



**Roundtable on  
Climate and SDGs Interlinkages:  
How we can achieve the SDGs while curbing climate change  
11 March, 11:30-13:00**

**Remarks by  
H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King  
President of the Economic and Social Council**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this roundtable on “Climate and SDGs Interlinkages: How can we achieve the SDGs while curbing climate change”. I would like to express my appreciation to the UN Foundation for co-organizing this meeting to focus on a critical issue of our time.

We are at a pivotal time for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While there is continuing momentum for the implementation of the SDGs, progress has been uneven among and within countries. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018 shows that “progress is insufficient to meet the Agenda’s goals and targets by 2030”, and that “this is especially true for the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups”. And, critically, we are faced with the urgency of climate action: the IPCC 1.5°C report makes it clear that we only have a limited window for action.

At the same time, we should not consider that those challenges are unsurmountable. They should, instead, bolster our determination to take bold and innovative actions to accelerate change towards the world we committed to realize in the 2030 Agenda.

The interlinkages across the SDGs are one of the aspects that make the 2030 Agenda transformative. If we focus on the synergies between the goals, we can identify the policies and measures that will have ripple effects across the goals. If we understand and address the trade offs between the goals, we can ensure that our policies do not act at cross purpose.

The interlinkages between climate change and the SDGs, the focus of our discussion today, are a case in point. Climate change has an impact on all SDGs. None of the SDGs can be realized if we let climate change endanger our planet and future generations. Vice versa, realizing the SDGs will contribute to halting climate change. This applies not only to the SDGs

on Sustainable Consumption and Production or terrestrial ecosystems, but also to SDG 1 poverty eradication.

Poverty and vulnerability are particularly closely related to climate change. The poorest people, the poorest countries and the most vulnerable states, notably Small Island Developing States such as my country, are those that suffer the most from the impact of climate change. This came out clearly at ECOSOC's joint meeting with the Peace Building Commission in November. The meeting showed the deep impact of climate conditions on the Sahel, a region already faced with multifaceted challenges related to development and stability. ECOSOC's meetings on the aftermath of hurricanes also brought back the dire impact of climate change in SIDS.

More generally, the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are actually closely related to the targets under the SDGs. A study of the World Resource Institute in 2016 found climate actions that were aligned with 154 of the 169 SDG targets<sup>1</sup>.

This means that the SDGs and Paris Climate agreement can be implemented in an integrated and mutually reinforcing way. By taking into account the interlinkages between climate and the SDGs we can multiply the impact of our actions.

Excellencies,

This fact will inspire our discussions when we meet in the high-level political forum on sustainable development next July. The HLPF will review progress towards SDG 13 on climate action along with the SDGs on quality education, decent work and economic growth, inequalities, peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 17 .

Substantive preparations for those reviews are underway. In fact I will be participating at the Global Conference on synergies between climate action and SDG implementation organized by DESA and UNFCCC over 1-3 April at Copenhagen. Delivering on the most successful HLPF next year is my top priority to complete its first cycle. I trust that the HLPF will produce new thinking and renewed commitment on combatting climate change.

Excellencies,

The July HLPF will pave the way for the Secretary-General's Climate Summit in September, while its on-going preparations gain momentum.

This will culminate in the HLPF Summit which will also be held in September. The HLPF summit will review overall progress on the 2030 Agenda and all 17 SDGs. It will identify progress and challenges, provide political guidance on implementation, and mobilize further action to accelerate implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/WRI\\_INDCs\\_v5.pdf](https://www.wri.org/sites/default/files/WRI_INDCs_v5.pdf)

We must keep in mind that other high-level meetings of key relevance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will also be taking place in September this year, namely the High-level Dialogue on financing for development, the High-level meeting on universal health coverage and the High-level mid-term review of SAMOA Pathway. These September high-level events share the same ambition to accelerate action towards a resilient and sustainable future, leaving no one behind.

The interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and the SDGs bring back the importance of coherent global responses to complex challenges. This requires strengthening partnerships and ensuring better coordination and coherence among the actions of multiple development actors. This is critical for breaking down traditional silos and ensure more cross-sectoral decision-making and innovative solutions. We must also harness the power of technology and innovation to find those who are being left behind and who are most vulnerable.

I hope that this roundtable will generate ideas and spark our imagination on how we can achieve SDGs while curbing climate change. I encourage you to be bold and think outside the box.

Let us not forget that Member States at the highest level pledged with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda that no one would be left behind and they committed to “endeavour to reach the furthest behind first”. We should be guided by this principle in our pursuit for the world we want.

Thank you.