to small-scale funding. She further stressed increased involvement of local governments in the production of NDCs and Voluntary National Reviews.

Meagan Fallone, Founder, StepUp Advisers, stated that the distinction between climate and development is artificial, underscoring that fragmentation of national reporting among the Rio Conventions allows governments to underdeliver on their commitments. She urged integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into policymaking infrastructures to reform subsidies and help with real-time monitoring and response to environmental stresses.

Diana Üрге-Vorsatz, Vice-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and Director, Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Policy (3CSEP), highlighted the co-benefits of well-designed climate action, and called for cross-sectoral collaboration of financial mechanisms. She underscored the importance of considering new political priorities for climate-development synergies, including energy security.

Noting countries failed to reach agreement on cooperation between conventions during the recent 2026 UN Bonn Climate Change Conference, Kaveh Guilanpour, Vice-President for International Strategies, Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES), urged harnessing the upcoming Rio Convention COPs and the second Global Stocktake of the Paris Agreement to highlight the benefits of synergistic approaches in a resource-constrained world.

Elisabeth Gilmore, Carleton University, Canada, emphasized that synergistic approaches form the basis of decision making in local communities. She stressed that the goal of synergistic action is to translate to tangible results for communities, whose voices must drive adaptation efforts.



Li Junhua, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

High-Level Segment: Recommitting to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda: Regaining Peace, Solidarity, Sustainability, and Prosperity

Stressing that climate change is compounding disruptions caused by ongoing geopolitical turmoil, Li Junhua, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, in his opening address on Tuesday, said integrated solutions are a necessity. He urged action to unlock and align financing and strengthen multilateral cooperation to ensure synergies guide collective efforts toward a more resilient and sustainable future.

Via video message, Simon Stiell, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, underscored that the SDG vision, of achieving peace and prosperity with no one left behind, depends on resilient, low-emission economies. He emphasized this is more critical than ever in a year in which war is upending the global economy and El Niño supercharges environmental threats. Stiell called on developed countries to deliver the goal of tripling annual adaptation finance to USD 300 billion promised by 2035.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, UN Under-Secretary-General, and Executive Secretary, ESCAP, noted many countries in the Asia-Pacific region are among those most vulnerable to climate change, and called for recommitting to peace and solidarity in times of geopolitical uncertainty. She underscored that synergistic approaches can maximize co-benefits and resource efficiency, support healthier communities, and build stronger economies.

Via video message, Annalena Baerbock, President, 80th session of the UN General Assembly, noted progress toward fulfilling the climate and sustainable development agendas. She said renewable energies overtook fossil fuels regarding new energy production in 2025. She urged identifying and scaling up successes to enable overcoming complacency with synergism.

Lok Bahadur Thapa, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN, and President, UN Economic and Social Council, noted while the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda are among the international community's most important frameworks for sustainable development, progress remains worryingly off track. He urged acting with greater synergy to break institutional silos that fragment climate action, policymaking, and implementation.



Lynda Tabuya, Minister for Information, Environment and Climate Change, Fiji

“The commitments of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda, to protect people and planet, are connected promises.” Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, urged joint action to deliver on these promises, underlining that when climate action and development plans unite, public spending can be 40% more effective. She highlighted three areas for accelerated action: breaking silos; scaling up finance that creates incentives for solutions with co-benefits; and strengthening partnerships.

Statements by Ministers and Leaders: “We were the first nation to ratify the Paris Agreement. It speaks to our very survival.” Lynda Tabuya, Minister for Information, Environment and Climate Change, Fiji, urged delegates to break silos, first within their own ministerial cabinets, to ensure buy-in and results on interconnected challenges.

Ali Shareef, Minister of Climate Change, Environment and Energy, Maldives, stressed that climate shocks are already shaping his country's islands, economy, and “the very fabric of their communities.” He underscored the spirit of solidarity required to “keep 1.5°C alive,” calling for international responsibility and partnerships that match climate-vulnerable countries' ambitions for a resilient future.

Geeta Chaudhary, Minister for Agriculture, Forests and Environment, Nepal, said integrated implementation of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs is an imperative, and that investments must deliver multiple, reinforcing benefits. Pointing to her country's climate-threatened glaciers, which are a key water tower for the region, she urged centering mountains and the cryosphere on the global development agenda.

Recalling the devastating floods that inundated her country in 2022 and 2025, Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Pakistan, stressed that climate disasters threaten peace, prosperity, and development. She noted the need to prevent climate instability by, among others, scaling finance and strengthening technology transfer.

Darika Sarunyagate, Advisor to the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand, underscored international cooperation as a vital mechanism for improving policy coherence and accelerating implementation. She stressed centering social inclusion to ensure a just climate transition.

Noting climate and development action are intertwined, Diaz Faisal Malik Hendropriyono, Deputy Minister of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia, called for designing synergies to ensure the success of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. He outlined Indonesia's efforts on education, health, emission reductions, and ecosystem restoration.

Anton Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Environment, Sri Lanka, called for solidarity in a world facing escalating climate impacts, biodiversity loss, economic uncertainty, and evolving inequity, stressing that prosperity can only be achieved by integrated action and international cooperation. He underscored Sri Lanka's progress toward achieving the SDGs and the importance of continued international cooperation and support.

Noting over one thousand glaciers have disappeared during the past decade alone, Sanoi Boyzoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tajikistan, highlighted their impact on freshwater availability for millions of people in Central Asia. He called for renewed political commitment, strong multilateral cooperation, and concrete action at all levels.

In a special address, Zhenmin Liu, Special Envoy for Climate Change, China, recalled the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement as landmark achievements in human development. Lamenting that geopolitical tensions, unilateralism, and protectionism hinder their implementation, he stressed translating the recognition of climate and sustainable development synergies into action. Regarding the shift in focus toward implementation, Liu urged considering extending the SDGs timeline beyond 2030.

By video, UNFCCC COP 30 President André Correa do Lago stressed the importance of synergies between climate and the SDGs, noting key entry points and linkages with the just transition mechanism established at COP 30 in Belém, Brazil.

High-Level Segment: Strengthening Resilience in Times of Volatility: Fiscal Policies and Sustainable Financing for Synergistic Solutions

Introducing this high-level panel on Tuesday, C2ES Vice-President Guilanpour noted drastic changes to the global economy in the years following the agreement on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance at UNFCCC COP 29.



Kaveh Guilanpour, Vice-President for International Strategies, C2ES



Thanyaporn Krichtitayawuth, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network Thailand

Responding to a question on the impacts of the recent US-Israel war on Iran felt by the Asia-Pacific region, Yevgeniy Zhukov, Director General, Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Asian Development Bank (ADB), underlined disproportionate exposure to the crisis, as 80% of the region's energy imports transit through the Strait of Hormuz. He further noted that rising food prices will be compounded by El Niño-induced droughts, outlining that projected fiscal deterioration makes the case for diversifying away from fossil fuels.

Thanyaporn Krichtitayawuth, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network Thailand, stressed that adapting to climate change requires addressing environmental impacts. She outlined efforts to secure short-term private sector finance to mitigate upcoming El Niño impacts on water management and food security, highlighting the potential of carbon taxes, green and sustainability bonds, and contingent debt instruments.

Subrata Sinha, Acting Deputy Regional Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Asia and the Pacific Office, drew attention to key messages from the 19th edition of the UNEP Finance Initiative Global Roundtable on Sustainable Finance, including that climate financing uncertainties are leading to a disorderly transition, climate change and nature links and impacts are accelerating, and "opportunities sit on the other side of risk." He emphasized UNEP's role in providing science, supporting policy reform, strengthening access to finance, and helping countries deliver practical solutions.

Answering a question on women entrepreneurs' access to finance, Maria Holtsberg, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women Asia and the Pacific, stressed that the financial architecture is designed with requirements that women entrepreneurs structurally lack. She lamented that despite evidence to the contrary, investing in women-led enterprises is still perceived as risky. She drew attention to the [EmPower: Women for Climate Resilient Societies](#) financing programme that has secured USD 53 million in blended finance for women entrepreneurs.

In ensuing discussions, panelists stressed the importance of:

- tailoring international banking and insurance standards and principles to national contexts;

- monitoring progress and measuring evidence to de-risk investments;
- sustainable fuel traceability and carbon accounting;
- using natural assets as a form of collateral;
- transforming businesses by integrating gender equality principles; and
- using low-carbon technology to mitigate climate shocks in small-scale agricultural enterprises.

Multi-stakeholder Dialogue: Financing in Crisis and Fiscal Policies Under Scrutiny: How Can All-of-Government and All-of-Society Approaches in Climate and SDG Policy Making be Better Advanced?

On Monday, dialogue facilitator Michaela Friberg-Storey, UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand, invited speakers to share experiences in promoting more inclusive fiscal and development policies that benefit the most vulnerable.

Darkey Ephraim Africa, Ambassador of South Africa to Thailand, stressed mainstreaming climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into national policies. He illustrated South Africa's governance framework that vertically integrates traditional systems in formal structures, highlighting the Imbizo system of community fora, which connects local perspectives with national decision-making processes.

Underscoring that environmental and sustainable development programmes “will not go anywhere without social inclusion,” Gerd Trogemann, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok Regional Hub, called for moving beyond awareness raising and on-paper consultation toward true participation. He urged centering whole-of-society principles for implementing the most recent cohort of NDCs.

Meagan Fallone, StepUp Advisers, emphasized the need to include the private sector in the discussions, highlighting success stories of progressing toward the SDGs by partnering with businesses. She also illustrated the catalytic impact of providing economic and training opportunities to women, that result in disproportionate knock-on development benefits.

Questions from the audience touched on the need to:

- empower Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth through financial mechanisms that guarantee their participation in decision-making processes;

- involve ministries of education when discussing climate action;
- identify the links between climate change and conflicts, and divert financing from war toward environmental protection; and
- increase collaboration between developing and developed countries.

Launch of the Asia-Pacific Synergies Report

Via video message on Tuesday, Hiroataka Ishihara, Minister of the Environment, Japan, introduced the [Asia-Pacific Synergies Report: Advancing Synergistic Solutions to the Triple Planetary Crisis and the SDGs](#), stressing the importance of synergies for implementing mutually reinforcing global agendas. He highlighted the report's array of practical case studies from across the region, saying they present an opportunity to develop a new wave of integrated action.

ESCAP Executive Secretary Alisjahbana noted the report will inform deliberations at the [ninth session of the ESCAP Committee on Environment and Development](#), convening immediately after the Synergies Conference, on establishing a regional programme of action to advance synergies for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

A video highlighted the report's key findings and recommendations, including entry points for transformation pathways in the region, through:

- health-centered climate action;
- nature-positive nexus approaches;
- circular economy approaches; and
- cities as delivery platforms for synergies.

In a video message, UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen highlighted the role of regional and subregional bodies in translating global commitments into context-specific action. She welcomed the report's recommendations for national planning and coordinated implementation.

Thematic Roundtables: Integrated Delivery Systems for People and Planet

The following thematic roundtable sessions took place on Monday, 29 June.

Climate Justice, Energy Resilience, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Delivering Integrated Solutions Where Vulnerability Is Greatest:

“We face two compounding crises of climate and energy, and SIDS are on the frontline of both.” UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Li Junhua stressed the need to leverage finance, technology, and policy to achieve energy resilience, noting this is a matter of justice for SIDS. He urged operationalizing the multidimensional vulnerability index as a critical step to ensuring climate-vulnerable developing countries are not excluded from concessional finance and development assistance due to income status.

Lynda Tabuya, Minister for Information, Environment and Climate Change, Fiji, illustrated the consequences of fossil fuel dependence in her country, underlining it is an issue of justice and sovereignty. Stressing the principle of common but differentiated



Meagan Fallone, Founder, StepUp Advisers



Elisabeth Gilmore, Carleton University, Canada

responsibilities is inalienable, Tabuya highlighted strong regional collaboration among Pacific SIDS and called on international partnerships to match this ambition. She further urged meeting climate finance commitments and protecting the 1.5°C goal, noting every fraction of a degree is a matter of survival for SIDS.

Daniele Violetti, UNFCCC Secretariat, moderated an ensuing panel, inviting speakers' perspectives on building fit-for-purpose energy resilience. Ali Shareef, Minister of Climate Change, Environment and Energy, Maldives, stressed the overdependence of his country on fossil fuels, highlighting challenges in attracting investment for small-scale renewable energy installations. He noted the importance of diversifying energy supply chains and centering communities' needs to enable a just energy transition.

Robeliza Halip, Executive Director, Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples, underscored the energy transition as an opportunity to strengthen Indigenous Peoples' territorial governance. She called for: appropriate technology that aligns to community needs; decentralized energy systems and governance; and accountability on renewable energy waste management.

Elisabeth Gilmore, Carleton University, noted science, and those who fund it, must prioritize investigating the key issues of the most vulnerable and consider a climate justice lens. She urged stronger recognition of Indigenous and local knowledge as data and evidence, emphasizing the strengths of coproduced science in developing solutions.

Junichi Fujino, IGES, highlighted that SIDS are leading integrated strategies on energy resilience. He pointed to regional initiatives generating co-benefits, including a project in Palau that is empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises and women-led organizations through green energy financing.

Sustainable Transport and Mobility for Inclusive and Low-Carbon Development: Katrin Luger, ESCAP, moderated this roundtable. Providing opening remarks, Weimin Ren, ESCAP, stressed that few sectors advance development—while also harming the climate—more than the transport sector. Noting vehicle ownership relative to population size has increased by over 64% in the past decade in Asia and the Pacific, he emphasized the need for reliable, frequent, and inclusive public transport.

Keynote speaker Hongliang Yang, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), highlighted AIIB's thematic priorities on green infrastructure, connectivity and regional cooperation, technology-enabled infrastructure, and private capital mobilization. He noted that “structural deficiencies create a vicious cycle” by reducing public transport reliability, leading to more private vehicles and increased traffic, which further deteriorates public transport quality.

Remarking that the transport sector is a key entry point where climate action can improve lives, Shifa Hadee, Ministry of Economic Development, Transport and Trade, Maldives, stressed that her country recognizes sustainable transport as a core climate priority. She called for international cooperation and accessible development finance for SIDS that face high infrastructure costs and capacity constraints.

Rajibul Alam, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh, highlighted the incoming [UN Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026–2035](#). Noting his country's average altitude lies below 10 meters above sea level, making it vulnerable to rising seas, flooding, and saltwater intrusion, he called for restructuring transport financial mechanisms to advance Paris Agreement implementation.

Sudhir Gota, Asian Transport Observatory, outlined the gap in transport infrastructure financing, estimating that fulfilling current pipelines and policy targets will require USD 2.6 trillion in annual spending, compared to the USD 800 billion spent annually over the last three decades.

Noting interlinkages between transport and urban planning, Kalpana Viswanath, Co-Founder and CEO, Safetipin, emphasized that public services, including green spaces and public toilets, are essential for transport users and workers. She further highlighted that: private transport use is increasing in all countries; safe last-mile connectivity must be solved to close the gender gap in public transport use; and affordability remains a major barrier, especially for women.

Chloe Pottinger-Glass, UN-Habitat, introduced the transit-oriented development model, noting it involves holistic planning for transit stations and surrounding neighborhoods. She called for closing the last-mile connectivity gap by implementing alternatives to private cars, such as bicycle paths and safe



Kalpana Viswanath, Co-Founder and CEO, Safetipin

walkways, and urged coordination between urban planning and transport investments to combat gentrification.

Energy and Just Transition for Climate and Development: Scaling Access, Renewables, and Efficiency to Drive Growth and Equality: Opening this roundtable, Hongpeng Liu, ESCAP, stressed accelerating a just and inclusive energy transition and identified key implementation gaps, including insufficient finance and infrastructure and weak institutional coordination. He called for focus on solutions and partnerships to accelerate regional and international cooperation.

Juhi Bansal, UNFCCC Regional Collaboration Centre for Asia and the Pacific, highlighted key lessons and challenges emerging from the 64 new NDCs submitted, stressing the strong possibility of global emissions peaking before 2030. Noting 44% of countries have set quantitative renewable electricity capacity targets and 13% include coal phase-down targets by 2030, she said NDCs continue to underrepresent actual national ambition and called for stronger alignment with national policy frameworks.

Offering a regional perspective, Sergey Tulinov, ESCAP, reported that while renewables are accelerating, they accounted for only 11.5% of total energy consumption in 2023, and energy efficiency improvements are slowing. He called for better energy information systems, and for embedding social protection frameworks in the transition.

Bahareh Seyedi, UN DESA, outlined interlinkages between SDGs 7 (affordable and clean energy) and 13 (climate action), emphasizing that approximately 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions originate from the energy sector. Launching the [SDG 7 Policy Brief on SDG 13 on Advancing the SDG-Climate Nexus Through NDC Implementation](#), she highlighted key recommendations, including the need for strengthening institutional coordination and policy coherence, and improving data and accountability mechanisms. Seyedi further flagged clean cooking as a persistently underprioritized area for improvement.

In an ensuing panel discussion, May Hsieh, Alliance of Small Island States, stressed that for SIDS, a just transition is fundamentally a question of resilience and energy security, calling for predictable and accessible climate finance tailored to their vulnerabilities.



Dimas Fauzi, Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership

Dimas Fauzi, Southeast Asia Energy Transition Partnership, outlined partnership models for achieving impact at different scales, and emphasized the importance of collaboration with different stakeholders and bottom-up project design. Adrian Lasimbang, Founder, TONIBUNG, called for a just and equitable energy transition anchored in: Indigenous self-determination; free, prior, and informed consent; land tenure security; and community-managed, decentralized energy systems supported by capacity building.

Sizwile Khoza, Stockholm Environment Institute, highlighted persistent policy incoherence and the need to address power asymmetries to ensure equitable benefit sharing for women, Indigenous communities, and marginalized groups. Jitsai Santaputra, Co-Founder, Youth for Energy Southeast Asia, called for greater coordination between youth organizations and policymakers.

Water, Health, and Climate: Securing Human Well-being in a Changing Climate: Setting the scene, ESCAP Deputy Executive Director Lin Yang noted the intersections between climate action and SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), adding that the water-health-climate nexus is “no longer a distant concern” in the Asia-Pacific region.

In a keynote address, Kenzo Hiroji, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Japan, and High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters, underlined the challenges of managing water under a changing climate, pointing to the cascading impacts of climate-induced water-related risks. He emphasized the need to manage water holistically, across borders and sectors, and called for synergistic governance that connects water, disaster risk reduction, and climate change.

Providing special remarks, Sanoi Boyzoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tajikistan, underscored the existential threat posed by glacier loss, noting it is a health and development crisis. He highlighted Tajikistan’s efforts through the Dushanbe Water Process to garner political momentum and finance for resilient water management.

Pema Gyamtsho, Director General, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, concurred that the alarming speed at which glaciers melt has far-ranging impacts, including disrupting precipitation and increasing vector-borne diseases and



Group photo of panelists from the session on “Water, Health, and Climate: Securing Human Well-being in a Changing Climate.”

drought-related human displacement. He called for community-oriented early warning systems and awareness raising on how climate change affects water resources.

A panel moderated by Lorenzo Santucci, ESCAP, considered stakeholders' perspectives on integrated water management approaches. Yoko Watanabe, Director of Environment, ADB, outlined the bank's efforts to scale up climate and nature finance for concurrent interventions with reinforcing outcomes, including on river basin and wetland management.

Dechen Tsering, Regional Director, UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office, stressed the importance of integrated national planning and budgeting for water management, pointing to the interlinkages between water, infrastructure, health, and ecosystem management. Leonie Vaas, Hirdaramani Apparel, said businesses must transition from water management to stewardship, remarking that protecting upstream and downstream water resources can prevent disruptions to business operations.

Responding to participants' questions, speakers noted:

- the importance of natural capital accounting, as public goods like water are often not considered to be investable;
- the need to combine gray and green water infrastructure planning in cities;
- that corporations' environmental impacts increasingly influence business strategies; and
- the advantages of regional organizations' data-sharing platforms for transboundary water management.

NbS for a Climate-resilient and Nature-positive Future:

Roundtable facilitator Kathryn Bimson, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Asia Regional Office, opened the session, noting that NbS are not a new concept and they remain crosscutting across MEAs, with significant implementation gaps still to be addressed.

Drawing on Pakistan's experience as a frontline climate-vulnerable country, Sandeep Sengupta, Head of Global Climate Policy, IUCN, explained that adaptation remains a national priority within an integrated resilience and economic transformation approach. He called on the international community to scale up access to climate finance for adaptation in developing countries and to expand support for NbS and ecosystem restoration.



Kathryn Bimson, IUCN Asia Regional Office

Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Pakistan, highlighted the unique potential of NbS to simultaneously address climate adaptation and mitigation and biodiversity goals. She noted NbS can contribute over 30% of the total mitigation actions needed to limit warming to 1.5°C, but stressed they are not a substitute for emission reductions. Kharal called for high-integrity NbS that are ecologically responsible and designed for longevity.

In a panel discussion, Bunthida Plengsaeng, Deputy Director General, Department of Water Resources, Thailand, presented NbS projects implemented in Thailand, including restoring rivers for flood and drought mitigation, and shifting from synthetic to organic fertilizers in rice farming. She emphasized the need for better knowledge sharing with local communities.

Regan Pairojmahakij, Centre for People and Forests, highlighted how triangular frameworks can combine science-based tools with local community needs to identify tailored NbS portfolios, outlining initiatives in Nepal and Myanmar. She highlighted the importance of engaging private investors and local governments.

Charlotte Hicks, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, explained that NbS should not be treated as single interventions, but as portfolios shaped by context and location. She illustrated how cross-sector synergies, including the One Health approach, can open opportunities for co-financing.

In ensuing discussions, participants addressed, among others: the need for an integrated, holistic approach focusing on livelihood options for communities; green cover targets for countries; financial support for developing countries facing disaster risks; capacity building for NbS uptake; and the role of spirituality and sacred sites for nature protection.

Smart, Sustainable Cities: Leveraging Digital Innovation at the Local Level for Climate and Development: This roundtable was moderated by Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary-General, UCLG ASPAC.

Curt Garrigan, ESCAP, reported that one in two people in the Asia-Pacific region live in cities, with an expected urban population increase of 50% by 2050. He highlighted fragmented governance, limited local capacity, and finance and interoperability gaps as major barriers to scaling solutions. On



Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary-General, UCLG ASPAC

building enabling environments for smart city transformation, he recommended: establishing dedicated units within municipal governments; enhancing multilevel governance coordination; developing legal and regulatory mechanisms; and fostering partnerships with academia, the private sector, and civil society.

IPCC Vice-Chair and 3CSEP Director Ürge-Vorsatz highlighted the upcoming IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities, noting it focuses on digitalization, smart solutions, and opportunities and risks for cities. Stressing rising costs for advanced tools and AI, she urged not to overlook “dumb” solutions like walking, cycling, and passive housing that provide resilience.

Kanop Ketchart, Mayor, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand, emphasized the importance of building communities’ trust to increase citizen participation in urban planning and development. He highlighted key initiatives, including crowd-sourced reporting of infrastructure damage and waste, and locally-developed and maintained AI systems as enablers of citizen participation and cost-effectiveness.

Safetipin Co-Founder and CEO Viswanath urged re-examining how technologies impact urban communities. Remarking that while New Delhi has become the world’s most surveilled city through closed circuit television, Safetipin’s crowd-sourced data indicates well-lit and frequented streets are considered safer than video-monitored ones.

Thematic Roundtables: Scaling Integrated Implementation and Partnerships

These thematic roundtables took place on Tuesday, 30 June.

Regional Approaches to Synergies: Insights from the Asia-Pacific Synergies Report: In opening remarks, Kentaro Doi, Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Japan, noted synergies require wide stakeholder buy-in and leadership across sectors and levels of government. He expressed hope that the Asia-Pacific Synergies Report’s practical guidance is disseminated through regional platforms and used to advance solutions responding to communities’ needs.

ESCAP Executive Secretary Alisjahbana underscored the role of cities in delivering integrated development initiatives with simultaneous benefits across the SDGs. She stressed the



Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, UN Under-Secretary-General ESCAP Executive Secretary

importance of governance, finance, and data for deploying synergistic approaches.

Recalling UNEA resolutions [6/4](#) and [7/5](#) on promoting synergies, cooperation, or collaboration for implementing MEAs, Dechen Tsering, UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office, highlighted opportunities for greater alignment in national planning processes. She called for taking the evidence provided by the report’s case studies into implementation pathways at the national and regional levels.

Yevgeniy Zhukov, ADB, underlined the need to end fragmented practices tackling crises “that do not exist in isolation.” He noted nature-positive development is an emerging area in the ADB portfolio, which recognizes that biodiversity underpins health, food security, and economic resilience.

Presenting the Asia-Pacific Synergies Report and noting the region would require an additional 32 years to achieve the SDGs at the current pace of progress, Eric Zusman, IGES, highlighted the report as a key tool for replicating and scaling synergies across Asia and the Pacific.

During the panel discussion that followed, Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, urged centering health as a key driver for climate action, and using data to demonstrate the benefits of climate actions on health-related outcomes.

Dindo Campilan, Regional Director, IUCN, emphasized that synergies represent approaches that deliver greater impact than the sum of their parts and called for designing the institutional partnerships required to deliver high-integrity synergies.

UCLG ASPAC Secretary General Tjandradewi highlighted the role of regional networks that facilitate the exchange of experiences and open-source capacity building for local governments. Junichi Fujino, IGES, noted sustainable waste management must be systemic and begin with better-designed production and infrastructure.

Summarizing the session, IGES President Kazuhiko Takuechi emphasized knowledge sharing and technology transfer as the core engine for transforming environmental crises into long-term economic opportunities. He called on participants to disseminate



Kentaro Doi, Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Japan

the report as a “guiding beacon to scale integrated solutions for a resilient future for all.”

Aligning Climate and Development Pathways: From NDCs to Integrated Implementation for Climate and the SDGs: Introducing this roundtable, Sean Lees, UNDP Asia and the Pacific, stressed embedding NDC priorities into national planning processes.

Keynote speaker Daniele Violetti, UNFCCC Secretariat, stated that NDCs and SDGs are “two sides of the same coin” and require joint implementation. Noting the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement indicated that existing policies and NDCs “put us well above the 1.5°C trajectory,” he urged greater focus on improving:

- ownership, noting that NDCs span the whole economy, but their coordination sits in one ministry;
- subnational government engagement;
- finance; and
- accountability, stressing weak frameworks currently exist to verify net-zero pledges.

Rajendra KC, Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Environment, Nepal, highlighted his country’s goal to reach net-zero by 2045, by targeting mitigation and adaptation across all sectors. He outlined how consolidating ministries can increase shared responsibility and ownership for the NDC implementation process.

Presenting Bangkok’s master plan on climate change that aims, among others, to achieve net-zero by 2050, Nateetip Jungsomprasong, Bangkok Metropolitan Authority, said it prioritizes action on transportation, energy, freshwater, urban planning, and climate adaptation. She called for enhanced coordination between local and national governments.

Athena Denise Galao, UN Women Asia and the Pacific, reported that over 90% of NDCs submitted in the last decade have gender considerations, including on women’s economic empowerment and gender mainstreaming. She highlighted the extensive, multi-stakeholder process that produced Cambodia’s NDC, noting it is among the strongest on gender.



David Guever Jurado, Ministry of Development Planning and Environment, Bolivia

David Guever Jurado, Ministry of Development Planning and Environment, Bolivia, highlighted his country’s work in facilitating an Indigenous-led process for NDC implementation. He underscored that free, prior, and informed consent is a binding condition for any climate action in Indigenous territories.

Regarding a question on whether multilateral development banks (MDBs) are sufficiently aligned with NDC and SDG priorities, Sudhir Sharma, UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office, noted that while MDBs are moving toward integrating climate change in their portfolios, full alignment with NDCs and SDGs falls under government development planning. He stressed that NDCs should be the outcome of national sustainable development planning processes.

Country Platforms for Integrated Delivery: Enhancing International Cooperation and Partnerships for Climate-SDG Synergies: Session facilitator Elisabeth Gilmore, Carleton University, said developing countries urgently require new forms of solidarity and partnership to sustain SDG actions. She invited panelists’ insights on how to: enhance the effectiveness of technical cooperation; leverage country networks to advance climate-SDG synergies; and support innovative finance and investment.

Napaporn Tanginthai, Department of Climate Change and Environment, Thailand, presented her country’s regional and bilateral cooperation efforts, highlighting the ASEAN Centre for Climate Change as a key platform for data sharing across the region. She outlined several flagship initiatives, including carbon credit partnerships and a low carbon cities programme, and noted a partnership with the ADB on adaptation finance and green investment platforms.

Rubina Ferdoushy, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change, Bangladesh, stressed that for climate-vulnerable countries like hers, technical cooperation is a matter of survival. She emphasized co-created water governance and called for: unrestricted technology transfer under BRICS+ frameworks; dedicated climate finance windows by MDBs; and stronger South-South cooperation.



Rubina Ferdoushy, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change, Bangladesh

Marvel Josef Petrus Ledo, GIZ Indonesia, stressed the importance of localizing SDGs and illustrated multi-stakeholder partnerships at the local level including on sustainable agriculture, food security, and ecotourism. Among key lessons, he emphasized building: local government capacities; structured peer learning with proper follow-up; and real-time, transparent digital knowledge exchange.

Matias Antonio Senra de Vilhena, Embassy of Brazil in Thailand, presented Brazil's South-South cooperation contributions, including on bioenergy technology transfer and tropical agriculture expertise. He referenced a BRICS+ framework declaration on climate finance linking climate action with poverty eradication, and explained that South-South cooperation complements North-South partnerships.

Panelists converged on the importance of moving beyond aid toward co-creation, grounded in common values and shared development priorities. Gilmore concluded that countries receiving support can simultaneously provide knowledge and capacity, and that finance must be understood not merely as a cost but as a development investment.

Closing Plenary

Looking Ahead: A Youth Dialogue: Facilitated by Aashna Swarup, UN DESA, this session convened young practitioners to reflect on the role of youth in driving climate action and sustainable development.

Aghul Mehdiyeva, ClimaTalk, stressed that youth are an acting force that is already shaping solutions on the ground, and urged governments to provide continuous and tangible support for youth-led climate communication efforts.

Steven Setiawan, UNEP Children and Youth Major Group, called for institutionalizing youth participation at the outset of policy processes, rather than as a consultative afterthought.

Challenging the assumption that sustainability is something “only wealthier nations can afford,” Bianca Yap, Flint, underscored that the false choice between economic growth and environmental protection is rapidly losing ground. She called on



Ralph Wahnschafft, UN DESA

governments to use public procurement as a lever to scale clean technology.

Intouch Sricharoenchit, Asia-Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism, highlighted the role of AI in tackling financial and operational barriers to climate innovation, while identifying outdated regulation as a key bottleneck.

Conference Summary: Ralph Wahnschafft, UN DESA, summarized key messages from the conference, including that:

- environmental challenges and sustainable development constraints are deeply interconnected;
- accelerating progress toward the SDGs and implementing climate action is more urgent than ever;
- significantly increased financial resources are needed to scale up action;
- all climate and SDG policy and decision making must be based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches; and
- cities provide important implementation platforms for impactful climate action and development.

On the road ahead, Wahnschafft highlighted conclusions from the past two days' discussions, including that: global peace, stability, and security remain fundamental preconditions for advancing the SDGs; action on environmental and development agendas must answer calls for greater ambition and energy, considering the stakes at hand; and existing and new partnerships must be strengthened.

In his concluding remarks, Daniele Violetti, UNFCCC Secretariat, emphasized the role of the conference in providing a critical platform where synergies are explored as we move towards implementing the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

Noting synergies are no longer a theoretical concept and now require implementation, Bahereh Seyedi, UN DESA, underscored the wealth of tangible examples of financial and policy instruments that countries can use to integrate and mainstream synergies between climate action and development issues. She emphasized that “we all have a role to play” in reaching the necessary scale of implementation for meeting global commitments. The meeting was closed at 5:02 pm.



Rapporteurs of the thematic roundtables report on salient points discussed



Group photo at the end of the closing plenary

Upcoming Meetings

HLPF 2026: HLPF 2026 will take place on the theme of “transformative, equitable, innovative, and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs for a sustainable future for all.” It will conduct in-depth reviews of SDGs 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). **dates:** 7-15 July 2026 **location:** New York, US **www:** hlpf.un.org/2026

UN Convention to Combat Desertification COP 17: Parties will convene to forge solutions to the interconnected challenges of desertification, land degradation, and drought under the theme “Restoring Land, Restoring Hope.” **dates:** 17-28 August 2026 **location:** Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia **www:** unccd.int/cop17

65th Session of the IPCC (IPCC-65): IPCC-65 will advance work related to the seventh assessment cycle. Delegates will consider its budget and the timeline for the contribution of the three Working Groups to the Seventh Assessment Report. **dates:** 12-15 October 2026 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **www:** ipcc.ch

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 17): COP 17 to the Convention on Biological Diversity will review implementation of the GBF and address issues under the Convention, while the 12th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP 12) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and MOP 6 to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing will address issues under the Protocols. **dates:** 19-30 October 2026 **location:** Yerevan, Armenia **www:** cbd.int/conferences/2026

Montreal Protocol MOP 38: MOP 38 will review implementation and strengthening of the Montreal Protocol. **dates:** 2-6 November 2026 **location:** Kigali, Rwanda **www:** ozone.unep.org/meetings/thirty-eighth-meeting-parties

2026 UN Water Conference: The 2026 UN Water Conference will focus on actions to accelerate SDG 6 achievement and reaffirm internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

dates: 8-10 December 2026 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **www:** sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2026

BBNJ Agreement COP 1: The historic first COP to the Agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) is expected to address institutional and financial arrangements as well as issues around area-based management tools, marine protected areas, and environmental impact assessments. **dates:** 11-22 January 2027 (tentative) **location:** New York, US **www:** un.org/bbnjagreement/en

For additional meetings, see sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

3CSEP	Center for Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Policy
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
C2ES	Center for Climate and Energy Solutions
COP	Conference of the Parties
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IGES	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCLG ASPAC	United Cities and Local Governments Asia-Pacific
UN DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly