

Bonn: New initiatives in energy, water and agriculture sectors announced at UN Climate Conference

10 November 2017 – New commitments and initiatives in energy, water and agriculture sectors were announced on Friday, at the United Nations Climate Conference ([COP23](#)) in Bonn, Germany, under the auspices of the [Marrakech Partnership](#) for Global Climate Action to help implement the [Paris Agreement](#).

The Marrakech Partnership aims at catalyzing greater climate action by public and private stakeholders as the Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, calls on countries to combat climate change by limiting the rise of global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius and strive not to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Cleaner energy development

In Bonn, new initiatives were announced to push forward the transition to renewable energy and to show that more ambitious clean energy development can quickly become a bigger part of national climate plans submitted under the Paris Agreement.

“With the price of renewable and storage technologies tumbling, and greater understanding on how to set the policy table for a cleaner energy mix and more integrated energy planning, the question before decision makers is, why wait?” said Rachel Kyte, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and CEO, Sustainable Energy for All ([SE4All](#)).

Among key announcements, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) released a new report, *Untapped Potential for Climate Action: Renewable Energy in Nationally Determined Contributions*, which suggests there is substantial scope for countries to cost-effectively increase renewable energy.

The Climate Group also announced new members to its recently launched EV100 campaign, a major new global electric transport initiative designed to make electric vehicles “the new normal.” And 13 countries with the International Energy Agency (IEA) announced this week the launch of a new multi-year, 30 million euros plan to support clean energy transitions around the world.

Investing faster and further in agricultural climate action

Regarding agriculture, leaders and experts said that investing faster and further in agricultural climate action and to support the sustainable livelihoods of small-scale farmers will unlock much greater potential to curb emissions and protect people against climate change.

“Countries now have the opportunity to transform their agricultural

sectors to achieve food security for all through sustainable agriculture and strategies that boost resource-use efficiency, conserve and restore biodiversity and natural resources, and combat the impacts of climate change,” said René Castro, Assistant-Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)).

In the livestock sector, for example, FAO estimates that emissions could be readily reduced by about 30 percent with the adoption of best practices.

FAO released a new [Sourcebook on Climate-Smart Agriculture](#). It recommends scaling up public and private climate finance flows to agriculture; spurring public-private partnerships; strengthening a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder dialogue; investing in knowledge and information; and building capacity to address barriers to implement climate action.

Managing healthy water supplies



Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President of the organization Women for Water Partnership, at the UN Climate Conference (COP 23) in Bonn, Germany. Photo: UN News/Jerome Bernard

In the water sector, the majority of national climate plans with an adaptation component prioritize action on water, yet financing would need to triple to \$295 billion per year to meet such targets, said experts on Friday.

“Sustainable use of water for multiple purposes must remain a way of life and needs to be at the center of building resilient cities and human settlements and ensuring food security in a climate change context,” said Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President of the Women for Water Partnership.

The international water community co-signed on Friday what it called a “nature based solution declaration” to encourage the use of natural systems in managing healthy water supplies. Around 40 per cent of the world's population will face water shortages by 2050, accelerating migration and triggering conflict, while some regions could lose up to six per cent of their economic output, unless it is better managed.

“Involving both women and men in decision making and integrated water resources initiatives leads to better sustainability, governance and efficiency”, said Ms. Verhoef-Cohen.

[Unhealthy diets could undo progress on](#)

food security in Asia-Pacific, warns UN report

10 November 2017 – Urgent action is needed to tackle malnutrition and promote consumption of healthier foods in the Asia-Pacific region – home to most of the world's undernourished people – the United Nations food security agency said Friday.

“Good nutrition depends on [raising awareness about healthy foods and choices](#), as well as efficient, affordable and sustainable systems to deliver that food,” said Kundhavi Kadiresan, the head of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) in the Asia-Pacific region, announcing findings from the agency's regional report on food security and nutrition.

“If we are to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of [ending hunger] in the region, we must invest to improve our food systems and pool our knowledge and resources to meet our current food and nutrition challenges head on.”

The FAO report, [2017 Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition](#) has revealed that while food security has improved for millions of people in Asia and the Pacific, hunger and malnutrition appear to be rising in some areas, leaving roughly half-a-billion people undernourished.

The situation is particularly dire for children below five, with one in four children suffering from stunting – impaired growth and development, often as a result of poor nutrition.

At the same time, report also found that obesity is on the rise, with “significant increases” in the prevalence of overweight children over the past 15 years, especially in South Asia (from three per cent to seven per cent) and Oceania (five per cent to nearly 10 per cent).

The report was released Friday at a regional symposium on sustainable food systems in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand.

Organized by FAO, in collaboration with the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)), World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the World Bank, the symposium focuses on policies that can improve food systems, and promote better nutrition and healthier diets.

The event was opened by the FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Zero Hunger in the region, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, who urged participants to work together to find solutions.

“The world has committed to zero hunger and improving nutrition as a key outcome of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development. We must look at improving our current systems of production and patterns of consumption, and set a course of action,” she said.

The symposium is a component of the UN [Decade of Action on Nutrition](#)

[2016-2025](#), which aims to increase investments and actions to improve people's diets and nutrition.

Accelerate climate action and raise ambition, urges UN chief

10 November 2017 – As the impact of climate change worsens around the world, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has called on the global community to redouble efforts to help countries respond to climate shocks, especially the most vulnerable.

"I am encouraged to see climate action taking hold, at all scales, at all levels, involving an ever-wider coalition of actors and institutions," said the Secretary-General, at a [press stakeout](#) at the UN Headquarters, in New York.

"But we need to do more," he underlined.

In his remarks, the UN chief said that he will be travelling to Bonn to participate in the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23), where, he will urge efforts to accelerate climate action as well as to raise ambition to do more.

"The window of opportunity to meet the 2-degree target may close in 20 years or less – and we may have only five years to bend the emissions curve towards 1.5 degrees," he said, noting the need for a further 25 per cent cut in emissions by 2020.

Speaking on the need for bolstering finance, Mr. Guterres called for mobilizing the agreed \$100 billion annually for developing countries, which is crucial to spur action.

He also said that in September 2019, he will convene a Climate Summit to mobilize political and economic energy at the highest levels.

"I ask world leaders to show courage in combatting entrenched interests; wisdom in investing in the opportunities of the future; and compassion in caring what kind of world we build for our children," he said.

"As a former politician myself, I have no doubt that in today's world, this is the path to progress today and a meaningful legacy for tomorrow."

Also at the stakeout, the UN chief informed that before Bonn, he will visit the Philippines to attend the UN-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Summit, and after participating at COP23, he will deliver an address at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London on

counter-terrorism and human rights on Thursday, 16 November.

“As the world responds to modern terrorism, our goal must be to win the fight while upholding our values,” he said.

Science and technology can provide solutions to key sustainable development challenges

10 November 2017 – Integrated science is essential to strengthen water management, sustainably use the oceans and tackle climate change, the head of the United Nations cultural agency said on World Science Day for Peace and Development.

“[Sciences, Technology and Innovation \(STI\) provide key answers](#) to build peace and bolster sustainable development,” said Irina Bokova, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) in her message on the [World Day](#).

“We need more integrated science to strengthen water management, to ensure the sustainable use of the ocean, to protect ecosystems and biodiversity, to tackle climate change and disasters, to foster innovation,” she added.

Ms. Bokova underscored that STI stand at the heart of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, pointing out that UNESCO has developed a unique approach to promote global scientific cooperation while encouraging local actions, with the dual focus of gender equality and Africa.

“In this spirit, UNESCO launched in 2017 a ground-breaking [international symposium and policy forum](#) on girls’ education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), to challenge the gender inequalities in [those fields],” she stated.

Today, as the complexity of the world’s issues goes beyond the framework of a single discipline, UNESCO has made “trans-disciplinarity” the cornerstone of its work for sustainability – building networks with multiple stakeholders, such as museums, universities, private and public actors, governments and non-governmental organizations.

This year’s theme, ‘[Science for global understanding](#),’ encompasses UNESCO’s approach to develop scientific cooperation between and within societies, combining global sustainability and local actions and knowledge.

“There is today an urgent need to promote South-South and North-South-South cooperation to foster STI for sustainable development and to encourage mutual understanding and peace,” she continued. “In this context, science diplomacy will be a powerful instrument for the use of science as a foundation for a culture of cooperation.”

Ms. Bokova stressed that investment in science education would be equally crucial, saying: “We need to grant equal access to enrolment in sciences [to] all persons, starting at an early age, with a strong focus on girls.”

In that spirit, the UNESCO chief called on all stakeholders, well beyond scientific circles, to mobilize in order to release the full potential of sciences for development and peace.

Under UNESCO auspices, the first World Science Day for Peace and Development was celebrated worldwide on 10 November 2002.

[Victims can help shape effective counter-terrorism strategies, says senior UN official](#)

9 November 2017 – Surviving victims can help shape effective strategies to counter terrorism, a senior United Nations counter-terrorism official said on Thursday, pledging to provide practical, pragmatic and realistic support to victims.

“Victims are [powerful and credible](#) messengers,” the Under-Secretary-General of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, Vladimir Voronkov, at a roundtable discussion on victims’ resiliency in New York. “And I promise that we will continue to make victims our priority,” he added.

To rectify a deficit of information on and for victims, the [UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal](#) was created in June 2014. It has grown in strength, attracting more and more users to its site, he said.

The [UN Office of Counter-Terrorism](#) has also commissioned a series of documentaries on victims of terrorism. Created together with the Department of Public Information (DPI), the series provides a platform to give victims a voice on a variety of issues.

At Thursday’s [event](#), the documentary *Surviving Terrorism: Victims’ Voices from Norway*, offered an intimate portrayal of two victims of the July 2011 mass killings by Anders Breivik.

The film showed the lives of Ms. Kamzy Gunaratnam and Mr. Viljar Hanssen as they recover from the attack and turn their experiences into something positive.

VIDEO: Surviving Terrorism: Victims' Voices from Norway

"Building a resilient society is a powerful tool in the fight against terrorism," Mr. Voronkov said at the earlier discussion. "A society that is resilient is more likely to uphold human rights and the rule of law, and not give into the grievances of terrorists."