



**Contribution to the 2019 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development  
Submission from UN Climate Change (UNFCCC secretariat)**

**Identification of progress, gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, risks and challenges in achieving the SDGs; and, or in relation to the theme within the area under the purview of your intergovernmental body**

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. Urgent action to halt climate change and deal with its impacts is integral to achieving all SDGs. The Paris Agreement brings nations together to strengthen the response to climate change, with the aim of keeping global temperature rise this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees, while building countries' resilience to the adverse effects of climate change. Achieving the primary goal of the Paris Agreement is vital. 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 1.5°C. 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.<sup>1</sup> The Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016, marking a shift in focus towards implementation. It also signals the commitment of nations to take action for the climate and sustainable development, translating the goals of the Paris Agreement into actionable strategies and shifting global financial flows onto low carbon, climate-resilient pathways.

As of 27 February 2019, 185 parties had ratified the Paris Agreement. In parallel with the Agreement, a push to develop and implement initiatives to enhance adaptation, financial flows, technologies and capacity-building efforts to support developing and most vulnerable countries is underway.

**With the adoption of the Katowice Climate Package at COP 24, the world entered a new era of climate ambition - ambition:**

- for all nations to implement the Paris Agreement and unleash its full potential;
- for nations to significantly update their nationally-determined contributions by 2020;
- to help developing countries and the most vulnerable get the support they need; and
- to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Climate change threatens many of humanity's biggest achievements as well as its future goals -** goals reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Climate change is a cross-cutting and immediate threat to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and to the survival and well-being of island nations and coastal communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Read more <https://unfccc.int/achieving-the-sustainable-development-goals-through-climate-action>.

**This interlinked relationship also provides our biggest opportunity for positive, systemic change** - change that will ensure resilient, productive, and healthy environment for present and future generations. This year offers an unprecedented opportunity to address both climate change ambition and the 2030 Agenda, includes the review of SDG13 under the ECOSOC in July and the General Assembly in September, the Secretary General's climate summit in September, and COP25 in Chile in December. Coordinated and synergistic efforts across organizations, levels and sectors, and throughout the UN family to address both climate change and the SDGs will make a difference. **In addition to the efforts of Parties to the UNFCCC, Paris Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol, one of the biggest success stories on climate action in the last two years is the inclusion of groups such as sub-national governments, private businesses, investors and citizens throughout the world.** The IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C<sup>2</sup> points to the importance of collaborative and synergistic action in achieving the 1.5°C goal.

**Preliminary data for 2017 show that emissions from fossil fuels and industry grew at about 1.5 % from previous years, to a record high of 36.6 GtCO<sub>2</sub> (65 per cent higher than in 1990).** In order to limit global warming to well below 2 °C, global net GHG emissions should decline by about 20 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030 and reach net zero around 2075. The IPCC estimates that global warming is likely to reach 1.5 °C between 2030 and 2052 if emissions continue to increase at current rates.

**Parties to the Paris Agreement are expected to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs). NDCs highlight climate-related targets, policies and actions planned in response to climate change. Countries' NDCs relayed so far reveal linkages across all SDGs.** They outline development approaches and actions aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience. The NDCs show that governments are integrating climate action into socio-economic development strategies, since both are integral to sustainable development. As of 27 February 2019, 182 Parties (181 countries plus the European Commission) had communicated their first NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC), one Party has communicated their second NDC. Article 4.3 of the Paris Agreement, requesting all Parties to ensure that their NDCs reflect their highest possible ambition.

**Parties are currently getting ready for NDC implementation for 2020**, including by:

- Aligning NDC actions with new policy priorities and the reality of climate action on the ground;
- Refining/Updating the analysis underpinning NDCs;
- Improving the Regulatory/Institutional Framework;
- Identifying and Prioritizing Policies and Measures;
- Developing an NDC Implementation Plan including financial considerations;
- Taking stock of recent developments since the adoption of the Paris Agreement;
- Preparing new/updated NDCs for submission by 2020.

**Additional upcoming milestones for the UNFCCC process and the implementation of the Paris Agreement include:**

- Wrap up of the pre-2020 period, including ratification of the Doha Amendment and the goal of jointly mobilizing USD annually in 2020 and through to 2025;
- Definition of a new collective climate finance goal from the floor of USD 100 billion.
- Call for long-term low emissions development strategies in 2020.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

<sup>3</sup> Further information and data sources are available online: <https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions/ndc-registry>; <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NDCStaging/Pages/All.aspx>

**Valuable successful experiences and lessons learned on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality; Emerging issues likely to affect inclusiveness and equality at various levels; Assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level;**

**Climate impacts do not discriminate; climate action is essential for achieving all SDGs, including SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and 10 on reduced inequalities. Taking mitigation action and adapting to climate change is critical to empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.** Relevant activities enabling countries to advance climate action, and capture and share relevant successful experiences and lessons learned, relevant to ensuring inclusiveness and equality in the context of climate action under the UNFCCC process<sup>4</sup> have and are taking place under the Marrakech Partnership for climate action, the UNFCCC Momentum for Change initiative, the Talanoa Dialogue, on adaptation, mitigation, means of implementation, gender, empowering youth, the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, and activities on response measures.

**Momentum for Change<sup>5</sup> is an initiative spearheaded by the UN Climate Change secretariat to shine a light on the enormous groundswell of activities underway across the globe that are moving the world toward a highly resilient, low-carbon future.** Momentum for Change recognizes innovative and transformative solutions that address both climate change and wider economic, social and environmental challenges. These ‘Lighthouse Activities’<sup>6</sup> are some of the most practical, scalable and replicable examples of what people, businesses, governments and industries are doing to tackle climate change. Momentum for Change has focusses on various areas of action, including

- Planetary Health: recognizing novel solutions that balance the need for both human health and a healthy planet;
- Climate Neutral Now: recognizing efforts by individuals, companies and governments that are achieving real results in transitioning to climate neutrality;
- Women for Results: recognizing the critical leadership and participation of women in addressing climate change;
- Financing for Climate Friendly Investment: recognizing successful and innovative climate-smart activities;
- ICT Solutions: recognizing successful climate change activities in the field of information and communication technology; and
- Urban Poor: recognizing climate action that improves the lives of impoverished people in urban communities.

**Towards enhancing all aspects of climate action, the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action<sup>7</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. The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action<sup>8</sup> supports implementation of the Paris Agreement by enabling collaboration between governments and the cities, regions, businesses and investors that must act on climate change, with the mission is to strengthen collaboration between governments and key stakeholders to immediately lower emissions and increase resilience against climate impacts. These actions are guided by the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement and undertaken in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://unfccc.int/resource/annualreport/> for an overview of activities

<sup>5</sup> <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change>

<sup>6</sup> <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change/lighthouse-activities>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://unfccc.int/climate-action>

<sup>8</sup> <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/marrakech-partnership-for-global-climate-action>

Development. The Partnership focusses on immediate climate actions between now and 2020 to support the success and overachievement of the NDCs, and National Adaptation Plans.

**Regional Climate Weeks**<sup>9</sup> inspire individuals and organizations to become part of the momentum created by the global climate agreement in Paris. It is a unique collaborative platform where both government and non-Party stakeholders gather to address the gamut of relevant climate issues under one umbrella. Bringing together diverse stakeholders in the public and private sectors around a common goal of addressing climate change, is the main goal of the Regional Climate Weeks. The Weeks comprise a series of events that provide space for a grassroots exchange of knowledge and best practices across the region on: NDC implementation, SDGs, and Global Climate Action. Every year the Regional Climate Weeks are held in the following regions: Africa, Latin-America and Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific. It is a unique initiative that aims to raise awareness and support members of our society in developing countries at the regional level to achieve global climate neutrality by mid-century. This year, the Regional Climate Weeks serve as critical stepping stones to UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit 2019 in September 2019.

**Under the UNFCCC process, the Talanoa Dialogue**<sup>10</sup> allowed for an international for countries to check progress and seek to increase global ambition to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Talanoa Dialogue provided an opportunity for Parties and non-Parties to come together to exchange experiences including stories and good practices on actions to address climate change taken by Parties and non-Parties which have demonstrated success in reducing emissions or increasing resilience and have the potential to be replicated elsewhere. The Dialogue was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference COP23 in November 2017 and ran throughout 2018. The Pacific island concept of 'Talanoa' was introduced by Fiji, which held the Presidency of the COP 23 UN Climate Change Conference. Countries and other stakeholders, including business, investors, cities, regions and civil society, contributed to the Talanoa Dialogue around three central questions: Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there? The Talanoa Dialogue provided transparency and broadened participation to increase global ambition to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, while also ensuring that no-one is left behind. With nearly 100 actions were identified across sectors, levels and regions, with some already successfully undertaken with demonstrated results – providing inspiration for others to apply similar practices, the practices identify are stories of success and inspiration, demonstrating what is working well and what could work elsewhere. Further details and an overview of the good practices identified are available in the Synthesis Report on the Talanoa Dialogue,<sup>11</sup> the 2018 Yearbook of the Marrakech Partnership,<sup>12</sup> and the Global Climate Action 2018 Examples of good practices report.<sup>13</sup>

**As a knowledge-for-action-hub for adaptation and resilience, the UNFCCC Nairobi work programme (NWP) has been at the forefront in fostering partnerships with non-state actors in key thematic areas (e.g. vulnerable groups and communities, ecosystems, water resources, human settlements, health) and in sub-regions through the Lima Adaptation Knowledge Initiative (LAKI) to drive forward activities that produce usable knowledge products and catalyse action in response to identified knowledge needs.**<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.regionalclimateweeks.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://unfccc.int/topics/2018-talanoa-dialogue-platform>

<sup>11</sup> [https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9fc76f74-a749-4eec-9a06-5907e013dbc9/downloads/1csm8ieqa\\_676144.pdf](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9fc76f74-a749-4eec-9a06-5907e013dbc9/downloads/1csm8ieqa_676144.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/GCA\\_Yearbook2018.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/GCA_Yearbook2018.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/GCA\\_TD\\_GoodPractices\\_2018.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/GCA_TD_GoodPractices_2018.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Key outcomes of work under the NWP are available at: <https://unfccc.int/documents/65157>; outcomes of the first phase of the LAKI available at: [https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NWPStaging/Documents/LAKI\\_e-pub\\_2018.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NWPStaging/Documents/LAKI_e-pub_2018.pdf)

**More broadly, activities under the UNFCCC process contribute to supporting countries in the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions, and in ensuring responsive, inclusive participatory and responsive decision-making at all levels, including under the transparency framework, and work of the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee and Least Developed Countries Expert Group.** To achieve the objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), several processes have been established to foster transparency and accountability of countries' actions to address climate change, including the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) arrangements under the Convention and the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement. Under these processes, all countries are obliged to communicate information on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and actions to reduce them, as well as on adaptation and means of implementation such as finance, technology transfer and capacity-building. The information prepared and reported by countries forms an essential basis for understanding current emission levels, the ambition of existing efforts, as well as progress on climate actions and support on both the national and international scales. Further, it can create opportunities for governments to demonstrate their accountability to the public and civil society by reporting on and accounting for actions on reducing climate change impacts and GHG emissions, as well as support provided/mobilized or needed/received.

**The Adaptation Committee<sup>15</sup>, in its mandated role as the main promotor of the implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention, has anchored reducing inequalities as a key element in its work.** Recent work includes a technical expert meeting held in 2018 which focused on opportunities and options for enhancing adaptation planning in relation to vulnerable ecosystems, communities and groups, with a view to identifying concrete opportunities for strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerability and increasing understanding and implementation of adaptation in the context of enhancing pre-2020 action a resulting technical paper.<sup>16</sup> Looking ahead, the Adaptation Committee is elaborating a plan on how to integrate gender considerations into all its activities. It will also work with others, including the Women and Gender constituency to hold a capacity-building event in 2020 on identifying gaps and solutions related to incorporating gender considerations into adaptation planning and implementation.

**The Least Developed Countries Expert Group<sup>17</sup> (LEG) ensures support for developing countries to take climate action. At the core of the work of the LEG is to ensure that adequate support is given to least developed countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change which is one of the drivers of inequalities.** Established in 2001 as part of the suite of support for LDCs under the UNFCCC, the LEG is mandated to provide technical guidance and support to the LDCs on the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs), the preparation and implementation of the national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) and the implementation of the LDC work programme. The LEG also provides technical guidance and advice on accessing funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for the process to formulate and implement NAPs, in collaboration with the GCF secretariat.

**NAPs remain the central vehicle for adaptation planning and implementation under the UNFCCC process and can be seen as a launch pad for harmonized, strategic planning, fostering further adaptation action across sectors, levels and regions.** NAPs enable Parties identify their medium to long term adaptation needs and developing and implementing strategies and programmes to address those

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<sup>15</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/adaptation-committee-ac>

<sup>16</sup> <http://tep-a.org/technical-paper/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/least-developed-countries-expert-group-leg>

needs, and are supported by Technical Guidance,<sup>18</sup> which outlines indicative steps in undertaking the process, from laying the groundwork to reporting and monitoring. Further derivatives of the NAP technical guidelines through supplementary materials were also developed and is available in NAP Central.<sup>19</sup> The NAP-SDG iFrame methodology,<sup>20</sup> also developed by the UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group,<sup>21</sup> has helped 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. In 2016, the LEG being cognizant of the wider UN call for leaving no one behind, it developed a vision for 2020 considering providing support to all LDCs produce their first NAP by 2020. The LEG coordinates all support from relevant agencies and organizations and reiterates its call for synergy and collaboration ensuring that they all embrace the vision for 2020. This also includes for a more concerted effort in helping LDCs access the USD 3 million financial support from Green Climate Fund (GCF) on the formulation of NAPs. Other modalities of support by the LEG on NAPs includes: providing training and workshops, producing publications on best practices and lessons learned, developing technical materials and conducting outreach events for South-South cooperation. The LEG has also recently established Open NAPs as a direct support to LDCs that are lagging in terms of embarking on the process, including accessing funding from GCF.<sup>22</sup>

**Climate change has a greater impact on those sections of the population, in all countries, that are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods and/or who have the least capacity to respond to natural hazards, such as droughts, landslides, floods and hurricanes. Women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty, and the majority of the world's poor are women.** Women's unequal participation in decision-making processes and labour markets compound inequalities and often prevent women from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policy-making and implementation. Yet, women can (and do) play a critical role in response to climate change due to their local knowledge of and leadership in e.g. sustainable resource management and/or leading sustainable practices at the household and community level. Women's participation at the political level has resulted in greater responsiveness to citizen's needs, often increasing cooperation across party and ethnic lines and delivering more sustainable peace. At the local level, women's inclusion at the leadership level has led to improved outcomes of climate related projects and policies. On the contrary, if policies or projects are implemented without women's meaningful participation it can increase existing inequalities and decrease effectiveness. Parties to the UNFCCC have recognized the importance of involving women and men equally in UNFCCC processes and in the development and implementation of national climate policies that are gender-responsive by establishing a dedicated agenda item under the Convention addressing issues of gender and climate change and by including overarching text in the Paris Agreement, focusing on improving gender balance and increasing the participation of women in all UNFCCC processes, including in delegations and in bodies constituted under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol; and increasing awareness and support for the development and effective implementation of gender-responsive climate policy at the regional, national and local levels.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/national-adaptation-plans-naps/guidelines-for-national-adaptation-plans-naps>

<sup>19</sup> <https://unfccc.int/nap>

<sup>20</sup> Further information is available on *NAP Central*: <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap>.

<sup>21</sup> Further information is available on *NAP Central*: <http://www4.unfccc.int/nap>.

<sup>22</sup> More information on the activities of the LEG is provided regularly during the SBI through their report, which can be accessed at: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/least-developed-countries-expert-group-leg/workshops-meetings-leg/napa>

<sup>23</sup> <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/workstreams/gender-in-the-intergovernmental-process/chronology-of-gender-in-the-intergovernmental-process>



**The UNFCCC calls on governments to educate, empower and engage all stakeholders and major groups on policies relating to climate change** through Article 6 ‘Action for climate empowerment’,<sup>24</sup> – a call that is echoed by the Kyoto Protocol (Article 10(e)) as well as by the Paris Agreement (through Article 12). The UN climate regime fosters action to develop and implement educational and training programmes on climate change. Many governments and IGOs are already working in partnership with civil society to fulfil the above commitments. However, the scale of challenges posed by climate change requires an engagement on outreach activities of a greater magnitude.<sup>25</sup> Improving awareness and understanding of climate change, and creating solutions to facilitate access to information on a changing climate are key to winning public support for climate-related policies.

**Indigenous peoples are custodians of nearly 22 percent of the Earth’s surface and safeguard an estimated 80 percent of the world’s remaining biodiversity. The Paris Agreement recognizes the important role of indigenous peoples and local communities in building a climate-resilient world, and established the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform at COP21.** Parties agreed on the overall purposes, principles and three functions of the Platform (related to knowledge, capacity for engagement, and climate change policies and actions), with continuous input into the negotiations by representative of indigenous peoples.<sup>26</sup> These principles include full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, and equal status of indigenous peoples and Parties, including in leadership roles.<sup>27</sup> At COP24 in Katowice, the COP established a new constituted body, the LCIPP Facilitative Working Group (FWG) to facilitate the implementation of the Platform’s functions. The FWG, which operates on the basis of consensus,<sup>28</sup> is comprised of 14 members, with equal representation of Parties (seven representatives) and indigenous peoples organizations (seven representatives). Equal representation is also present in the leadership of the body. Consideration of additional representatives of local communities and Parties will also take place in the future. The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform serves as an inclusive, long-term space for exchange of experience with mitigation and adaptation between Parties and local communities and indigenous peoples. The perspectives of frontline communities and understanding of indigenous peoples’ holistic views and in-depth knowledge of the environment can help to scale up and accelerate global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change in a holistic and integrated manner.

**Impacts of implementation of response measures deals with social and economic impacts of actions which are taken to combat the climate change, in particular cross-border impacts on developing countries.** The Paris Agreement recognizes that Parties may be affected not only by climate change, but also by the impacts of the measures taken in response to it. Over last three years, Parties have focused on just transition of work force and creation of decent work and quality jobs, and economic diversification and transformation, towards inclusive and low carbon economies and creation of job opportunities, as well as sharing information and experiences related to diversifying the economies. At COP24 in Katowice, the work was extended to two more areas, including assessing and analyzing the impacts of response measures; and facilitating development of tools and methodologies to assess the impacts. In addition to the existing forum and work programme, Parties also established the Katowice Committee of experts on impacts of the implementation of response measures.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <https://cop23.unfccc.int/topics#:b2acfe38-26c1-4583-9a41-d59110abf5d5>

<sup>25</sup> <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-outreach/the-big-picture/what-is-education-and-outreach>

<sup>26</sup> Decision 2/CP.23, paragraph 8: <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2017/cop23/eng/11a01.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Decision 2/CP.23, paragraph 8: <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2017/cop23/eng/11a01.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> See: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp24\\_auv\\_SBSTA7%20LCIPP\\_rev.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp24_auv_SBSTA7%20LCIPP_rev.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Decision 7/CMA1

**Areas where political guidance by the high-level political forum is required; Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in empowering people, ensuring inclusiveness and equality, and achieving SDGs.**

- Note the outcomes of COP 24, CMP 14 presided over by the Government of Poland, held in Katowice, Poland from 2 to 14 December 2018;
- Urge Parties to the Paris Agreement, that have not yet done so, to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible in order to ensure its universality;
- Urge Parties to deposit their instruments of acceptance in order to ensure the prompt entry into force of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol;
- Urge Parties to the UNFCCC to submit and enhance their NDCs and NAPs.