



Acting for Climate

Stepping Up Climate Change Policies, Action and Awareness in the Region

22 MARCH 2019, 10:00-11:25

International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG)



OBJECTIVES

The main aims of the round tables are:

- to provide a mutual learning space where participants from governments can interact with their peers and other relevant stakeholders in order to exchange experiences, propose solutions to address identified problems and anticipate future developments; and
- to identify main lessons and compile a set of key messages that can be shared with a wider audience.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Climate action – fast and fair

SDG-Target 13.2: Climate change measures in national policies, strategies and planning

- What are the most effective measures for governments to strengthen climate action and integrate climate considerations into national policies, leaving no one behind?
- How to ensure that a clear price signal induced by a shift in subsidies and implementation of effective taxing-scheme on products and services responsible for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions can be established both in the fastest and fairest way possible?

2. Promoting climate change awareness and capacity to act

SDG-Target 13.3: Improvement in education, awareness-raising, human and institutional capacity for Climate action.

- What are the social, economic and environmental benefits to accelerate the momentum for climate action and mobilize a whole-of-society action that encompasses all the various stakeholder aspects, including all levels of governments, business and industry, children and youth, farmers, indigenous people, local authorities, academia, women and workers?
- What are the most successful ways and means to mainstream climate action and awareness by governments at all levels as well as society?
- What are successful means to mainstream climate action and promote sustainability in private sector activities?



BACKGROUND

Climate change continues to gather pace, while the main GHG emissions driving climate change are at record levels. This continues to pose an unprecedented threat to our lives and societies, undermining fundamental human rights. The 2018 WMO data indicates that the long-term global-warming trend has continued in 2018. The 20 warmest years on record have been in the past 22 years, with the top four in the past four years. The science has never been clearer – human activities have already caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels. If we do not halve current GHG emissions within the next 11 years, a devastating warming of our planet by 1.5°C can no longer be avoided (IPCC's 2018 [special report](#) on 1.5°C).

Climate action remains highly insufficient

While there is a wealth of opportunities in transforming our world to become more sustainable, current global climate action remains highly insufficient, i.e. too slow and not sufficiently transforming. UN Environment's [Emissions Gap Report 2018](#) shows that current national commitments are not enough to bridge the emissions gap by 2030. According to the [Climate Action Tracker](#), an independent scientific analysis produced by multiple research organisations, none of the UNECE member states have taken sufficient action to combat climate change, with some being classified as 'critically insufficient' in their actions. Therefore, urged increase in effort is needed to strengthen ambitions and increase the effectiveness of domestic policies, in order to implement transformative change and achieve the goals of the [Paris Agreement](#).

Solutions are available to step up the climate challenge

The problem of why current climate action is insufficient can be framed in many ways and has various interlinked psychological, social, political, economic, technical and structural reasons. For example, it could be insufficient due to a lack of political will, a lack of awareness among several actors, vested economic interests, power structures and inequalities, resistance to change disproportionate resource consumption, insufficient legislative and voluntary compliance measures and their weak enforcement as well as a lack of emission-free technologies. Furthermore, a general market failure concerning the internalization of costs, creating incentives for pollution and promoting climate inaction, fundamentally contributes to the problem. Depending on the framing, different solutions are available to step up to the climate challenge. For example, awareness measures for consumers contributing to behavioural change, access to information and justice, standards and holistic reporting tools for producers, quality education, gender equality, leveraging information and communication technologies for climate actions, innovation on and diffusion of emission-free technology, divestment, fiscal reforms on the true costs as well as many others, together play a crucial role.

Even though global progress has not been sufficient to combat climate change, governments are taking action at national and local levels through a range of initiatives. Various attempts are being made to bridge the emissions gap and to tackle climate change in key sectors such as agriculture, transport, energy and manufacturing. In some countries, carbon taxation has been an instrument to reduce CO₂ emissions and correct market failures. When price signals are significant and quickly become operational, climate action

can be accelerated. However, it is crucial to ensure that a strong price signal is established, both – in the fastest and fairest way possible, leaving no one behind. Countries have demonstrated that it is possible to implement carbon taxes successfully for the benefit of all.

Government measures and action by non-state actors are crucial

As part of their efforts, governments are implementing public information campaigns, mainstreaming climate into their educational systems, and involving NGOs in their public training programmes. Alongside government measures, action by non-state actors – including business and private sector – will be crucial. The way we measure companies' success, their reporting mechanisms, innovation, investment and expertise will play an important role in tackling climate change. Sub-groups of civil society play a key role in translating individual awareness into the mobilisation of joint societal action. Digital technologies are also providing innovative ways to optimize energy efficiency and build climate resilience that will drive climate action forward.

Highlighting the many benefits of climate action, including for health, environmental sustainability, and economy will help to successfully create the much-needed momentum towards accelerating efforts of climate action.

 **SDG LINKAGES**

Measures to mitigate, adopt and reduce the impact of climate change should strengthen and promote sustainable development and human rights. Partnership on the implementation of all goals (**SDG 17**) is fundamental. If climate change continues at its current rates, achieving most of the SDGs will become very difficult. Thus, SDG 13 has strong linkages to end poverty (**SDG 1**), end hunger and achieve food security (**SDG 2**) and contributes to healthy lives and well-being (**SDG 3**), use and management of water resources (**SDG 6** and **SDG 14**), along with protecting our biodiversity (**SDG 15**) as well as to build peaceful and resilient societies (**SDG 16**).

Furthermore, climate action is a challenge with significant implications for all aspects of our modern life and society. Thus, the success of SDG 13 on climate action depends on strong efforts taken on the implementation of other SDGs, such as health and wellbeing (**SDG 3**), education (**SDG 4**), gender equality (**SDG 5**) and reducing inequalities (**SDG 10**), providing clean energy (**SDG 7**), greener innovation and infrastructure (**SDG 9**) and sustainable cities (**SDG 11**). Further, it depends on the way we create decent and green jobs and economies (**SDG 8**), the way we produce and consume (**SDG 12**) how we protect, restore and promote sustainable use of ecosystems, our forests particularly (**SDG 14** and **SDG 15**) as well as how we create peaceful and inclusive societies (**SDG 16**).

 **PARTICIPANTS**

The roundtable will provide a platform for exchange among policymakers to encourage peer learning and design of practical solutions to identified problems, while including the voice of civil society, private sector and academia.



ORGANIZERS

This round table is organized by UN Environment, in cooperation with UN Women, World Health Organization (WHO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with input from UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).