

# GMC CONFERENCE 2024

1st National Edition

## STUDY GUIDE UNEP



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# **UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME**

**GMC 2024**

**8<sup>TH</sup>- 9<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2024**

## **Agenda:**

**Exploring strategies to promote synergies and coherence  
in climate action and sustainable development efforts  
with an emphasis on SDG**

## **LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Welcome to the simulation of the **UNEP at GECCS MUN 2024**. Go through this background guide and make note of the same as it shall be of utmost importance in ensuring a fruitful debate during committee proceedings and it shall be expected that the representatives steer the discussion on these lines.

The given list of topics is not exhaustive and it is not intended to be. The list is simply indicative of pressing issues and topics of concern which must be addressed and will give you a bird's eye view of the gist of the issue. The delegates are free to bring up any other relevant point for discussion. We understand that such simulations can be an overwhelming experience for first-timers and a tiring one for those who are familiar with the concept. We strongly suggest that first-time participants participate fully in the conference and if any doubt persists in their minds (either substantive or related to committee procedure), they do not hesitate to clarify the same with the Executive Board.

The success of UNEP as a committee will depend on each delegate. Apart from the research on the agenda that shall be required of all the delegates in the committee, we would like to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the delegates are aware of their country background and current status. The delegate must come to the conference with a clear and decisive policy as a delegate of their respective country.

We're expecting an issue-sensitive deliberation of the agenda. Civilized and appropriate behavior is anticipated.

All the very best, and prepare well.

Regards,

**Avinash Tripathy**

Director

**Bismah Shaikh**

Deputy-Director



# 1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## Introduction to the SDGs:

SDGs were adopted by the **United Nations in 2015** as a *universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030*. This global initiative seeks to address pressing challenges such as poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, and climate change. The SDGs underscore the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic dimensions in achieving sustainable development worldwide.

## Overview of the 17 SDGs:

The **17 SDGs** encompass a diverse range of goals, each with its specific targets and indicators. These goals address various aspects of human well-being and environmental protection, aiming to create a better future for people and the planet. Key topics covered by the SDGs include eradicating poverty, ensuring access to quality education, promoting gender equality, providing clean water and sanitation, and combating climate change, among others.



Source: [United Nations](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

## **Interlinkages Among SDGs:**

The SDGs are interconnected and interdependent. Progress in one goal often influences others, and successful implementation of the goals requires a holistic and integrated approach. For instance, achieving gender equality (SDG-5) can positively impact economic growth (SDG-8) and contribute to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG-16). Recognizing these linkages is crucial in promoting effective and sustainable development strategies.

## **SDGs and Global Agenda:**

The SDGs are an integral part of the global development agenda, guiding policy-making, development strategies, and international cooperation. As countries work towards achieving the SDGs, the UN emphasizes the importance of leaving no one behind, ensuring that all individuals benefit from the progress made. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a roadmap for countries to follow, emphasizing collaboration and collective responsibility in achieving the goals.

## **2. SDG AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **Understanding Climate Change:**

Climate change refers to **long-term shifts in global weather patterns resulting from human activities and natural processes**. This phenomenon leads to rising global temperatures, melting ice caps, extreme weather events, and disruptions to ecosystems and livelihoods. Climate change poses a significant threat to sustainable development, affecting food security, water availability, health, and economic stability.

### **Climate Action in the SDGs:**

Climate action is integrated into various SDGs, reflecting the urgency of combating climate change. By addressing climate challenges, the SDGs aim to safeguard ecosystems, protect vulnerable communities, and ensure a sustainable and resilient future for all. Climate action aligns with several SDGs, including **SDG-13 (Climate Action)**, **SDG-6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**, and **SDG-11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)**, among others.

## **SDGs as a Climate Change Mitigation Tool:**

Achieving the SDGs plays a vital role in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable practices. By adopting sustainable development approaches, countries can contribute to global efforts to combat climate change and protect the environment. For instance, **SDG-7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)** encourages the transition to renewable energy sources, thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuels and mitigating the impact of climate change.

### **3. SDG-13: TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS**

#### **Objectives and Targets of SDG-13:**

**SDG-13** focuses on *urgent climate action and encourages countries to adopt measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance climate resilience, and support vulnerable communities affected by climate change.* The targets under SDG-13 include strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity, integrating climate change measures into national policies, and mobilizing financial resources for climate action.

#### **Climate Resilience and Adaptation:**

Building climate resilience involves developing strategies to cope with the impacts of climate change. Countries must adapt to changing conditions and ensure the long-term sustainability of their communities and ecosystems. Effective adaptation measures can help reduce the vulnerability of communities and enhance their capacity to withstand climate-related shocks.

#### **Global Climate Initiatives:**

International cooperation is vital in addressing climate change effectively. Agreements such as the Paris Agreement aim to unite countries in their commitment to limit global warming and support sustainable development. The agreement sets out various mechanisms for countries to collaborate on climate action, including emissions reduction targets and financial support for developing nations.

## 4. NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND SDG INTEGRATION

### **Role of National Strategies:**

National Sustainable Development Strategies are essential in aligning domestic policies with the SDGs. These strategies serve as blueprints for countries to integrate the SDGs into their development plans and policies. By aligning national priorities with the SDGs, countries can streamline their efforts and resources towards achieving sustainable development.

### **SDG Implementation Challenges:**

Implementing the SDGs may present various challenges, including limited resources, institutional capacity, and policy alignment. Addressing these challenges requires innovation and collaboration among all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, private sector, and international organizations. Sharing best practices and lessons learned can facilitate the effective implementation of the SDGs.

### **Best Practices and Success Stories:**

Countries that have successfully integrated the SDGs into their national agendas provide valuable insights. Sharing best practices can inspire others and foster a supportive global community committed to sustainable development. Success stories can include examples of innovative policies, public-private partnerships, and community-driven initiatives that have contributed to achieving the SDGs.

## 5. SDG-7 AND HOW IT AFFECTS CLIMATE CHANGE

### **SDG-7 Overview:**

SDG-7 aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. By promoting renewable energy and improving energy efficiency, SDG-7 contributes to climate change mitigation. Access to clean energy is crucial in reducing reliance on fossil fuels and transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

### **Renewable Energy Solutions:**

Renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydro, play a crucial role in reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to a low-carbon future. Embracing these clean energy solutions is essential for sustainable development and climate action. Countries can explore renewable energy technologies and policies to achieve SDG-7 targets and contribute to global climate goals.



## **Energy Transition and Climate Goals:**

Transitioning from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources aligns with climate change mitigation efforts. SDG-7's focus on clean energy complements SDG-13's objectives, promoting a more sustainable and climate-resilient world. By embracing clean energy solutions, countries can contribute to global climate goals while advancing their national development priorities.

Ever since 1992, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have attempted to agree on measures to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent 'dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.' The international scientific body entrusted to assess climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has indicated that such a level requires keeping the increase in global annual average temperature below 2° C as compared with pre industrial times. However, the UNFCCC has struggled to keep the world within the limits indicated by the IPCC.

The reason international climate governance has proven to be such an intractable affair relates both to the enormity of the challenge at hand, as well as to the gaping disparity in states' capacity to tackle climate change. There is an inherent disproportion both in the projected impacts of climate change across countries and in the means to cope with such impacts and to contribute to climate change mitigation. The main instrument adopted to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere under the UNFCCC, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, fundamentally acknowledged this gap. Building upon a static differentiation between 'developed' and 'developing' countries embedded in the Convention, the Protocol imposed binding emission reduction targets only on the first. With ever growing emissions in emerging economies, like China and India, however, scientists have repeatedly flagged that reducing emissions in developed countries alone would not be enough.

To make matters worse, over the years political will behind the Kyoto Protocol has significantly faltered. After the elapse of the first commitment period in 2012, it has proven impossible to negotiate new targets for some important players, such as Japan, New Zealand and the Russian Federation, whereas others, namely Canada and the US, are not even Parties to the Protocol. This situation has left the European Union and a few other developed countries, like Australia, Norway and Switzerland, in the uncomfortable position of being the sole Parties to the Protocol with emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

In the hope of inducing more states to reduce their emissions, in 2007 UNFCCC Parties embarked upon the difficult process of negotiating measures to achieve the objective of the Convention. These negotiations suffered numerous setbacks and almost collapsed in 2009 in Copenhagen. Subsequent negotiations opened the way to a new geometry of commitments, based on a new approach to differentiation between Parties. The adoption of a treaty including emission reduction commitments for all Parties, however, was but one of the possible outcomes opened up by the new negotiation scenario.



The Paris Climate Change Conference was expected to bring to a conclusion this cycle of negotiations, by adopting ‘a protocol, another legal instrument or a legal outcome’ applicable to ‘all Parties,’ to be implemented from 2020. The ADP, the body tasked with the development of the text for the agreement, met 15 times to try and complete this endeavor. In February 2015 the ADP adopted a negotiating text for the Paris Agreement - an indispensable formality, should Parties decide to adopt the agreement as a protocol to the UNFCCC.

This sizable 90 page negotiating text was hastily compiled on the basis of UNFCCC Parties’ submissions. Subsequent ADP sessions were dedicated to trying to turn this chaotic text into that of a legal instrument to be adopted in December 2015. Finding a mode of work suited to negotiate a text based on the mechanical compilation of Parties’ submissions, with hardly any common ground on fundamental choices regarding the nature and the content of Parties’ obligations, was a veritable conundrum. A variety of approaches to streamline, cluster and reduce the size of the negotiating text were experimented with, but only delivered limited results.

## **6. SGD 11 AND HOW IT AFFECTS CLIMATE CHANGE**

Addressing climate change begins in cities given that they are the main users of energy and emitters of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but cities also have been leading the way in setting ambitious targets and driving innovative solutions. Cities that become more resource-efficient – in transport, heating, and cooling – could achieve reductions of up to 50 percent in energy use, GHG emissions, and resources.

Under the Climate Promise initiative, in which there are 120+ countries that we supported to ramp up their climate ambition, we are collaborating with governments and other stakeholders in 55 countries to integrate Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commitments and targets at sub-national levels of government development plans or budgets. For example, Argentina has established a formal group under its National Climate Change Cabinet to coordinate with provinces and municipalities. Sri Lanka is revising urban planning policies to gauge climate risks and mitigation potential.

If urbanization is managed well, cities can significantly contribute to meeting the NDC targets and maintain the ambition of 1.5 degrees Celsius while increasing resilience to climate change. To achieve the scale of transformation needed in our cities, we need to urgently tackle inequality, climate, and financing through bold actions. Together, we need to rally support for greater collaboration, ensure space for local actors and stakeholders and do everything possible to support implementation of political commitments made across the New Urban Agenda, the 2030 Agenda, and the Paris Agreement.

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS

What are International Environmental Conventions and Protocols?

A legally binding agreement to take joint action to address or combat a worldwide environmental problem is known as an international environmental convention. It takes considerable effort for sovereign states with disparate interests to come to an agreement to take such action.

To address international environmental challenges at the global and regional levels, these agreements have multiplied in recent decades.

What is the difference between Environmental Conference conventions and protocols?

A convention is an official pact between governments that is typically a product of negotiations conducted by an international organization.

A protocol is one tool that can be used to change a convention. All the states that have ratified the original convention are not required to abide by the modifications made by protocols.

<b>List of Environmental Conventions</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Establishment</b>
Ramsar Convention	1971
Stockholm Convention	2001
CITES	1973
Convention on Biological Diversity	1992
Bonn Convention	1979

Vienna Convention	1985
Montreal Protocol	1987
Kyoto Protocol	1997
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	1992
Rio Summit	1992
UNCCD	1994
Basel Convention	1989
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	2000
UN-REDD	2008
Nagoya Protocol	2010
COP24	2018
COP21	2016
Kigali Amendment	2016
Minamata Convention	2013

Rotterdam Convention	1998
COP25	2019

## **Paris Agreement**

To tackle climate change and its negative impacts, world leaders at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris reached a breakthrough on 12 December 2015: the historic Paris Agreement.

The Agreement sets long-term goals to guide all nations:

substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 degrees; review countries' commitments every five years; provide financing to developing countries to mitigate climate change, strengthen resilience and enhance abilities to adapt to climate impacts.

The Agreement is a legally binding international treaty. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. Today, 194 Parties (193 States plus the European Union) have joined the Paris Agreement.

The Agreement includes commitments from all countries to reduce their emissions and work together to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and calls on countries to strengthen their commitments over time. The Agreement provides a pathway for developed nations to assist developing nations in their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts while creating a framework for the transparent monitoring and reporting of countries' climate goals.

The Paris Agreement provides a durable framework guiding the global effort for decades to come. It marks the beginning of a shift towards a net-zero emissions world. Implementation of the Agreement is also essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In an effort to “significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change,” the accord calls for limiting the global average temperature rise in this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius, while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. It also asks countries to work to achieve a leveling off of global greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and to become greenhouse gas emissions neutral in the second half of this century. In 2018, the IPCC's Special Report: Global Warming at 1.5 Degrees Celsius concluded the difference between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius could mean substantially more poverty, extreme heat, sea level rise, habitat loss, and drought.

To achieve the Paris Agreement's original objectives, 186 countries—responsible for more than 90 percent of global emissions—submitted carbon reduction targets, known as “intended nationally



determined contributions” (INDCs), prior to the Paris conference. These targets outlined each country’s commitments for curbing emissions (including through the preservation of carbon sinks) through 2025 or 2030, including economy-wide carbon-cutting goals.

INDCs turn into NDCs—nationally determined contributions—once a country formally joins the agreement. There are no specific requirements about how or how much countries should cut emissions, but there have been political expectations about the type and stringency of targets by various countries based on the latest science. As a result, national plans vary greatly in scope and ambition, largely reflecting each country’s capabilities, its level of development, and its contribution to emissions over time. China, for example, committed to levelling off its carbon emissions no later than 2030. India set its sights on cutting emissions intensity by 33 to 35 percent below 2005 levels and generating 40 percent of its electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

The United States—the world’s largest historical emitter and the second-biggest current emitter after China—had committed to cutting overall greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. U.S. initiatives to achieve the target include the Clean Power Plan (a state-by-state program to cut carbon pollution from the power sector) and the tightening of automotive fuel economy standards to reduce transportation emissions—both policies the Trump administration fought hard to roll back and which the Biden/Harris administration has committed to strengthening.

Although the Paris Agreement laid out a clear target point, it did not contain the specific detail on how to reach it. The ambition is to create a "net zero" world by 2050. That means reducing greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible, and removing any remaining emissions from the atmosphere, through natural or artificial processes. Scientists argue it is vital to assess the progress being made towards that goal every year.

The UN group of climate experts, the IPCC, has estimated an annual budget of carbon emissions the world can release before temperatures rise above 1.5 degrees, measured in gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e).

In 2018, **the IPCC estimated** that the world should only release 25-30 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year by 2030.

It currently emits 36.3 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year, **according to the IEA.**

Environment Council conclusions and decisions

- 24/10/2022 - [Conclusions for the preparation of COP27](#)
- 06/10/2021 - [Conclusions for the preparation of COP26](#)
- 04/10/2019 - [Conclusions for the preparation of COP25](#)
- 09/10/2018 - [Conclusions for the preparation of COP24](#)
- 13/10/2017 - [Conclusions for the preparation of COP23](#)
- 05/10/2016 - [Decision on EU conclusion of the Paris Agreement](#)
- 18/09/2015 - [Conclusions for the preparation of COP21](#)

## 8. 2030 Agenda

### 1) The 2030 Agenda applies to all countries and actors ...

Previous development plans have mainly focused on progress in developing nations. But today's reality is different. A majority of the world's poor live in middle income countries, inequalities within countries are on the rise, and the effects of climate change and environmental degradation are felt by people and communities across the globe.

That is why the 2030 Agenda is **universal**, applying to all countries and actors. It requires all nations to take climate action, reduce unemployment, strengthen gender equality and promote peaceful societies, to name a few, if the world is to eradicate poverty and shift into a more sustainable development.

### 2) ... and the SDGs are interlinked

Traditional development efforts have often focused on one issue at a time, i.e. first hunger, then clean energy, then inclusive institutions, for example. The SDGs recognize that development must balance economic, social and environmental sustainability — and that interventions in one area will affect outcomes in others. For example, actions to support women and girls' empowerment may also catalyze local economies, enable safer childbirth, and build more inclusive communities.

The indivisible nature of the SDGs means that we cannot 'cherry-pick' topics, we must look at the agenda as an **integrated** package.

### 3) Leaving No One Behind

Development gains have often been measured in terms of improved average income, decreased average child mortality and lowered poverty rates. While those are important advances, the 2030 Agenda is clear: we need to do more. Averages can conceal that millions of people stay in poverty, or that more people become poor, as well as structural discrimination that excludes people from development progress.

The 2030 Agenda takes a radical stance through its pledge to **Leave No One Behind**. The SDGs are designed to bring the world to several life-changing 'zeros', including zero poverty, hunger, preventable child deaths, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, discrimination against women and girls and human trafficking. In practical terms, this means targeting development efforts and investments at those furthest behind first, including the 736 million (10 percent of the world population) who live in extreme poverty.

#### **4) Development must be smart — if it's not risk-informed, it's not sustainable**

40% of the world's population was affected by disasters between 2002 and 2012, resulting in 1.2 million fatalities and an economic cost of US\$1.7 trillion. Countries have seen development gains and years of hard work erased. That is why the 2030 Agenda stresses that development planning must be **risk-informed**.

Risk reduction and resilience building does not only refer to environmental disasters but also to degradation, pandemics, financial shocks, conflict and war. By preventing, mitigating and preparing, countries and communities will save money, resources and most importantly — lives. For example, economies must be able to quickly bounce back from financial downturns, agriculture must withstand drought, hospitals must be able to cope with sudden disease outbreaks and public institutions must be open and inclusive to support peaceful societies. This takes laws, policies and cooperation across sectors and actors. Development must be smart. If it isn't risk-informed, it isn't sustainable.

#### **5) Everyone is needed!**

The 2030 Agenda needs bright minds and relentless dedication from all of society — Governments and the UN cannot do it alone. Harnessing the knowhow, expertise, technology and financial resources from businesses, academia, civil society and individuals, is necessary to reach the ambitious targets in every context.

The SDGs were created through the largest ever participatory process undertaken by the UN. 10 million people from all walks of life expressed their views on- and offline in the consultation process to help shape the 2030 Agenda.

### **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations. Its job is to advance scientific knowledge about climate change caused by human activities. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) established the IPCC in 1988. The United Nations endorsed the creation of the IPCC later that year. It has a secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, hosted by the WMO. It has 195 member states who govern the IPCC. The member states elect a bureau of scientists to serve through an assessment cycle. A cycle is usually six to seven years. The bureau selects experts to prepare IPCC reports. It draws the experts from nominations by governments and observer organizations. The IPCC has three working groups and a task force, which carry out its scientific work.

The IPCC informs governments about the state of knowledge of climate change. It does this by examining all the relevant scientific literature on the subject. This includes the natural, economic and social impacts and risks. It also covers possible response options. The IPCC does not conduct its own

original research. It aims to be objective and comprehensive. Thousands of scientists and other experts volunteer to review the publications. They compile key findings into "Assessment Reports" for policymakers and the general public; Experts have described this work as the biggest peer review process in the scientific community.

The IPCC is an internationally accepted authority on climate change. Leading climate scientists and all member governments endorse its findings. A key role in the annual climate negotiations held by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) entered in 2015. The IPCC shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore for contributions to the understanding of climate change.

In 2015 the IPCC began its sixth assessment cycle. It will be completed in 2023. In August 2021, the IPCC published its Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC AR6) on the physical science basis of climate change. *The Guardian* described this report as the "starkest warning yet" of "major inevitable and irreversible climate changes". Many newspapers around the world echoed this theme. In February 2022, the IPCC released its Working Group II report on impacts and adaptation. It published Working Group III's "mitigation of climate change" contribution to the Sixth Assessment in April 2022. The Sixth Assessment Report is due to conclude with a Synthesis Report in March 2023.

During this period of the Sixth Assessment Report, the IPCC has released three special reports. The first and most influential was the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C in 2018. In 2019 the Special Report on Climate Change and Land (SRCCL), and the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) came out. The IPCC also updated its methodologies in 2019. So, the sixth assessment cycle is the most ambitious in the IPCC's history.

The IPCC has finalized its Sixth Assessment Report. The report provides an update on the scientific, technical and socioeconomic aspects of climate change, including:

- its causes
- potential impacts
- response strategies.

The Sixth Assessment Report is published in parts, with 3 Working Groups contributing separate reports.

The Working Group reports are:

- The Physical Science Basis
- [Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#)
- [Mitigation of Climate Change](#).

The final part is a Synthesis Report summarizing the science and knowledge around climate change. It is based on the Working Group reports, as well as the 3 IPCC Special Reports published between 2018 and 2019. The Synthesis Report was approved by IPCC member governments and released on 21 March 2023.



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