

More than 65 million 'low-carbon jobs' can be created by 2030: UN-backed Climate Summit urges action 'to the next level'

New UN-backed commitments to take action against the damaging effects of climate change, could result in \$26 trillion in economic benefits worldwide, and help create 65 million new “low-carbon jobs” by 2030 – the deadline for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

Those are some of the opportunities of moving to a low-carbon economy, outlined on Friday, at the close of the Global Climate Action Summit, which took place in San Francisco.

It brought together national, regional and urban leaders from across the world, together with businesses, investors and civil society organizations, in an effort to keep global warming to well-under 2 degrees Celsius, in line with the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

Committing to take “their collective ambition to the next level”, participants focused on five specific areas.

- **Healthy Energy Systems:** An alliance of more than 60 state, regional and city governments pledged to 100 per cent zero-emission targets, together with 23 multinational corporations with revenue of more than \$470 billion.
- **Inclusive Economic Growth:** 488 companies from 38 countries, adopted emission-reduction goals, in line with the Paris Agreement – 40 per cent up on the number last year.
- **Sustainable Communities:** More than 70 big cities are now committed to carbon neutrality by 2050, representing 450 million citizens.
- **Land and Ocean Stewardship:** A leaders’ group will head a new alliance linking more than 100 NGOs, pledged to more action on behalf of forest, food and land sustainability.
- **The Investor Agenda:** brings together nearly 400 investors, managing \$32 trillion of assets, who pledged to scale up the flow of capital into climate action, and a more sustainable, low-carbon economy.

The summit issued a formal “Call to Global Climate Action” saying that “now is the time for all leaders to step up”.

“Only together will we transform our communities and energy systems, create employment opportunities and economic prosperity, protect our oceans and natural environment and complete the transition to a zero-carbon world”.

This Summit and its Call to Action make an important contribution

towards achieving our collective goal: to boost ambition that we need to address climate change – *Patricia Espinosa, UN climate change chief*

UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#), said the summit had demonstrated “*the vast opportunity afforded by climate action. They are betting on green because they understand this is the path to prosperity and peace, on a healthy planet.*”

The Call to Action, was presented to the UN’s [Special Envoy on Youth](#), Jayathma Wickramanayake, in a symbolic gesture to illustrate that it is future generations who will be most affected by the decisions of the current generation to build a more resilient world.

Accepting the Call to Action on behalf of the United Nations, [UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa](#), said: “This Summit and its Call to Action make an important contribution towards achieving our collective goal: to boost ambition that we need to address climate change.”

“We must increase climate action and create unstoppable momentum towards COP24 in Poland and the Secretary General’s 2019 Climate Summit,” she added adding that the summit “will encourage governments worldwide to step up their actions, demonstrating the vital role that states and regions, cities, companies, investors, and civil society are playing to tackle climate change.”

The event took place against a background of accelerating impacts of climate change, evidenced this week through the destructive power of Super Typhoon Mangkhut in South East Asia, and Hurricane Florence, on the east coast of the United States, which killed dozens and caused billions of dollars-worth of destruction.

[UN Environment](#) highlighted the vital role of non-Party stakeholders in propelling the global fight against climate change forward, in an excerpt of their [Emissions Gap Report](#), launched at the Summit.

“Climate change is undoubtedly the defining issue of our time, and working together across nations, organizations and communities is the only way that we can tackle this enormous task and seize the huge opportunities,” said head of UN Environment, Erik Solheim.

“We have seen here over the past few days the inspiring amount of work that is already being undertaken by communities around the world to address these issues. If we manage to put our environment first, we can come out on the other end of this formidable challenge and achieve our common goal: a sustainable world for all.”

Now is a 'pivotal time for climate action' says UN chief, looking to ozone layer gains

With record-breaking heat once again enveloping the earth this year, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said it was also “a pivotal time for climate action”, marking the International Day for the [Preservation of the Ozone Layer](#), on Sunday.

When scientist revealed that chlorofluorocarbons, found mainly in refrigerants and aerosol sprays, were tearing a hole in the ozone layer – a fragile shield of gas that protects the earth and helps preserves life – the world responded with the Montreal Protocol. The landmark 1987 global agreement, heralded the phasing out of the production of ozone-depleting substances.

“We can draw inspiration from the [Montreal Protocol](#), a shining example of how the world can come together for people and planet,” added the UN chief.

Phasing out ozone-depleting substances has not only helped protect the ozone layer but also contributed significantly to global efforts to address climate change.

Moreover, it has protected human health and ecosystems by preventing some harmful ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. “Thanks to this global commitment,” Mr. Guterres stated, “the ozone layer is expected to return to its 1980 levels by mid-century.”

“However,” he continued, “this work is not yet done.”

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UN chief

He explained that the landmark [Kigali Amendment](#), which enters into force on 1 January 2019, sets its sights on hydrofluorocarbons; powerful climate-warming gases, still being used in cooling systems throughout the world.

“So far,” Mr. Guterres said, “46 countries have ratified this new instrument,” as he called on all others to show their commitment to a healthier planet and “follow suit.”

“I expect countries to demonstrate significant progress in implementing the Kigali Amendment at the Climate Summit I am convening in September 2019,” the Secretary-General stressed.

For over three decades, the Montreal Protocol has done much more than helped repair the ozone layer.

“It has shown us how environmental governance can respond to science, and how countries can come together to address a shared vulnerability,” said Mr. Guterres.

“I call for that same spirit of common cause and, especially, greater leadership as we strive to implement the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change and mobilize the ambitious climate action we so urgently need at this time,” he concluded.

Keep Cool and Carry On

The theme for this year’s Ozone Day, commemorated annually on 16 September, is a “motivational rallying call” urging everyone to protect the ozone layer and climate under the Montreal Protocol.

“The theme has two connotations – that our work of protecting the ozone layer also protects climate, and that the Montreal Protocol is a “cool” treaty, as exemplified by its outstanding success”, says the UN’s official webpage marking the day.

[South Sudanese government must bring soldiers under control, urges UN mission chief, as peacekeeper is shot and injured](#)

A “lack of command and control” on the part of South Sudan’s government, just days after signing a new peace agreement to end years of brutal civil conflict, lies behind the shooting of a United Nations peacekeeper on Saturday, said the UN mission chief in the country.

Special Representative David Shearer, who heads UNMISS, said in a statement that a Nepalese peacekeeper had been shot and wounded by a government soldier early in the day, who was part of a convoy travelling near the town of Yei, in Central Equatoria.

A government SPLA soldier had begun shooting in the air near the UNMISS convoy of four vehicles, including two water tankers.

“The soldier then shot directly at one of the vehicles, hitting the Nepalese peacekeeper in the leg, and ran off into a crowd. The troops were unable to

return fire as they did not want to risk injuring civilians,” said UNMISS.

This situation is evidence of a lack of command and control of armed forces which has resulted in unruly elements who continue to commit human rights abuses in the area – *UNMISS chief, David Shearer*

“The peacekeeper was evacuated to the UN base before being airlifted to Juba for further medical treatment.”

Mr. Shearer said that “this direct attack on UN peacekeepers here to help the people of South Sudan is unacceptable. The perpetrator must be found and held accountable by Government authorities.”

The New Zealander added that “this situation is evidence of a lack of command and control of armed forces which has resulted in unruly elements who continue to commit human rights abuses in the area. It is beholden on the Government to bring their forces under control.”

This morning’s attack follows reports of fresh clashes between government and opposition forces in the area surrounding Kajo-Keji in Central Equatoria. The Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) has confirmed that it is investigating alleged violations of the ceasefire agreement in the Yei area.

Prior to the wounding of the peacekeeper today, Government soldiers had fired approximately 50 shots, about 500 meters from the UN base in Yei.

‘Trust’ still lacking, despite peace deal inked on Thursday

Earlier this week, President Salva Kiir shook the hand of his longtime rival and former Vice-President, Riek Machar, in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, as hopes rose that despite failed agreements in the past three years, lasting-peace across the world’s youngest country, may finally be possible.

“The signing of the revitalized peace agreement by all parties to the conflict three days ago heralded a time of optimism for the future. It is disheartening that, despite the new agreement, fighting is continuing in the Central Equatorial region,” said Mr. Shearer. “All forces must disengage as required by the peace agreement and end the violence. The parties must also work together to build trust between themselves and with the people of South Sudan who are suffering immensely from the ongoing conflict.”

Democracy ‘showing greater strain’ than at any time in decades, UN chief

Tackling economic and political inequality is at the root of strengthening democratic institutions at a time when they are under huge strain, said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Saturday, marking the official [International Day of Democracy](#).

“It means making our democracies more inclusive, by bringing the young and marginalized into the political system,” he continued. “It means making democracies more innovative and responsive to emerging challenges.”

The UN chief encouraged everyone to look for ways of invigorating democratic systems and values, calling on people everywhere to seek answers to the challenges facing democratic governments the world over.

Lamenting that democracy “is showing greater strain than at any time in decades,” he stressed that working for a future that leaves no one behind, requires everyone to consider essential questions, such as:

- What impact will migration or climate change have on democracy in the next generation?
- How do we best harness the potential of new technologies while avoiding the dangers?
- How do build better governance so that democracy delivers better lives and fully meets the public’s aspirations?

Democracy is particularly close to the current Secretary-General’s heart. In his 20s, Mr. Guterres was part of the Carnation Revolution of 1974, in which Portugal overthrew its authoritarian dictatorship. He went on to become Prime Minister of his country, between 1995, and 2002.

More recently, he said in a magazine interview, that a central fact in today’s world is that democratic advances that he and other democratic leaders secured in the late 20th century, are in jeopardy, as are, more profoundly, the very values of the Enlightenment – also known as the Age of Reason, when the notion was embraced that humanity could be improved, through rational change.

“On this International Day of Democracy, let us commit to joining forces for the future of democracy,” concluded the Secretary-General in his message.

The theme for this year’s observance is “Democracy under Strain: Solutions for a Changing World.” Coinciding with the [70th anniversary](#) of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), the Day is also an opportunity to highlight the values of freedom and respect for human rights as essential elements of democracy.

INTERVIEW: I've been listening, and problem-solving 'all my life' says new UN Ombudsman

With only eight days on the job so far, Shireen Dodson, the new United Nations [Ombudsman](#), brings with her a wealth of experience dealing with people from all walks of life, including setting up the first-ever Ombudsman office for the US State Department.

But her current career was not by design.

In an interview with UN News, she explained that after working for more than 20 years at the Washington-based cultural powerhouse, the Smithsonian Institution, she was about to retire when the State Department offered her a position as the Special Assistant to the Director of the Office of Civil Rights. In that role, each time someone called for an Ombudsman, it fell to her.

"It was in line with what I'd been doing all of my life, helping people and listening to people's problems" she said.

Ms. Dodson learned the fine art of mediation as a young child when she diplomatically negotiated between her divorced parents.

"Now mom, you have Thanksgiving dinner at two, and to my stepmom: Can you have Thanksgiving dinner at four?" she recounted to UN News with a smile, recalling two celebratory dinners that are all about the family.

During her time in the Civil Rights office, she went for training, got certified as a mediator and, four years later, was offered the job of Ombudsman.

We put our ear to the ground and we listen – *UN Ombudsman*

One of the things Ms. Dodson takes pride in from her years there, was that she "had as many managers coming, as I had staff," which illustrated that both staff and leadership saw the value of the office, and the way she handled the role.

Of her many challenges, the most difficult she said was "letting people know what an Ombudsman does," adding that her office was "the first place to start" with a problem.

"We put our ear to the ground and we listen, and we help people deal with

workplace conflict," she said, noting that the Ombudsman helps people see what the issues are, so they can return to the workplace having come to some understanding and resolution.

Operating under the four basic principles of confidentiality, informality, neutrality and independence, Ms. Dodson expressed the hope that her office would be an integral part of the Secretary-General's reform efforts, commenting that she had arrived at "a perfect time, [during] lots of change," saying "I think I can really assist."

While many may wonder why ombudsman is an acceptable term for a woman, Ms. Dodson explained that it's a question of language: it's a Swedish term.

"It's hard enough for someone to understand what an ombudsman is, versus an ombudsperson and an ombudswoman," she argued, saying that in her view, it is a gender-neutral title.

Although a "take charge" sort of person, Ms. Dodson stressed that she is not "a bull in a china closet," and that for the first 100 days she planned to "listen and learn" and to then see what she can add to the Organization's existing tools.

The Ombudsman concluded with this message to the thousands of UN staff members around the world: "We are here, open for business, come early, don't wait until the problem festers."