



**Contribution to the 2018 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development  
Submission from UN Climate Change (UNFCCC secretariat)**

***An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level***

**The Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for the first time brings all nations together for a common cause.** With its adoption and rapid entry-into-force, the world has taken decisive steps towards a low carbon, climate resilient and sustainable world. The Paris Agreement for the first time brings all nations into a common cause based on their historic, current and future responsibilities. The universal agreement’s main aim is to keep a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius and to drive efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Additionally, the agreement aims to strengthen the ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.

**Together, the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development increase momentum towards a transition from aspiration to implementation.** With these landmark agreements now in place, countries have entered a new implementation-focused phase, where climate action contributes to the broader goal of sustainable development at the national level. Central to the implementation of the Paris Agreement are countries’ Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs),<sup>1</sup> which, along with the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs),<sup>2</sup> have been developed by many countries alongside, or integrated with, national implementation plans for the 2030 Agenda. NAPs and NDCs express national climate-related strategies, policies and actions, which show countries’ efforts not just on climate action, but also on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda more broadly. This approach to implementation should ensure that countries can learn from and support each other, leaving no-one behind.

**Given the ambitious goals and visions of countries around the world, many countries have highlighted the need for enhanced international support for the implementation of their NDCs under the Paris Agreement, ensuring that no one is left behind.** Utilizing collaborative efforts and partnerships for the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) is highlighted throughout the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, towards ensuring that no one is left behind in the face of the challenges and opportunities related to both climate change and sustainable development.

**Countries can build resilience and enable adaptation in human settlements through the process to formulate and implement NAPs,<sup>3</sup>** including, linking national and local adaptation planning, and supporting local governments’ role in planning and implementing adaptation in human settlements.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www4.unfccc.int/ndcregistry/Pages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap/Pages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap/Pages/Home.aspx>.

NAPs provide an opportunity to emphasize human societies and settlements in national adaptation strategies, and foster further adaptation action by local governments in cities, towns and villages of all sizes.

**Under the UNFCCC process, the Talanoa Dialogue<sup>4</sup> an important international conversation in which countries will check progress and seek to increase global ambition to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.** The Dialogue was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference COP23 in November 2017 and will run throughout 2018. The Pacific island concept of 'Talanoa' was introduced by Fiji, which held the Presidency of the COP 23 UN Climate Change Conference. All countries and other stakeholders, including business, investors, cities, regions and civil society, are invited to make submissions into the Talanoa Dialogue around three central questions: Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there? Countries and non-Party stakeholders are already contributing ideas, recommendations and information that can assist the world in taking climate action to the next level in order to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement and support the SDGs. The Talanoa Dialogue provides transparency and broadens participation in the dialogue to increase global ambition to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, while also ensuring that no-one is left behind.

**Emerging issues likely to affect building sustainable and resilient societies; Identification of gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges; Areas where political guidance by the high-level political forum is required**

**Climate change presents the single biggest threat to sustainable development everywhere, including in societies, and its widespread, unprecedented impacts disproportionately burden the poorest and most vulnerable.** Experts at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum<sup>5</sup> recognized that climate change is exacerbating the vulnerability of human settlements to natural and man-made hazards globally, especially in developing countries, coastal and delta regions, and Small Island Developing States. This presents an unprecedented opportunity to re-define urban development, including investing in livable, low-carbon and resilient cities.

**Urgent action to halt climate change and deal with its impacts is integral to the successful implementation of the SDGs.** Achieving the primary goal of the Paris Agreement - to keep the average global temperature rise well below 2C degrees and as close as possible to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels - is vital. The global average temperature has already increased by around one degree, since then underlining the urgency of action if we are to stay as close as possible to 1.5C degrees. Pursuing climate action, including urgent mobilization of climate finance, transfer of technology and enhancing capacity building efforts, with sustainable development in an integrated and coherent way will enable countries to achieve their goals efficiently and quickly under the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Negotiations to operationalize the Paris Agreement are planned to conclude at the Katowice Climate Change Conference in December 2018.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://talanoadialogue.com/>.

<sup>5</sup> See <http://wuf9.org/>.

<sup>6</sup> Read more <https://unfccc.int/achieving-the-sustainable-development-goals-through-climate-action>.

**Valuable lessons learned on transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies, and opportunities for action; Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in establishing sustainable and resilient societies**

**Taking mitigation action and adapting to climate change in human societies and settlements is critical to ensuring that human development is not jeopardized and that the world's growing population can thrive where they live.** Countries can ensure low-carbon societies, build resilience and enable adaptation in human settlements through their NDCs, as well as the process to formulate and implement NAPs,<sup>7</sup> including, linking national and local adaptation planning, and supporting local governments' role in planning and implementing adaptation in human settlements. NAPs can be a launch pad for harmonized, strategic planning, providing an opportunity to emphasize human societies and settlements in national adaptation strategies, and foster further adaptation action by local governments in cities, towns and villages of all sizes. The NAP-SDG iFrame methodology,<sup>8</sup> developed by the UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group,<sup>9</sup> can also help harmonize how countries understand their progress in implementing measures on adaptation and sustainable development, and measure contributions to the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

**Cities are already taking climate action.** As of today, over 2500 cities reported their commitments to both mitigation and adaptation on the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) platform,<sup>10</sup> showing that many cities are already taking climate action, including in Africa and Asia. More cities are taking action and pledging their commitments on the NAZCA platform on an ongoing basis.

**A recently published report 'Adaptation in human settlements: key findings and way forward. Report by the secretariat'<sup>11</sup> shares key findings, good practices and lessons learned** on enabling adaptation and building resilience in human settlements. This report is based on submissions from countries that are Party to the UNFCCC and other organizations, as well as expert knowledge and the latest experiences and research. It provides evidence of, and guidance and tools for, the coordinated local engagement of national and subnational governments in building climate resilience in collaboration with communities, civil society organizations, research centers and the private sector.

**Towards enhancing all aspects of climate action, the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action<sup>12</sup> encourages activities that galvanize immediate climate action in the period between now and 2020** to support the realization and achievement of NDCs under the Paris Agreement and spur new climate actions in areas of untapped mitigation and adaptation potential. Countries Party to the UNFCCC process identified tangible lessons learned, good practices and policies, and areas for action through a series of Technical Expert Meetings on climate change mitigation and adaptation held in 2017, towards accelerating climate action, which is directly beneficial to accelerating progress for sustainable and resilient societies. These are captured in the 2017 Climate Action Now Summary for Policymakers, and some, as relevant, outlined in the box below.<sup>13</sup> Through this process, Parties also identified sustainable development co-benefits in pursuing climate change mitigation and adaptation actions, including in human settlements.

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<sup>7</sup> Further information is available on *NAP Central*: <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap>.

<sup>8</sup> Further information is available on *NAP Central*: <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap>.

<sup>9</sup> Further information is available on *NAP Central*: <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap>.

<sup>10</sup> See <http://climateaction.unfccc.int/>.

<sup>11</sup> See FCCC/SBSTA/2018/3, available at <https://unfccc.int/>.

<sup>12</sup> See <http://unfccc.int/resource/climateaction2020/>.

<sup>13</sup> See <http://unfccc.int/resource/climateaction2020/>.

***Plan collaboratively, bring together relevant actors, encourage coherence of actions and make efficient use of available capacities:***

- *Develop spaces and institutional structures to encourage dialogue between different sectors and ministries, including state and non-state actors;*
- *Implement mechanisms and incentives to connect actors at the local, regional, national and international levels, to enable coherent planning, implementation of actions and learning;*
- *Provide resources, including relevant data, to non-state actors so they can participate meaningfully in planning and action;*
- *Account for transnational impacts when planning;*
- *Pool resources from diverse actors through multi-stakeholder partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and finance, particularly for support to developing countries.*

***Work closely with vulnerable people and communities, and pursue “people-centered approaches” to policymaking:***

- *Establish mechanisms, support and incentives to gather input from vulnerable people, communities and indigenous peoples;*
- *Provide financial, technical and capacity-building support at the community level to pursue relevant community-led projects;*
- *Consider a broad range of context-specific measures that increase resilience, are community/farmer-centered and gender sensitive;*
- *Engage with local communities and integrate traditional and indigenous knowledge.*

***Create policy incentives that encourage action on mitigation and adaptation with related co-benefits:***

- *Coordinate support for low-emission policies, technologies and practices to enable more targeted and impactful assistance to developing countries, to meet national SDG and mitigation targets;*
- *Improve monitoring and evaluation of mitigation and adaptation efforts, such as through SDG indicators, and consolidate institutional arrangements to support policymaking and implementation.*

***Improve data and information systems and sharing to enable more cities to choose the most cost-effective evidence-based and locally appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies:***

- *Data and information about the impacts of climate change and the risks that climate change poses are not available for many countries;*
- *Higher-resolution information about the impacts of climate change and the risks that climate change poses to societies is required;*
- *Address complexities in measuring, reporting and verifying emissions in the agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors.*