



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17 March 2017

Excellency,

Pursuant to my letter dated 14 February, I have the honour to share herewith the concept note as well as the provisional programme of the High-Level SDG Action Event entitled "Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda", that I am organizing in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to be held on 23 March 2017 at United Nations Headquarters, New York.

The SDG Action Event will consist of a High-Level Opening and a 'Stocktaking' Panel discussion to assess the status of climate science and efforts to address it, including ratification and implementation of the Paris Agreement as well as climate actions by all stakeholders. The morning session will also include a plenary debate where High Level representatives of Member States are invited to make interventions. The Plenary segment will continue in the afternoon alongside two parallel multi-stakeholder interactive sessions.

Member States are invited to actively engage in panel discussion, plenary segment, and the interactive sessions. For details on the List of Speakers, please see the UN Journal.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Thomson".

Peter Thomson

All Permanent Representatives
and Permanent Observers
to the United Nations
New York

High-Level SDG Action Event
Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda
23 March 2017, United Nations Headquarters

Office of the President of the 71st UN General Assembly
(as of 15 March 2017)

Concept Note & Provisional Programme

CONCEPT: The President of the 71st UN General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, in collaboration with the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ms. Patricia Espinosa, will convene Member States, the UN System, and stakeholders on 23 March in a High Level Meeting at United Nations Headquarters to advance the following objectives on climate change and sustainable development:

- (1) Invigorate political momentum on climate change, highlighting its deep linkage to the Sustainable Development Agenda. Emphasis will be placed on concrete solutions on climate and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that yield cross-cutting dividends, especially regarding land-use, energy and the ocean;
- (2) Increase common understanding among key actors including Member States, the UN system and non-state stakeholders regarding the urgent need to ramp up ambition and implementation, especially given upcoming 2020 targets and milestones for both climate and SDGs.

Opening
Trusteeship Council Chamber

**9:30am –
10:00am**

Opening Remarks:

- H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly
- H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations
- Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Panel: Stocktaking on Climate – Ambition and Action

Paris Agreement ratification; Science; Gaps & Opportunities

Trusteeship Council Chamber

**10:00am –
11:15am**

This ‘stock-taking’ panel and ensuing dialogue will discuss the status of climate science and of efforts to address it, including ratification and implication of the Paris Agreement as well as climate actions by all stakeholders.

Format: Moderated dialogue with multi-stakeholder panellists, followed by and remarks from the floor by additional Governments and stakeholders.

Moderator: Mr. Andrew Steer, President and Chief Executive Officer, World Resource Institute

Presentation: Dr. Hoesung Lee, Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Film: Mission 2020: necessary, desirable, achievable (2.45mins). Produced by the Stockholm Resilience Centre and Mission 2020

Panellists:

- H.E. Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Rural and Maritime Development, Agriculture and National Disaster Management, Government of Fiji / Climate Change Champion
- H.E. Ms. Ségolène Royal, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Marine Affairs, France
- Ambassador Howard Bamsey, Executive Director, Green Climate Fund Secretariat
- Governor Jay Inslee, Washington State, United States
- Ms. H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma, CEO, AbzeSolar S.A.

Plenary
Trusteeship Council Chamber

**11:15am –
12:30pm**

Plenary: Statements from High Level Member State representatives.

LUNCH BREAK

	<p>Plenary (cont.) <i>Extended High Level Plenary of morning Stocktaking on Climate Trusteeship Council Chamber</i></p>	<p>Session I: Implementing Solutions <i>Scaling up implementation of the Paris Agreement and SDGs</i> <i>Conference Room 7</i></p>	<p>Session II: 2020 as Opportunity <i>Achieving 2020 targets of SDGs and NDC ambitions</i> <i>Conference Room 8</i></p>
<p>3:00pm – 5:30pm</p>	<p><u>Film:</u> Before the Flood Trailer</p> <p>This ‘Stock-taking’ plenary will enable Governments and stakeholders to make statements from the floor on the status of climate science and of efforts to address it, including ratification and implication of the Paris Agreement as well as climate actions by all stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Format:</u> Chaired Plenary</p>	<p>This dialogue will explore the deeply cross-cutting dimensions of climate and the sustainable development goals and provide concrete examples where implementing solutions with this multi-sectoral approach has enhanced social, economic and environmental dividends.</p> <p><u>Format:</u> Moderated dialogue followed by remarks from the floor by Governments and stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Facilitator:</u> Ms. Elizabeth Cousens, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, UN Foundation</p> <p><u>Panellists:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Minister Xie Zhenhua, Special Representative on Climate Change Affairs of China - Ms. María Verónica Arias Cabanilla, Metropolitan District of Quito, Environment Secretary - Mr. Adnan Z. Amin, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), - Dr. Tacke, Chief Executive Officer, Siemens Windpower - Mr. Peter Wiklöf, Chief Executive Officer, Ålandsbanken Abp - Ms. Paritosh Kasotia, Deputy Director, The Solar Foundation 	<p>This dialogue will explore means to enhance global attention to and support of climate action and the SDGs, in particular as it relates pressing 2020 targets.</p> <p><u>Format:</u> Moderated dialogue followed by and remarks from the floor by Governments and stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Facilitator:</u> (tbc)</p> <p><u>Panellists:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Marcelo Mena Carrasco, Vice Minister of Environment, Chile, Co-Chair, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, - Ms. Veronique ‘Ronnie’ Haki International Association of Public Transport (UITP) representative and Interim Chairperson at the NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) - Ms. Lise Kingo, CEO and Executive Director, UN Global Compact - Ms. Helen Mountford, Director, New Climate Economy - Ms. Davida Herzl, Chief Executive Officer, Aclima - Ms. May Boeve, Executive Director, 350.org.

		<p>Followed by ‘Respondents’ and open dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Elliot Harris, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Environment (UNEP) - Mr. Robert Kirkpatrick, Director, UN Global Pulse 	<p>Followed by ‘Respondents’ and open dialogue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Alina Saba, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) - Mr. Paul Holthus, Founding President and CEO of World Ocean Council on behalf of the International Chamber of Shipping - Mr. Brian Helmuth, Professor Environmental Science and Public Policy, Northeastern University
<p>Wrap Up: The Way Forward <i>Trusteeship Council Chamber</i></p>			
<p>5:30pm – 5:45pm</p>	<p><u>Format</u>: Moderated panel discussion. Moderator of morning Panel will discuss outcomes of the day’s sessions with the respective afternoon Session Facilitators.</p>		
<p>Closing <i>Trusteeship Council Chamber</i></p>			
<p>5:45pm – 6:00pm</p>	<p><i>Closing Remarks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly - Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 		

High Level SDG Action Event
"Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda"
New York, 23 March 2017
Trusteeship Council
Concept Note

Background

The ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has set the objectives to achieve sustainable development, eradicate poverty and foster shared prosperity, combat climate change and environmental degradation, and make the world safer. Its implementation requires scaled up, urgent and meaningful engagement by Member States as well as other development actors and stakeholders.

The early entry into force of the Paris Agreement is sending a strong signal regarding Governments' commitment to urgently address climate change, which continues to pose serious challenges to all countries, including in terms of persistent drought and extreme weather events, rising sea levels, coastal erosion and ocean acidification, further threatening efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development worldwide.

For both the climate change and SDGs, 2020 is a particularly critical year. Numerous scientific studies place 2020, or near it, as a threshold for when sufficient actions must be taken so to not cross dangerous thresholds. Many countries' domestic existing greenhouse gas reduction strategies and national determined contributions (NDCs) include 2020 year as a benchmark year. Moreover, the year 2020 is also significant for achieving many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets, as set out in the 2030 Agenda, and in particular for land-use, the ocean and other climate-relevant SDGs.

Achieving these objectives, some as soon as 2020, and achieving a just transformation to a low greenhouse gas emission and climate resilient global economy will require drawing on the contributions of all parts of society – Member States, the private sector, civil society, cities and local authorities, Indigenous Peoples, academia, and others. Already these actors, independently and in partnerships, are innovating and leading on climate and sustainable development solutions. However more is required on all fronts, by all.

Recognizing the particularly critical importance of sustainable finance for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including climate action, the following SDG Action Event – SDG Financing Lab to be held on 18 April – will focus on how to drive the transformation to align financial markets with sustainable development, as well as showcase concrete ways in which Member States can approach the financing of different SDGs.

Objectives, Format and outcome

The President of the 71st UN General Assembly, Mr. Peter Thomson, is convening his second SDG Action Events – entitled "Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda" – in collaboration with the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ms. Patricia Espinosa. It will convene Member States, the UN System, and

stakeholders, on 23 March 2017 in order to (i) invigorate political momentum on climate change; (ii) showcase concrete initiatives and multi-stakeholder approaches to address climate change and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that yield cross-cutting dividends, especially in terms of land-use, energy and the ocean; and (iii) draw attention to the need for urgent action before 2020.

The High Level Event will consist of an Opening and Stocktaking Session to discuss the status of climate science and efforts to address it, including ratification and implementation of the Paris Agreement as well as climate actions by all stakeholders. This will be followed by a plenary where Member States, UN Observers and UN entities are welcome to make interventions. The afternoon will consist of a continued plenary as well as two parallel moderated and interactive multi-stakeholder Sessions dedicated to the respective themes:

- *Implementing Solutions: Panelists and participants, in a moderated discussion, will explore the cross-cutting dimensions of climate and the sustainable development goals and provide concrete examples where implementing solutions with this multi-sectorial approach has enhanced social, economic and environmental dividends, in particular for land-use, energy, and the ocean. (Conf. Room 7)*
- *2020 as an Opportunity; Achieving the 2020 Targets of SDGs and NDCs: Panelists and participants, in a moderated discussion, will explore means to enhance global attention to and support of climate action and the SDGs, in particular as it relates to land-use, energy and the ocean, and the human dimensions given the pressing 2020 targets. (Conf. Room 8)*

Guidance for the Plenary

Guiding Questions:

I) What ambitious policies and measures are being undertaken by Member States and other stakeholders to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, in order to meet the objective of limiting the increase in global average temperature to below 2° C?

II) What actions are to be taken or can be scaled up to enhance enabling frameworks, incentives, and means of implementation at international, national and local levels that yield cross-cutting dividends for climate action and SDGs, especially given the need to deliver results by 2020?

III) What is needed to encourage more successful multi-stakeholder approaches by Governments, sub-national actors, the private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, particularly in relation to land-use, energy and the ocean, and the human dimensions of climate change and sustainable development?

Member States are invited to engage in the Plenary and interactive Sessions at the highest level and are highly encouraged to keep their interventions to three minutes per speaker and within five minutes if speaking on behalf of a group.

The Outcome Document of this entire event, including inputs from the Opening and afternoon Sessions is a Presidential Summary to be circulated to Member States and other relevant stakeholders.