

SUMMARY OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SDG ACTION EVENT: CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: 23-24 MARCH 2017

The President of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson, convened a High-Level Event, titled “Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda,” in collaboration with the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This was originally scheduled as a one-day event, but due to the large number of UN Member States that wanted to speak, a second morning was added to the schedule, with the meeting taking place from 23-24 March 2017, at UN Headquarters in New York.

The event sought to provide an opportunity to highlight synergies between actions to address climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Representatives of UN Member States, international organizations, the private sector and civil society discussed their efforts to advance solutions to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change, which were both adopted in 2015.

Following opening statements, there were panel presentations and plenary statements. As the facilitator of one of the panel sessions reported at the end of the first day, participants quickly jumped into discussions regarding options to address climate change in a holistic manner, with all recognizing the linkages between the SDGs and climate change. Many participants agreed with a comment that it is time to remove “negotiating hats” and focus on implementation challenges and opportunities.

Tajikistan, the Philippines, Armenia and Andorra announced that they submitted their respective instruments of ratification or accession to the Paris Agreement this week, and several other speakers announced their countries were close to completing the ratification or accession process. Speakers also confirmed and renewed their intentions to take action to address climate change, with many identifying specific actions, legislation and partnerships.

Discussions also focused on, *inter alia*, the possibilities for changes in the energy sector, with attention given to a report recently released by the International Renewable Energy Agency and International Energy Agency on renewable energy prospects, calls for removing harmful fossil fuel subsidies, and the possibilities for technological leapfrogging, along with the importance of ensuring a just transition for those affected by these changes. Opportunities for financing sustainable

development through the issuance of green bonds, and for steering investment decisions by enhancing the availability and measurement of climate-related risks, were also discussed. Participants also addressed the role of big data in promoting “radical transparency,” which participants noted could provide an accelerant for change. They discussed the need to make climate change personal and noted that this goal could be accomplished through developing the stories that data can tell. At the close of the event, Thomson thanked participants for their engagement and said he is “deeply encouraged” by the high level of interest in advancing the mutually reinforcing opportunities for action provided by the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Paris Agreement on Climate Change: The international political response to climate change began with the 1992 adoption of the UNFCCC, which sets out a legal framework for stabilizing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) to avoid “dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.” The Convention, which entered into force on 21 March 1994, has 197 parties. In December 1997, delegates to the third Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 3) in Kyoto, Japan, agreed to a protocol to the UNFCCC that committed industrialized countries and countries in transition to a market economy to achieve emissions reduction targets. These countries, known

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as Annex I parties under the UNFCCC, agreed to reduce their overall emissions of six GHGs by an average of 5% below 1990 levels in 2008-2012 (the first commitment period), with specific targets varying from country to country. The Kyoto Protocol entered into force on 16 February 2005. In December 2015, at COP 21 in Paris, France, parties agreed to the Paris Agreement that specifies that countries will submit progressively ambitious nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and that aggregate progress on mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation will be reviewed every five years in a global stocktake. The Paris Agreement was opened for signature during a high-level ceremony at UN Headquarters on 22 April 2016, and entered into force on 4 November 2016. As of 24 March 2017, 140 countries had submitted their instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval to the Paris Agreement.

2030 Agenda: The intergovernmental negotiation process on the “post-2015 development agenda” was first mandated by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2013, which also decided that a Global Summit should be held in September 2015 to adopt a new UN development agenda. The Special Event also called for linkages between the new development agenda and the SDGs mandated at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

An Open Working Group was mandated by Rio+20 to elaborate and forward draft SDGs to the UNGA. Following thirteen meetings, the Group adopted by acclamation a report containing 17 SDGs and 169 targets, and agreed to submit the proposal to the UNGA for consideration and action at its 68th session.

A subsequent series of eight week-long sessions convened in 2015 to prepare the outcome of the UN Summit. The final package developed by this process, titled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” contains the preamble, declaration, 17 SDGs and 169 targets, means of implementation and the Global Partnership, and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation.

REPORT OF THE SDG ACTION EVENT

In his opening remarks at the High-Level SDG Action Event: Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda, Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly, said that the impacts of climate change are already being felt around the world, but “we have time to change our ways,” and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement show us how. Thomson said climate change exacerbates drivers of conflict, displacement and humanitarian crises, and these drivers are all addressed by the SDGs. He called to look beyond traditional means of implementation, with a focus on new strategic partnerships and mobilizing resources from public, private, blended and alternative sources, while pursuing regulatory reforms that help economies transition to inclusive, low-carbon models.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said humanity is causing dangerous global warming and “this is not a question of opinion.” Militaries take climate change seriously due to its “direct consequences for peace and security,” he noted, and called climate action the only way to safeguard peace, prosperity and a sustainable future. Guterres highlighted the Paris Agreement’s

adoption by every single government, and governments’ recognition that its implementation goes “hand-in-glove” with the 2030 Agenda.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa echoed the UN Secretary-General’s vision for addressing challenges in an integrated manner, because “there is only one on-the-ground reality.” She said the policies to “bend the emissions curve” must be developed with a focus on human well-being, environmental stewardship and responsible economic growth. Noting that work towards the SDGs could open US\$12 trillion of market opportunities, she said momentum is building among national governments as well as in the “unprecedented alliance” of companies, investors, cities, regions, institutions and individuals towards low-emission and sustainable growth. She stressed that “We have fully entered the era of implementation, and it is unstoppable.”

A plenary panel followed the opening remarks. During the afternoon, participants met in three separate sessions, with two sessions focused on means and solutions to address climate change and sustainable development challenges and a plenary session focused on statements from governments and other high-level officials. The plenary session continued on Friday morning, given the large number of governments on the speakers list. Closing sessions convened at the end of both days.

STOCKTAKING ON CLIMATE: AMBITION AND ACTION

Andrew Steer, President and CEO, World Resources Institute (WRI), moderated the opening panel, which considered the science, gaps and opportunities involved with the Paris Agreement.

Hoesung Lee, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), noted that at the current annual emission rates of about 40 billion gigatonnes of CO₂, we will use up the rest of our carbon budget in 20 years. He added that, since the IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) in 2014, new studies suggest that by 2100 sea-level risks in non-mitigation scenarios might be twice as large as assessed.

Ségolène Royale, France’s Minister of Environment, Energy and Marine Affairs, confirmed France’s commitment to contribute US\$1 billion to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) by 2020. She also announced that France will increase funding dedicated to combating climate change from €3 billion per year in 2015 to €5 billion per year 2020, including €1 billion for adaptation. She added that France issued its first green bond in January 2017.

Luke Daunivalu, Charge d’Affairs of Fiji to the UN, presented the four priorities for Fiji’s presidency of the upcoming UNFCCC COP 23. The priorities are: ensure that “substantive progress” is achieved on the Paris Agreement rule book to be completed by COP 24; support countries to identify and make progress on their red lines in the upcoming negotiations; ensure that stakeholders are included in the UNFCCC process; and identify a representative theme for COP 23, such as Adaptation and Financing, or Adaptation and Resilience Building.

Noting that addressing climate change has been considered as an economic cost and burden, Howard Bamsey, Executive Director, GCF, said it should instead be considered as an opportunity and source of wealth creation. He explained that GCF’s task is to leverage investments carefully in order to help

countries take on climate activities that fulfill their aspirations in reducing emissions and to implement adaptation activities that are transformative and replicable.

Jay Inslee, Governor, Washington State, US, said his state is leading the effort to develop a clean energy economy, noting a united effort among British Columbia, Canada and the US states of California, Oregon and Washington to advance a clean energy economy. He said people want more green jobs, less carbon pollution, and more protection against the “ravages” of ocean acidification.

Princess Abze Djigma, AbzeSolar S.A., called for bringing solutions from the highest political levels to the community level, saying the keyword of green business is “implementation.” As an example, she showcased the MAMA-LIGHT Initiative for Sustainable Energy, which offers affordable light and energy to communities and has improved school results. She added that vocational training for youth and women is needed to develop products that can adapt to changing climates.

PLENARY

The stock-taking plenary began on Thursday morning with statements from several ministers. It continued throughout Thursday afternoon and into Friday morning.

Slovakia said actions must rest on scientific data, not political cycles or moods. Observing that the resources to tackle climate change will come largely from the private sector, he said governments’ “homework” is to set the rules, create a favorable investment environment, and ensure coherence among strategies on climate change, sustainable development, and humanitarian and peacebuilding processes.

Tajikistan reported that it ratified the Paris Agreement in late February 2017 and deposited the instrument to the UN Secretariat on 22 March. He said that inter-seasonal transitions have become more drastic in his country, among other meteorological changes and natural disasters.

Norway said “deeds, not promises” will create confidence in implementing the Paris Agreement and SDGs. He reported that by 2030, Norway will reduce its emissions by 40% compared to 1990 levels, while continuing international efforts to support climate action. He also highlighted the need to phase out harmful fossil fuel subsidies.

Finland said that while most businesspeople understand the economic case for investing in clean technologies, policies and regulations are needed to stimulate investment. He noted that Finland’s national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda, approved in February 2017, aims for a carbon-neutral Finland, and he highlighted Finland’s Carbon Neutral Municipalities network to develop cost-effective ways to reduce GHG emissions.

Egypt said Africa’s needs for adaptation total US\$12-15 billion annually. While there are important roles to play by all stakeholders, including the private sector, he said they should not replace substantive action from governments.

Ethiopia, speaking as President of the Climate Vulnerable Forum and the Vulnerable 20, expressed her hope that, despite the global situation being “somewhat in flux,” developed countries will honor the commitments made through the Paris Agreement and provide additional financial assistance and technology to vulnerable countries to support the implementation of adaptation and mitigation programmes.

Senegal called for countries to: commit to lower carbon-emission technologies; promote more sustainable consumption and production patterns; build resilient infrastructure; and transition to sustainable transportation.

Sweden announced that it is about to put into law its commitment to become carbon neutral by 2045. She also said the link between climate change and security risks “needs an institutional home” at the UN, such as through the appointment of a dedicated high-level representative.

Ecuador, for the Group of the 77 and China, called for: achieving a balance of financing for mitigation and adaptation; all parties who have not done so to ratify the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol; and ensuring certainty for the financing of the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund.

The European Union said all countries must seek better ways to produce, consume, invest and trade. She highlighted: the decision to channel 40% of the European Fund for Strategic Investments toward climate-relevant projects; a commitment to ensure reaching their Paris target of reducing economy-wide emissions by at least 40% by 2030; and the need for more attention to the destabilizing effects of climate change.

Saying financial resources to address the effects of climate change are lagging, and efforts must increase to scale up renewable energy activities and ensure effective adaptation, Maldives, for the Alliance of Small Island States, (AOSIS) noted that it will continue to work on adaptation and mitigation efforts to lower GHG emissions.

Germany, as president of the G20, highlighted the work of the G20 Sustainability Working Group on Energy and Climate, and said the G20 Summit will address the nexus between climate change and sustainable development.

Micronesia, for the Pacific Small Island Developing States, called for the appointment of a Special Representative on Climate and Security “as soon as possible,” stressing the link between sustainable development and peace and security.

El Salvador, for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), called for building and enhancing the synergies between the Paris Agreement and the SDGs and other relevant international agreements, such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Bangladesh, for the least developed countries, stressed the importance for adaptation funding from public sources, and of access to climate financing. In his national capacity, he said Bangladesh has set up two climate change trust funds: the Bangladesh Climate Fund, with US\$400 million from domestic funding; and the Bangladesh Climate Resilience Fund, with support from partners.

Zambia, for the land-locked developing countries (LLDCs), said 60% of the LLDCs have ratified the Paris Agreement.

Belize, for the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), recommended institutionalizing the present High-level Event under the authority of the UNGA Presidency to take regular stock of progress towards the convergence of the climate change and SDG agendas.

Guatemala, for the Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean, stressed the importance of shifting to sustainable consumption and production patterns. In his national

capacity, he noted that Guatemala 2032, the long-term vision for Guatemala's national plans, is aligned with both the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

Italy stressed the role of climate change in triggering the European migration and refugee crisis. He called for finalizing the Paris Agreement rule book by the end of 2018.

The Netherlands stressed that "science on climate change is clear," and offered to share the Netherlands' knowledge and experience with partners.

China noted that China's 13th five-year plan includes targets to reduce carbon intensity by 18% and carbon consumption by 15%. He added that China funds 100 climate mitigation and adaptation projects in 27 countries.

The Philippines announced that it deposited its instrument of accession to the Paris Agreement on 23 March. She said her country is holding extended public consultations to determine its NDC.

Nicaragua called for a global "compensation for damage" policy under international law, to oblige industrialized countries to pay for environmental damage.

Sri Lanka presented its "blue-green" strategy, which promotes a "light-footprint" approach on climate and the environment.

Morocco highlighted national investments in clean energy and green technology. It noted as part of its NDC the national goal to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix to 40% by 2020, and to 52% by 2030.

Brazil stressed the need to expedite capitalization of the GCF. As part of its NDC, he noted Brazil's goal to reduce GHG emissions to 37% below 2005 levels by 2025, and 44% by 2030.

Poland announced that it adopted the Strategy for Responsible Development in February 2017, which aims to safeguard Poland's sustainable development, including climate change-related aspects.

Highlighting the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls for addressing natural disasters and food security, Japan said mainstreaming gender equality in climate change action would help to address several SDGs at once.

Moldova presented efforts to decrease GHG emissions to 65% of 1990 levels by 2020, and to increase the share of renewables in the country's energy mix by 20% by 2020.

Argentina noted its aim to gradually reduce its energy subsidies while increasing energy efficiency and the share of renewable energy in its energy mix.

South Africa said the Paris process is "irreversible and in the best interest of all countries." She urged developed countries not to reduce bilateral financing and multilateral funding.

Israel announced that it is in the process of developing national climate change adaptation indicators for key sectors, and working with partners to adapt existing data to international standards.

Estonia announced the recent adoption of its first national climate change adaptation and action plan.

Singapore announced its intention to set a carbon tax and to green at least 80% of all buildings in the country by 2030.

The United Arab Emirates noted that setting a clean energy target (70% by 2050) has accelerated the commercialization of green investments, and strong regulatory systems have enabled investment breakthroughs in renewable energy.

Qatar announced plans to deposit its instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement soon.

Peru highlighted the implementation of the Sendai Framework as essential for implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. She announced that Peru plans to reduce GHG emissions by 30% by 2030, and to accelerate the adoption of national policies on climate change in various sectors.

Denmark announced plans to become independent of fossil fuels by 2050. He noted that increasing industrial efficiency presents opportunities of hundreds of billions of dollars for business.

Austria noted that, together with the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), her country supports the development of a Global Network of Regional Sustainable Centres. She also highlighted the Vienna Energy Forum 2017, which will focus on the theme "Sustainable energy for the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement."

As part of its mitigation efforts, Malaysia reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining forest coverage on at least 50% of its territory.

On Friday morning, 24 March, delegates gathered for a second day to hear statements from an additional 44 speakers who registered to speak during the event but were not able to speak on the first day due to time constraints.

Andorra announced that it had submitted its instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement that morning, while Armenia announced its submission on 23 March. Georgia, Myanmar and Serbia said they will soon submit their instruments of ratification. Oman also said it is in the final stages of ratification.

Speakers also discussed their efforts to ratify and implement the Paris Agreement, including through new partnerships and collaboration at the regional and international levels such as the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy and Climate Resilience Initiative (SIDS DOCK) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre. The Russian Federation highlighted a US\$7.5 million project to build resilience in Pacific States, in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

Countries also highlighted linkages between addressing climate change and other elements of the 2030 Agenda. Papua New Guinea stressed the need for "decentralization" of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda at the subnational level. Colombia noted as a dividend of peace the reduced destruction of its natural resources. Links with water issues, poverty reduction, food security, green jobs, clean energy, reduced inequalities, and infrastructure were also highlighted.

The climate change challenges faced by mountain regions, landlocked countries, and countries in the Horn of Africa were noted.

Mexico highlighted links with the upcoming 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. Indonesia suggested that the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) should connect with other processes, such as those under the UNFCCC. Guinea and Costa Rica called for organizing stocktaking events on the linkages between the SDGs and the Paris Agreement in the future.

Governments also highlighted national efforts to address climate change and related issues, including: a registry for calculations of companies' carbon footprints (Spain); building codes (Jordan); a domestic emissions trading scheme (Kazakhstan); programmes for educating and raising public awareness and mobilizing public participation, especially of

young people (Viet Nam); a national Green Economy Strategy (Kenya); joining the Climate and Clean Air Coalition and taxing older vehicles (Rwanda); reducing gas flaring (Oman); enacting logging restrictions (Myanmar); and planning to reduce emissions to 70% of 1990 levels by 2030, taking into account the absorption capacity of forests (Russian Federation).

SESSION I: IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS: SCALING UP IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND SDGS

On Thursday afternoon, Facilitator Elizabeth Cousens, UN Foundation, opened this session and highlighted that the entire SDG framework represents a climate strategy through its targets on energy, cities, ocean and vulnerabilities, all of which can create more instruments for climate action and sustainability.

Pei Liang, National Development and Reform Commission of China, described SDG 13 (climate change) and the Paris Agreement as two sides of the same coin of “converting burdens into opportunities” and outlined three concrete proposals for doing so: ensure the next round of NDCs addresses resilience and adaptation, as it is difficult for governments to attract private sector investment for these areas; help countries translate commitments into concrete projects; and provide capacity-building support for designing policies and programmes.

María Verónica Arias Cabanilla, Environment Secretary, Metropolitan District of Quito, Ecuador, called for the vertical integration of legal frameworks between the national and sub-national level, noting that some local authorities are not aware of Paris Agreement commitments. Adnan Amin, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), said the transition to renewable energy is happening fast, citing falling costs of solar photovoltaic and onshore and offshore wind energy. The transition will happen because of private sector innovation, he said, but governments must create the policy framework and incentives for this to take place. He stressed the importance of NDCs in this regard.

Markus Tacke, Chief Executive Officer, Siemens Windpower and chair of Wind Europe, said that pricing renewable sources lower than fossil fuels would lead to a breakthrough. He underlined the importance of market design for wind power, including smart grid solutions to avoid blackouts and design needs for floating, to support wind generation in deeper waters. Peter Wiklöf, Chief Executive Officer, Ålandsbanken Abp, highlighted his bank’s Baltic Sea Card, which uses the Åland Index to show customers the carbon footprint attributed to their purchases. He reported that the top criterion for consumers’ choice of bank is ethics and that in order to earn money, “you have to be able to behave.” He added that the bank is investing in only the top-ranked companies according to ethical and other standards identified by Sustainalytics.

Pari Kasotia, The Solar Foundation, highlighted examples of progress driven by US states and citizens, and called for education and awareness to create a culture of energy efficiency, clean energy and recycling. She added that solutions must be site-specific, such as by providing solar cookers and solar medical suitcases for rural populations.

Responding to the panel presentations, Elliot Harris, UN Environment (UNEP), said that when companies disclose their environmental commitments or liabilities, their share prices perform better, reflecting investors’ desire for that information.

He highlighted the possibility of obligating countries to disclose such information or list it on the stock exchange. Another respondent, Robert Kirkpatrick, Director, UN Global Pulse, underscored that high-quality data on climate change, which has built up to the point that it is “incontrovertible,” is what allowed the Paris Climate Conference to succeed. Carla Mucavi, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), called for more investment in farmers and agriculture, noting that 800 million people are still hungry and marginalized: “The way we are going, they will still be left behind.” She reported that, according to FAO data, the population of people living in poverty could increase by up to 122 million by 2020, relative to a future with no climate change.

SESSION II: 2020 AS OPPORTUNITY

On Thursday afternoon, Daniele Violetti, UNFCCC, facilitated this session, which focused on means to enhance global attention to and support of climate action and the SDGs, in particular related to the 2020 targets.

Veronique Hakim, International Association of Public Transport representatives and Interim Chairperson at the New York City Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), said public transport’s climate contribution can be measured in terms of “Transit Avoided Carbon,” which represents emissions displaced by transit minus emissions produced by transit. She noted that the MTA has launched a green bond initiative to support investments for capital projects that target sustainability objectives.

Lise Kingo, CEO and Executive Director, UN Global Compact, suggested that the ocean community may be at the point where the climate community was 20 years ago, working to increase understanding by a broader audience. She elaborated that businesses do not fully understand how their actions affect oceans, and pointed to the development of consumer products using plastics from oceans as an example of the opportunities arising from applying data to a challenge, and telling the story well.

Helen Mountford, Director, New Climate Economy, said efforts to restore degraded forest and agricultural land (SDG 15) and scale up renewable energy (SDG 7) can support climate action. She cited cases in Niger, the 20x20 initiative in Latin America and the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (afr100) as bolstering the restoration of degraded land. Davida Herzl, CEO, Aclima, stressed the value of data for assessing risks and developing solutions. She said radical transparency and access to information can provide an accelerant for change, and noted that sensor data can accelerate that shift and “make climate change personal.”

May Boeve, Executive Director, 350.org, said the way to change politics is for people to push their leaders to act. Alina Saba, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development, said climate justice and climate action are broader concepts than “green economy,” and they include the need to consider historical emissions and violations of indigenous peoples’ rights. She urged attention to SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 15 (life on land) when looking at SDG 13 (climate action).

Paul Holthus, CEO of the World Ocean Council, said the shipping industry’s GHG emissions are addressed within the International Maritime Organization. He highlighted efforts to

develop sensors and to place them on ships to collect information on ocean acidification and other areas where more information and data is needed.

Brian Helmuth, Northeastern University, said the academic community is interested in developing long-lasting partnerships and engaging in efforts to implement the SDGs. He stressed the importance of citizen science, and the need to turn data into stories.

During the discussion, speakers highlighted that investors are recognizing risks to their investments from climate change, and are seeking ways to manage those risks. Others stressed the need to craft and manage a just transition from fossil fuels.

WRAP UP: THE WAY FORWARD

During a brief wrap up session on Thursday, Andrew Steer said the Action Event had started with a sobering presentation on the state of climate science, which showed that it is “here, it is real, and it looks like it is worse than we thought.” However, the plenary session had also brought forth seven sources of hope. First, he cited “huge life” in the application of the NDCs, noting new carbon taxes, innovations in adaptation, green jobs, research and development, and governance structures. Second, he drew attention to “unprecedented” private sector leadership, both from big and small businesses. Third, multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance the Paris Agreement are starting to deliver, he said, and most are linked to the SDGs. Fourth, Steer observed an intellectual shift from five years ago, when people believed in trade-offs, but now a strong body of evidence shows that we can move from a high-carbon, low-growth world economy to a low-carbon, high-growth economy, with more jobs. For example, 20 countries have decoupled their economic growth from CO₂ emissions, and there is a US\$12 trillion opportunity in implementing the SDGs and NDCs. Fifth, he welcomed the day’s references to SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), stressing the large proportion of global emissions from food loss and waste, and beef. The sixth source of hope is the financing trend of mixing modest amounts of public money with other sources to gain real leverage. Finally, Steer underscored the role of leadership, saying that it is not sufficient to just do better; “you need to do enough.”

Daniele Violetti highlighted the role of just transitions, transparency and data, leadership, and scaling up solutions.

Elizabeth Cousens noted participants’ belief that the needed solutions already exist and are on the cusp of reaching scale. In renewable energy, costs are plummeting and uptake is rising, while the investment community is approaching a tipping point among asset managers who see the value of sustainability. She said speakers had highlighted policy, technical, education and informational gaps as barriers to taking solutions to the needed scale. She also cited the role of education in informing citizens of the impacts of their behaviors and empowering them politically.

CLOSING REMARKS

In her closing remarks on Thursday, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Espinosa saluted the fact that, according to a recent International Energy Agency (IEA) report, carbon emissions have been flat for the third year in a row. She said transforming NDCs into national policies is not going to be easy for governments, UN agencies or other international organizations, and called for cooperation to identify opportunities and solutions and integrate efforts.

In his closing remarks on Friday, UNGA President Thomson thanked participants for their engagement and said he is “deeply encouraged” by the high level of interest in advancing the mutually reinforcing opportunities for action provided by the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. Noting that speakers at the event had emphasized that climate change is not only a threat in itself but also a multiplier of other threats, he invited Member States and stakeholders to consider climate change an opportunity. Thomson further noted recurrent themes during the discussions, including: the need to scale up current successful actions; the importance of engaging women; the call to empower youth as drivers of change; the immense potential of science, technology and innovation to provide solutions; and the remarkable efforts around the world on renewable energy. He announced that a summary of the event would be circulated to Member States and published on his website, and committed to continuing to raise awareness on the interlinkages between climate change and development, including through the Ocean Conference in June. Thomson adjourned the meeting at 12:37 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Fifth Meeting of IAEG-SDGs: The fifth meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) aims to: present the updated tier system; discuss the role of custodian agencies; discuss the strategy to address those indicators that remain without a custodian agency and/or a work plan; review work plans for tier III indicators and the proposals for new concepts and definitions and develop a mechanism to ensure completion of work; present the IAEG-SDG work plan on data disaggregation; and present the timeline for finalizing the proposals on possible additional indicators. **dates:** 28-31 March 2017 **location:** Ottawa, Ontario, Canada **contact:** UN Statistics Division **fax:** +1-212-963-9851 **email:** statistics@un.org **www:** <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-05>

45th Session of the IPCC: The IPCC will meet to discuss, *inter alia*, Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) products, the methodology reports to refine the 2006 IPCC Guidelines on National GHG Inventories, and the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C. **dates:** 28-31 March 2017 **location:** Guadalajara, Mexico **contact:** IPCC Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-Sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch>

3rd Sustainable Energy for All Forum: The 3rd Sustainable Energy for All Forum (SEforALL) will convene under the theme: “Going further, faster - together.” High-level representatives from government, business, civil society and international organizations will gather to broker new partnerships and ideas, spur investment and drive action towards sustainable energy, while sharing stories from across the world of how they are making progress towards realizing Sustainable Development Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy). **dates:** 3-5 April 2017 **location:** Brooklyn, New York, US **contact:** SEforALL Secretariat **phone:** +43-676-846-727-200 **email:** Info@SEforALL.org **www:** <http://seforallforum.org/> or <http://se4all.org/>

The Marine Environment and UN Sustainable Development Goal 14: The 41st Annual Conference of the Center for Oceans Law and Policy will convene under the theme, “The Marine Environment and UN Sustainable Development

Goal 14.” Through SDG 14, the international community agreed to aim to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.” **dates:** 17-18 May 2017 **location:** Yogyakarta, Indonesia **contact:** University of Virginia Center for Oceans Law and Policy **phone:** +1-434-924-7441 **fax:** +1-434-924-7362 **email:** colp@virginia.edu **www:** <http://www.virginia.edu/colp/annual-conference.html>

High-Level SDG Financing Lab: As part of his SDG Action Events to push for momentum on SDG implementation across all 17 SDGs the President of the General Assembly is convening a high-level SDG Financing Lab. This one-day event will highlight the critical importance of sustainable finance for the achievement of the SDGs, including climate action. It 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. **date:** 18 April 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Office of the President of the UN General Assembly **www:** <http://www.un.org/pga/71/event-latest/high-level-sdg-financing-lab/>

UNFCCC SB 46: The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change’s Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) will convene for their 46th sessions, in parallel with the 3rd meeting of the first session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA). **dates:** 8-18 May 2017 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228 815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://unfccc.int/>

Second Annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum): As requested by General Assembly resolution 70/1 on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the President of ECOSOC will convene the meetings of the STI Forum once a year to discuss science, technology and innovation cooperation around thematic areas for the implementation of the SDGs. **dates:** 15-16 May 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/TFM/STIForum2017#forum>

High-Level Event on Innovation: Building on the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, the President of the General Assembly will convene a High-Level Event on Innovation and Connectivity. Leading innovators from the major corporations of the world will interact with Member States on how emerging technologies can transform efforts aimed at the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **date:** 17 May 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Office of the President of the UN General Assembly **www:** <http://www.un.org/pga/71/event-latest/high-level-event-on-innovation/>

ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development: The second ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up will include the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. It will address the follow-up and review of the Financing for Development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **dates:** 22-25 May 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:**

Ms. Dominika Halka, Chief, Multi-stakeholder Engagement and Outreach Branch, ECOSOC, **phone:** +1-212-963-6653 **email:** halka@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd-follow-up/ecosoc-ffd-forum.html>

Ocean Conference: Our Oceans, Our Future: Partnering for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: This high-level UN Conference, co-hosted by the governments of Fiji and Sweden, will coincide with the World Oceans Day, and seeks to support the implementation of SDG 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development). **dates:** 5-9 June 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Permanent Missions of Fiji and Sweden to the UN **phone:** +1-212-687-4130 (Fiji); +1-212-583-2500 (Sweden) **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/oceans/SDG14Conference>

High-Level Event on Education: A High-Level Event on Education will be convened in partnership with key SDG 4 stakeholders to drive a new push for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. The event will also elaborate on how to advance the incorporation of the SDGs into the curricula of every school in the world. **date:** 28 June 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Office of the President of the UN General Assembly **www:** <http://www.un.org/pga/71/event-latest/high-level-event-on-education/>

HLPF 5: The fifth session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convening under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will be held under the theme “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.” As decided in UN General Assembly resolution 70/299, HLPF 5 will conduct in-depth reviews of the implementation of the following goals: SDG 1 (end poverty), SDG 2 (end hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), and SDG 14 (life below water). **dates:** 10-19 July 2017 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>
For additional meetings, see <http://sdg.iisd.org/>

GLOSSARY

COP	Conference of the Parties
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GHGs	Greenhouse gases
NDCs	Nationally determined contributions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	UN General Assembly