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17 Goals to transform our world

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Special Edition

COP23 - UN Climate Conference in Bonn, 6-17 November 2017



At the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, the nations of the world met to advance the goals and ambitions of the Paris Agreement and to make progress on its implementation guidelines. The conference was hosted by the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and chaired by Fiji.

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and even more tomorrow. People are experiencing the significant impacts of climate change, which include changing weather patterns, rising sea level, and more extreme weather events. The greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are driving climate change and continue to rise. They are now at their highest levels in history. Without action, the world's average surface temperature is projected to rise over the 21st century and is likely to surpass 3 degrees Celsius this century—with some areas of the world expected to warm even more. The poorest and most vulnerable people are being affected the most. Affordable, scalable solutions are now available to enable countries to leapfrog to cleaner, more resilient economies. The pace of change is quickening as more people are turning to renewable energy and a range of other measures that will reduce emissions and increase adaptation efforts. But climate change is a global challenge that does not respect national borders. Emissions anywhere affect people everywhere. It is an issue that requires solutions that need to be coordinated at the international level and it requires international cooperation to help developing countries move toward a low-carbon economy. To address climate change, countries adopted the Paris Agreement at the COP21 in Paris on 12 December 2015. The Agreement entered into force shortly thereafter, on 4 November 2016. In the agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and given the grave risks, to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius. Implementation of the Paris Agreement is essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and provides a roadmap for climate actions that will reduce emissions and build climate resilience.

UN climate conference aims for greater ambition as 2017 set to be among hottest years

BONN November 6th, 2017 - The United Nations Climate Conference opened on Monday in Bonn, Germany, with the aim of a greater ambition for climate action, as the world body's weather agency issued a stark warning that 2017 is set to be among the three hottest years on record. The Bonn Conference of the State Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), informally known as COP 23 and which runs until 17 November, is chaired by Fiji, an island State particularly affected by the impacts of our warming climate. "The need for urgency is obvious. Our world is in distress from the extreme weather events caused by climate change – destructive hurricanes, fires, floods, droughts, melting ice, and changes to agriculture that threaten our food security", said COP 23 President and Prime Minister of Fiji Frank Bainimarama, at the opening of the conference. "Our job as leaders is to respond to that suffering with all means available to us. We must not fail our people. That means using the next two weeks and the year ahead to do everything we can to make the Paris Agreement work and to advance ambition and support for climate action before 2020." The Paris Agreement, which was adopted by the 196 Parties to the UNFCCC in December 2015 in the French capital after which it is named, 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. A year ago, the Marrakech Climate Conference concluded with the *Marrakech Action Proclamation, for our climate and sustainable development*, in which the UNFCCC States Parties affirmed their "commitment" to the "full implementation" of the Paris Agreement. Today, 169 Parties have ratified the Agreement.

UN weather agency warns 2017 to be among hottest years ever

As this year's Conference got under way, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO), released its provisional statement on the State of the Climate. "It is very likely that 2017 will be one of the three hottest years on record, with many high-impact events including catastrophic hurricanes and floods, debilitating heatwaves and drought," said the agency. For his part, WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas told delegates in Bonn that the past three years have all been in the top three years in terms of temperature records. "This is part of a long term warming trend," pointing to recent "extraordinary weather," including temperatures topping 50 degrees Celsius in Asia, record-breaking hurricanes in rapid succession in the Caribbean and Atlantic reaching as far as Ireland, devastating monsoon flooding affecting many millions of people and a relentless drought in East Africa. "Wherever we live, we are all vulnerable and need to act," Mr. Bainimarama told delegates, explaining that Fiji is helping build a Grand Coalition for decisive, coordinated action by governments at every level, by civil society, the private sector and all citizens on earth. "That's why we installed an ocean-going Fijian 'drua' canoe in the entrance here to remind everyone of the need to fill its sail with collective determination to make COP23 a success and confront the biggest challenge humanity has faced," he said. Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, reminded the participants that: "We have some very specific goals we must achieve while we are here in Bonn. We expect these negotiations to be the next essential step that ensures that the Paris Agreement's structure is completed, its impacts are strengthened, and its goals achieved. We also need to move forward to fulfil the commitments that are due in 2020. In this regard, finance and mitigation pledges are essential." The Bonn Conference will feature a series of meetings and events, including the high-level segment, on 15 November and 16 November, attended by Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. Mr. Guterres has invited leaders to consider championing six high-impact areas at a special Climate Summit in 2019. These areas are investment in clean technology, maturing carbon pricing, enabling the energy transition, risk mitigation and building resilience, augmenting the contribution of sub-national actors and business and mobilizing climate finance. Among the side events scheduled at COP 23, several will be organized under the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, to show how cities, regions, private sector companies and investors are

trying to implement the Paris Agreement in the areas of energy, water, agriculture, oceans and coastal areas, human settlements, transportation, industry, and forests.

Day 2 at COP23: Indigenous peoples promote solutions as Paris Agreement momentum grows

Day 2: Tuesday, 7 November 2017

Indigenous peoples' wisdom for climate adaptation – Indigenous peoples took center stage at the COP on Tuesday when they made a strong call to be part of the solution to climate change, emphasizing their traditional wisdom and practical knowledge about adaptation methods. "When we speak about sustainable development, we are looking after the management of our resources in a more orderly way," said Janio Sangama, a member of the Kichwa tribe from the region of San Martin in the Peruvian Amazon rainforest. An intention to join Paris—The list of countries joining the Paris Agreement has been growing quickly over the last year, but there were only two countries that had not signed the agreement—Nicaragua and Syria. That changed last month, when Nicaragua joined the Agreement and today, the Syrian representative at the COP intimated, in a plenary session, that Syria also intended to join. At the moment, 169 countries have joined the agreement and the list is growing. Climate solutions—Exhibitions have typically been a mainstay of climate conferences. Companies use the COP to show new ideas and products, many governments have elaborate displays, and organizations raise their visibility. Now, with a greater focus of the conference moving toward action and results, many exhibitions take on greater importance, often showcasing the latest technologies and strategies to deploy in efforts to address climate change. There are exhibits on fusion energy, smart roads, sidewalks that absorb less heat, sensors that provide an early warning system for flash floods. There are groups pressing for reducing meat consumption, forest preservation and organic farming. We'll be visiting some booths in more detail later during these two weeks. A sprawling COP—The distances are vast at the COP, which comprises two zones separated by 1.4 kilometers. The negotiations, the media center, and press conferences rooms are in one zone, named Bula, and exhibitions and side events are in the other, the Bonn Zone. It's about a 20 minute walk or electric shuttle ride, or it takes about five minutes by bicycles, which are provided for free.

Day 3 at COP23: Release of the 2017 Adaption Gap Report

BONN November 8th, 2017 - **Adapting to climate change:** Reducing carbon emissions is the part of the climate change discussion that gets most attention. But equally important is the need to adapt to a new reality. Climate change is happening, and the climate will continue to change, even if all emissions were eliminated tomorrow. A new UN assessment released today, the 2017 Adaptation Gap Report, finds that progress needs to be made towards assessing adaptation at the global level to meet the requirements of the Paris Agreement. The Agreement established the global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal. The report explores the opportunities and challenges associated with assessing adaptation progress at the global level and recommends a framework is needed that can capture the big picture, what is changing, and be flexible as methods improve.

The full report can be found at: <http://www.unenvironment.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report>

Fuel the size of a pineapple: There are several pineapples that adorn the ITER exhibit at the COP23 to demonstrate the amount of fuel which would power a huge multi-nation fusion energy project with no emissions and no radiation waste, and which is now underway in southern France. The functioning fusion reactor, working off a pineapple's worth of fuel, would generate the equivalent of 10,000 tons of coal. The problem is that the 20 billion Euro fusion reactor, now under construction since 2009, will not produce any energy until about 2035.

Sustainable roads—Consider the environmental impacts of a paved road—while people and goods can move easier, the hardened surface prevents water from returning to the ground. That's one reason why a company, Ding Tai Co., is showing off its roads in Bonn—showing that a paved road can breathe, reduce run-off, and recharge groundwater—purified, and reduce the heat-island effect that makes cities so much hotter than its environs.

Momentum—It seems that wherever you are, people are already looking at the next steps. In the case of climate change, the next step is the One Planet Summit, convened by French President Emmanuel Macron on 12 December. It will be, to the day, the two year anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement, and will bring together world leaders. Next September, California will be hosting a conference for non-party stakeholders, then comes COP24 in Katowice, Poland, followed by the 2019 Summit that will be convened by the UN Secretary-General.

Participants at UN conference examine human mobility in an era of climate change

As the number of people displaced worldwide due to climate change-related events continues to grow, the United Nations and its partners are focusing on regional approaches, framed by existing international practice, to respond to the issue of 'climate refugees.' The number of disaster displacements on annual average between 2008 and 2016 amounted to 25.3 million, according to figures released by the Norwegian Refugee Council. The five countries globally that have the highest proportion of their population affected by displacements are all island States: Cuba, Fiji, Philippines, Tonga and Sri Lanka. "During this hurricane season alone for example, we saw the displacement of 1.7 million people in Cuba -- that's the equivalent of 15 per cent of its population," said Camila Minerva, Humanitarian Programme Manager with Oxfam in the Dominican Republic, during a press conference on 'human mobility and climate change' at the UN Climate Conference (COP23), in Bonn, Germany. "The poorest and the most marginalized are five times more likely to be displaced and to remain so for longer time than people in higher income countries and it is increasing with climate change," she added. Mariam Traore, Migration, environment and climate change specialist with the UN Migration Agency (IOM) said that it is also important to remember that the slow onset effect of climate change makes people move and migrate, sometimes in a forced way. "In a country like Bangladesh, we did a survey last year and 40 per cent of the households we interviewed told us that climate change contributed directly to their decision to migrate," she added. In this context, some have suggested to create a climate refugee status, protecting those forced to leave their country because of the impacts of climate change. "The refugee legal status is provided by the 1951 Refugee Convention, which is very clear on what [basis refugee status is conferred], which is basically persecution," said Marine Franck, Programme Officer (climate change), Division of International Protection, in the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "In the context of climate change displacement, there might be cases where there is persecution involved where this refugee status could apply but in most cases, it doesn't," she added. She recalled that in 2011, States had suggested that UNHCR create a new status of refugee for people displaced because of climate change. "But some States were not ready at all for that," she stated. Ms. Franck stressed that this issue of broadening the scope of refugee protection "is not necessarily desirable, because there is a risk of undermining the refugees

fleeing persecution and violent conflict.” Moreover, she explained: “We would need also to renegotiate the Convention and there is no appetite for that from States and it might not be the most effective protection tool.” UNHCR thinks it is better to look at what exists at the regional level and try to have a bottom-up approach with broadening at the regional level using practices that are effective. She mentioned humanitarian protection visas, temporary protection and stay arrangements, as well as migration laws that can provide real protection. “It is much more effective because States are going to look at what their neighbours are doing and may adopt the same kind of procedures, rather than if we adopt a global convention or a new category [...] it might not be easy to negotiate and it is not also sure that States will then implement it properly,” Ms. Franck said.

Day 4 at COP 23: The negotiations in Bonn help implement the Paris Agreement

The work of a COP—A climate conference operates on many levels — there are negotiations, discussions, presentations, press conferences, and exhibition — all aimed at advancing some aspect of the climate agenda. The negotiations themselves take place in a number of settings, ranging from small meeting rooms that allow countries to discuss the fine points at the working level, to larger plenary settings that involve all countries. The negotiations in Bonn are at the point where progress has been slowly made on the rules for implementing the Paris Agreement — the buzz word is about where all the issues land.

Action before 2020 — It really wasn’t envisioned that the Paris Agreement would enter into force so quickly — in less than a year after it was adopted. It was thought that the agreement would enter into force by 2020. Now, just two years later, 169 countries have joined. But a major area of negotiations has been left in limbo — the pre-2020 action agenda. Today, representatives from developing countries said this item needed to be restored to the agenda, citing the urgency for action before 2020 and the unfinished business of several previous COPs. This included the ratification of the Doha amendment to the Kyoto Protocol —which still survives, but after five years, has not entered into force.

Assessing the risk from climate change — It is not possible to say which country is suffering the most from climate change, but clearly, some are suffering more than others. According to the Climate Risk Index, released today from the NGO Germanwatch, a number of developing countries have had to endure repeated losses from storms. In 2016, Haiti, Zimbabwe and Fiji were at the top of the list, all slammed by major storms. They were followed by Sri Lanka, Vietnam and India. Taking a longer view, the hardest hit countries from 1997-2016 were Honduras, Haiti, Myanmar, Nicaragua, and the Philippines. Joshua Wycliffe, Fiji’s Permanent Secretary for Local Government, Housing and Environment said, “we live in a world of change. Documents like the index provide us with a path on how we intervene.” He said when Tropical Cyclone Winston hit Fiji, half the population was displaced. “These storms can wipe economies off.

Climate smart farming — Farmers around the world are increasingly finding that their traditional ideas about when to plant and when to harvest are no longer valid. Climate change has altered the landscape and has asked academia for help in dealing with a whole host of new variables. That is why Cornell University developed some new tools for farming in a climate changed world. The new tools include a water deficit calculator, to help farmers plan or periods of low-rain. It also lets farmers know whether they need to invest in costly irrigation systems. There is a tool that allows farmers to plan when to plant cover crops—a few days difference makes a huge difference in yields. And there are tools to help farmers to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy. The University is also working with farmers in developing countries to improve yields and reduce losses to pests, droughts and pathogens. At present, the forecast is bleak for the total production of 9 out of 10 crops, unless the world employs better farming practices.

Accelerate climate action and raise ambition, urges UN chief

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.

New initiatives in energy, water and agriculture sectors announced as Action Days begin

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

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.

Day 5 at COP23: Global Action Days kick off with SDGs in spotlight

Day 5: Friday, 10 November 2017

Climate action—The climate action agenda has firmly been part of the international dialogue on climate since the 2014 Climate Summit, and even before that, innovative solutions and ideas have been integral components of the climate conferences. Now that the Paris Agreement has been adopted, the action agenda has taken on a new urgency, as it encompasses all the work being taken to actually reduce emissions and build climate resiliency—and which help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Today, the Bonn Climate Conference looked at action on energy, agriculture, and water. A view from above—It was while astronaut Thomas Pesquet spent 196 days at the International Space Station that he realized how fragile the world seemed. At first, he said, there is that awesome window on the world that "space view," but on closer inspection, it was apparent how small and how connected everything was, and how much we need to protect the planet. In his luggage was a copy of the L'Accord de Paris—the Paris Agreement, and he is now urging people to do even more to address climate change. The inconvenience of it all—Al Gore has attended many climate conferences, and he visited the Bonn Climate Conference today with an updated message of urgency and hope that the world will move to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. "I'm gonna show you some slides. That's what I do." The fundamental question he asked was, "do we have to change," and the answer was yes. Unprecedented heatwaves, floods, droughts, extreme weather and increasing numbers of refugees and migrants are starting to have political consequences. But he saw an emerging spirit around the world to tackle climate change, noting dramatic investment

increases in renewable energy in countries such as Algeria, Chile and India. “We are approaching a moment in time. We are approaching a tipping point,” adding that the Bonn Conference needed to provide more momentum. Investing in water—Global financing to prioritize sustainable water management must triple to US \$295 billion per year to meet Paris targets, said representatives of the international water community who co-signed a “nature-based solution declaration” on Friday, the COP’s Water Action Day. As 40 per cent of the world’s population could face water shortages by 2050, what start as local water management issues have global impact as resources become scarce and migration accelerates. “Involving both women and men in decision making and integrated water resources initiatives leads to better sustainability, governance and efficiency,” said Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, President of the Women for Water Partnership, and Co-Chair of Water Scarcity in Agriculture Platform (WASAG). Building national climate plans—Central to the success of the Paris Agreement are the nationally determined contributions—known as NDCs in climate speak parlance—of every country. But for many countries, putting these plans together, and then implementing them, requires assistance. That is why UNDP is devoting its space at the Bonn Climate Conference to discussions on the NDCs. And it’s not so easy. There are questions to be answered, what to invest in, whether, or how, to scale up certain initiatives, and what would be the financial requirements. UNDP experts say that governments are looking for “impact investment,” but determining what works best is sometimes counterintuitive. For example, investing in small scale clean energy renewable energy projects might not yield the greater emission reductions or income benefits—often investments in social development can yield far more value. In Burundi, it is estimated that a \$50,000 development investment had delivered \$181,000 in benefits, annually, in better health and employment.

Day 6 of COP23: Non-state actors show commitment to climate

Day 6: Saturday, 11 November

Non-state actors—Just outside the perimeter of the COP—the zone under the jurisdiction of the United Nations—a tent called “America’s Pledge” brought together hundreds of COP23 participants determined to show that support for climate action in the United States was still strong at the national, state, and city levels. California Governor Jerry Brown said, “We’re doing real stuff in California. States have real power.” Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said the tent was the first of its kind and was inspired by the fact that this was the first COP where the US did not have a pavilion. He said the non-state actors who committed to climate action accounted for half of the US economy and would represent the world’s third largest economy if it were a country of its own. The non-state actors are requesting that they be more fully integrated into the COP process and show that they are taking real climate action. Brown said the group was releasing a report on progress so far “so the world can hold us accountable if we are going to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Demonstrators disrupted Brown’s speech, claiming that the governor was doing too little too slowly to eliminate fossil fuel automobiles and the production of fossil fuels. Referring to the demonstrators, Brown said, “This is very California.” He added that the eliminating 32 million vehicles overnight would lead to economic disaster. “We need to move from noise to real action. We need to move to decarbonization.” Cities stepping up—Representatives of cities, settlements and urban organizations demonstrated their commitment to the Paris Agreement with the launch of new initiatives aimed at building better, more sustainable cities, including decarbonizing the construction sector. “There’s a movement afoot,” said Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto, at COP23 promoting Climate Mayors, a growing group of US mayors who have pledged to meet Paris Agreement targets, or in the case of Peduto—exceed them. Peduto said Pittsburgh, which once was a major steel producer, was a city with a future, and was now working to promote new technologies, including electric cars. “The next time you call an Uber in Pittsburgh, it might be a self-driving car. He added that “time goes in one direction. If you are waiting for mills to reopen, you will be left in the past. I have one message: Join us.”

Elsewhere, UN-Habitat Executive Director Joan Clos urged for better urbanization management at the launch event for the new global initiative Planners for Climate Action, which will bring together global, regional and national associations of urban planners to amplify their voice in building sustainable cities. We want to prevent urbanization from going too far down the wrong direction, he said. Renewables in Kasese, Uganda—Kasese Mayor Godfrey Baluku Kime says his city is well on its way to meeting the goal of becoming 100 percent renewable by 2020. The city, which lies near snow capped mountains, relies heavily on kerosene to power households. It makes sense in Uganda, which he said receives 12 hours of sunshine a day, compared with Bonn, where he has yet to see the sun. So far, a programme has installed 17,000 solar panels, paid for by residents and the government. "It is important not to squeeze the resident," he said, adding that the programme had generated income and had improved lives for people living in rural areas.

New efforts announced at COP23 for oceans, transport, cities

Cities, the transport sector and ocean advocates today announced a number of new initiatives to push for further, faster climate action, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23) in Bonn, Germany.

These announcements were made under the auspices of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, created last year to spur action by state and non-state sectors to help implement the Paris Agreement on climate change.

New Transport Decarbonisation Alliance

In a major new partnership, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Costa Rica and the Paris Process on Mobility and Climate (PPMC) launched the Transport Decarbonisation Alliance to stimulate greater political leadership in the sector. Transport contributes about one quarter of all energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and about 15-17 per cent of the entire spread of human CO₂ emissions. "More ambitious and coordinated action on transport is required to deliver on the Paris Agreement," said José Mendes, Deputy Minister for Environment of Portugal. Six new voluntary sector initiatives were also introduced in Bonn to address specific aspects of transport and climate change. These include: the 'below50' (expanding the global market for the world's most sustainable fuels); the EcoMobility Alliance (cities committed to sustainable transport); EV100 (accelerating the transition to electromobility); Walk 21 (valuing and delivering more walkable communities); the Global Strategy for Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles; and the Transforming Urban Mobility Initiative (accelerating implementation of sustainable urban transport development and mitigation of climate change).

Cities and communities speed coordinated climate action

Similarly, global cities and communities also announced new efforts Saturday to coordinate their climate action commitments to deliver bigger and faster results together. "Local and regional governments are making commitments that will help national Governments close the gap between current national commitments and the emissions reductions needed to achieve the Paris Agreement targets", said Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, a global network of more than 1,500 cities, towns and regions working together for sustainable development. Urban areas account for around two-thirds of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from global energy use. Their overall contribution to total greenhouse gas emissions is estimated at between 37 and 49 per cent globally, depending on base assumptions of data used. Also at a press conference at COP 23, the Mayor of city of Pittsburgh (in the United States), William Peduto, announced that 367 American mayors have agreed to be "part of the Paris Agreement no matter what our Federal Government did". "It's going to happen at the local level", he said. The new initiatives announced include efforts ICLEI and the global NDC Partnership (a coalition of countries and institutions working to mobilize support for climate goals and enhancing sustainable development) to design, implement and align climate action strategies across all levels of governments. Similarly, the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (a group of some 40 organizations working to mobilize investment in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure

in cities and urban areas internationally) is mapping available finance to match known infrastructure projects – a critical requirement to help local governments identify funding.

Threat of ocean warming and ocean acidification

Also Saturday at COP 23, a new declaration was signed to strengthen global response to climate change impacts on oceans and coastal zones. Oceans are the planet's largest carbon sink, a major regulating force of global climate, and fundamental to the survival and well-being of humanity. "Oceans have featured little in the UN climate negotiations to date, and yet they are not only important for planetary survival but also offer great opportunities for innovation towards a low-carbon blue economy", said Biliana Cicin-Sain, President of the Global Ocean Forum. Isabel Torres de Noronha, Executive Secretary of the Future Ocean Alliance, a non-governmental organization, in an interview with UN News, underscored that ocean acidification "might put at risk not only ecosystems but also many economic activities and food security of coastal populations." Among initiatives at national level, she highlighted one from Viet Nam about strengthening the coastline by planting forests of mangroves.

UN climate conference recognizes the role of women in climate action

With the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23), in Bonn, Germany, entering its final week of negotiations, the Fiji Presidency today announced the Gender Action Plan, highlighting the role of women in climate action.

At a press conference, President of COP 23 and Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama, announced that the States Parties had finalized the plan. "This recognizes the role of women in climate action," he said. "It is about integration of gender into all the work around climate policy – both nationally and internationally," added Nazhat Shameen Khan, the Chief Negotiator for the COP 23 Presidency. Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres will be attending the high-level segment of COP 23, on 15-16 November.

New national and corporate climate action on forests

Also Sunday, countries and corporations announced new initiatives to cut emissions from forest use and establish sustainable forestry management programmes. The efforts include an Ecuadorean initiative to reduce 15 million tons of CO2 emissions in the forest sector; a commitment to deforestation-free commodities by Walmart; Mars Inc.'s new policy to reduce their carbon footprint 27 per cent by 2025 and 67 per cent by 2050 through addressing deforestation throughout their corporate value chain; and Gabon's National Park Service efforts to combat illegal logging. "The forests have this incredible ability to store carbon and we have underinvested in that," said Inger Andersen, Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), at a press conference. "Protecting and restoring the forests is absolutely key to achieving the Paris Agreement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

Hundreds of companies commit to climate action

Also today in Bonn, the industry sector said that it is set to deliver much of the emissions reductions needed to achieve the Paris Agreement goal but added that closer national and international policy and implementation strategy partnerships together with governments will help business take further, faster action. "Industry is taking action on climate change like no other period in history," said Peter Bakker, President and CEO of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, a global, business leaders-led organization of over 200 leading businesses working on sustainable development). "The transition to the low-carbon economy is inevitable, and business will continue to implement the solutions necessary for fulfilling the Paris Agreement," he added. Since 2015, over 600 companies with combined revenues of more than \$15 trillion have made over 1,000 commitments to climate action

through 'We Mean Business,' a global non-profit coalition. Many are going 100 percent renewable, are implementing science-based targets and are collaborating across sectors through the Low Carbon Technology Partnership initiative (LCTPi).

Local, regional leaders sign Commitment for faster climate action

Local and regional leaders from around the world signed the Bonn-Fiji Commitment Sunday, pledging action to deliver on the Paris Agreement. Cities are responsible for as much as 70 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels used for energy and transport, and with more than half the global population living in urban centres and this figure expected to approach two-thirds by 2050, the Bonn-Fiji Commitment pushes efforts to advance sustainable urban development. The Commitment encompasses 19 initiatives, including The European Covenant of Mayors and Compact of Mayors joining forces to create the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy – the largest coalition of over 7,400 cities from six continents and 121 countries to reduce emissions and make societies and economies resilient to climate change. Similarly, the UN World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the UN Climate Change secretariat (UNFCCC) and in partnership with the Fijian Presidency launched an initiative to protect people living in small island developing States from the health impacts of climate change. The vision is that, by 2030, all small island developing States will have health systems that are resilient to climate change.

Initiative to increase insurance coverage for climate-related disasters launched at UN conference

On the heels of one of the worst – and most costly – Atlantic hurricane seasons on record, a global initiative was launched Wednesday at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP23), in Bonn, Germany, with the aim of providing insurance to hundreds of millions of vulnerable people by 2020 and to increase the resilience of developing countries against the impacts of climate change.

In 2017, extreme weather events are estimated to have caused more than \$200 billion worth of damage worldwide, as hurricanes, droughts and rising sea levels devastated vulnerable communities with increased frequency and intensity. In the face of skyrocketing costs, new forms of financial protection have become an increasingly urgent part of the climate change discussion. The InsuResilience Global Partnership is a major scaling-up of an initiative started by the G7 in 2015 under the German Presidency. It aims at meeting the pledge of providing cover and support to an extra 400 million vulnerable people by 2020. The Global Partnership now brings together G20 countries in partnership with the so called 'V20' nations, a group of 49 of the most vulnerable countries including small islands like Fiji, which holds the Presidency of COP23. "The Global Partnership is a practical response to the needs of those who suffer loss because of climate change," said the COP23 President and Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama. This announcement on climate risk insurance was made a day before the high-level segment of COP23, which Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, are expected to attend. Thomas Silberhorn, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, announced support of 125 million dollar for the new Global Partnership as part of the launch. This follows the £30 million commitment to the initiative made by the British Government in July 2017. "Climate risk insurance is a response to the simple fact that extreme weather events are constantly increasing in number and intensity, and also a response to our experience that the international community and the countries affected by extreme weather events tend to really act after those incidents occurred and they tend to come too late and to intervene not significantly enough," Mr. Silberhorn told a press conference. "So our intention is to act more preemptively, to act in time, and to act decisively in order to reduce the impact of extreme weather events. Insurance is one tool to address this challenge," he added.

A partnership for climate and disaster risk finance and insurance solutions

The Global Partnership supports data and risk analysis, technical assistance and capacity building according to countries needs and priorities, solutions design of concrete risk finance

and insurance solutions, smart support for the implementation for such schemes and monitoring and evaluation efforts. "This new and higher ambition initiative represents one shining example of what can be delivered when progressive governments, civil society and the private sector join hands with creativity and determination to provide solutions," said Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change secretariat (UNFCCC). The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), for example, is being supported with the help of 'InsuResilience.' The most recent example of support was in September 2017, when more than \$55 million was paid out to 10 Caribbean countries within 14 days of hurricanes Irma and Maria, which left an arc of destruction across the region. The money was used in various ways, for example, to quickly buy urgently needed medicines and to build emergency shelters for the people affected by the storms. In Zambia, InsuResilience supports the NWK Agri-Services cotton company, which offers direct weather and life insurance to small contract farmers. In 2015, some 52,000 farmers decided to buy insurance. Following a major drought in 2016, more than 23,000 farmers received payments.

COP23: UN chief urges more ambition, leadership and partnerships on climate action

Addressing the United Nations Climate Conference (COP23) in Bonn, Germany, on Wednesday, Secretary-General António Guterres called for more ambition, more leadership and more partnerships to tackle climate change.

"Our duty – to each other and to future generations – is to raise ambition," said Mr. Guterres at the opening of the high-level segment of COP23, which was also attended by Heads of State and Government, including President of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama, who is also the President of COP23. "We need to do more on five ambition action areas: emissions, adaptation, finance, partnerships and leadership," the Secretary-General added. The Bonn Conference, which opened on 6 November 2017, is taking place one year after the entry into force of the Paris Climate Agreement. The Agreement, which was adopted by the 196 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 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. Today, 170 Parties have ratified the treaty. Regarding emissions reductions, the UN chief urged countries "to use the 2020 revision of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to close the 2030 emissions gap." He also stressed how essential climate mitigation is, calling for adaptation measures and strengthening resilience. The Green Climate Fund can play a catalytic role in this regard. He appealed to its members, especially donor nations, to reinvigorate engagement with that vital finance mechanism. As greater ambition on emissions, adaptation and resilience "is inextricably linked to funding," the Secretary-General stressed the need "to mobilize the agreed \$100 billion annually for developing countries." "We must stop making bets on an unsustainable future that will place savings and societies at risk," he added, stressing that "if we add the economic benefits of avoiding the devastation of climate change impacts, gross domestic product (GDP) in 2050 would soar by 5 per cent." "The world should adopt a simple rule: If big infrastructure projects aren't green, they shouldn't be given the green light. Otherwise we will be locked into bad choices for decades to come. Investing in climate-friendly development is where the smart money is needed," Mr. Guterres said. The Secretary-General stressed that more ambition required action coalitions across all key sectors and by all actors. "We must engage all actors – national, regional and local governments, philanthropists and investors and consumers – in the transformation to a low-emission economy," he said. As for political leadership, Mr. Guterres encouraged countries to be bold in their deliberations and decisions in Bonn and at home. "Show wisdom in investing in the opportunities of the future. Show compassion in caring what kind of world we build for our children," he stated. Also addressing the COP23 High-Level segment, the President of the UN General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, reminded participants that "the decisions we make today will affect not only us – but also those who come after." He added: "If we hand over a planet with an uncertain future, history will not forgive us." For his part, Mr. Guterres welcomed a series of summits and conferences on climate change which are scheduled ahead of the UN Climate Summit in

September 2019, including the 'One Planet summit' to be convened by France next month and focusing on financing, a gathering in California, bringing together non-State actors, and the COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018.

Climate engineering is risky, but should be explored, experts say at UN conference

Climate engineering, or climate intervention, is risky but needs to be explored as a supplement – not as a 'Plan B' – to greenhouse gas emissions reduction, said experts at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP23), in Bonn, Germany.

Climate engineering, also referred to as geoengineering, is the deliberate and large-scale intervention in the climate system with measures including carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere or solar radiation management. "We can do a lot, we have to do a lot, we have to try much harder at cutting our emissions, but there will remain certain emissions, especially in the land use sector, which are not going away. So we actually need to start talking about this removal of greenhouse gases inevitably," said Matthias Honegger, research scientist with the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, at a press conference. Different approaches are being discussed. Some already exist, like planting trees. Other ideas include dispersing certain minerals in the oceans to enhance the growth of algae, which then as they sink to the ocean floor, would create a net flux of carbon from the atmosphere into the oceans. "Business as usual is a little worrying," said Dr. Hugh Hunt, from the Department of Engineering at Cambridge University. "The concept of not doing anything is full of danger. Now the concept of cooling the planet is full of danger as well." "We need to have full-on public engagement, full-on societal involvement. The reason is that the risks of climate change are huge, the risks of doing nothing are huge; but the risks of geoengineering are huge as well. We've got to explore those risks, because who knows, we may end up entering a very risky world without understanding it," he added. "Geoengineering risks are not well understood and need to be explored."

Stratospheric aerosol injection

Due to the great uncertainties over effectiveness and side effects of climate engineering – including the risk of disrupting natural systems – experts think that there is a need to discuss climate engineering governance, especially as it relates to stratospheric aerosol injection. Stratospheric aerosol injection consists of injecting sulfate aerosols into the stratosphere with aircraft or balloons to create a global dimming effect. "This technology is absolutely terrifying. We may actually need it, but then, who do we want to decide. That's where this society-wide discussion has to take place," said Janos Pasztor, Executive Director of the Carnegie Climate Geoengineering Governance Initiative (C2G2), and former UN senior climate advisor. "It would require a level of international cooperation that we have not yet seen." "Who will decide whether we should make use of stratospheric aerosol injection and when that decision should take place? [...] Who will make that decision on behalf of the world? And then how far do we turn the thermostat of the global air conditioning system [...] to cool the planet?" he said. "There are issues: the more temperature you want to reduce the higher the chance there will be negative impact and the higher the chance that some of these impacts will not be the same across different geographical zones. You might end up in a situation where some people benefit from the reduced temperature but some people would have negative impacts. What do you do with those people? How do you compensate them? How do you take care of them?" he added.

Mr. Pasztor concluded that the highest priority should remain the gas emission reduction. "But we have to consider these other options, as supplements, not as a 'Plan B,'" he warned.

Day 11 at COP 23: New efforts announced at Bonn Climate Conference to implement climate action

Day 11: Thursday, 16 November:

An Implementation COP—The Bonn Climate Conference has been discussed as a roll-up-your-sleeves kind of COP. It has been described as an implementation COP where decisions are being made on the nitty gritty details that will determine how the climate process is moving forward. Now that the Conference is winding down, it appears that parties are heading toward agreement. Ecuador, which is representing a group of 134 developing countries, reported progress on many of the outstanding issues in the negotiations. Lead negotiator and Ecuadorian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility María Fernanda Espinosa said progress had been made on the creation of the platform for indigenous peoples to exchange knowledge and practices regarding adaptation that would start in 2018. Progress had also been made on the issue of loss and damage, which refers to people who are faced with situations where adaptation is no longer possible. Areas where progress has been less than stellar center on the means of implementation. Developed countries had promised that they would ramp up climate financing to US\$100 billion a year by 2020. Developing countries, however, are not seeing many signs that this money will materialize. Another sticking point during the COP, revolved around commitments made for the period prior to 2020. Remarking that it was the 20 year anniversary of the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, she said “no one is talking about Kyoto. We haven’t had its birthday party yet”. Not a sunny COP—It was gray and drizzly for days, but the sun finally did emerge for short spurts. The emerging science on climate change has also cast a shadow: emissions are rising again after staying flat for three years. Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are at an all-time high, and global temperatures are continuing their upward march. But against all this news, there is an air of steadfast optimism about the realistic solutions out there, that can help us address climate change. The reasons for optimism: For one, there is no shortage of sunshine in most of the world and the prospects for solar energy appear unlimited. With progress on storage batteries, renewable energies could continue their exponential growth. Renewables, right now, represent a small but developing energy sector, growing by 5.4 percent every year. Although still relatively small in the big picture, scientists here in Bonn contend that this kind of growth will lead to a sharp upward swing in the use of renewables. The International Energy Agency, which maps these trends, says in 2016, growth in solar photovoltaic capacity was larger than for any other form of generation, and that since 2010 costs of new solar PV have come down by 70%, wind by 25% and battery costs by 40%. It also found that there was a growing electrification of energy: in 2016, spending by the world’s consumers on electricity approached parity with their spending on oil products. The road ahead – And already people are looking at the road ahead: UN Secretary-General António Guterres laid out the path forward during his speech to the opening of the high-level segment on Wednesday, where he stressed the urgency for increasing ambition on climate change. He listed five ambition areas: emissions, adaptation, finance, partnerships and leadership. These areas will find a thread through the One World Summit in Paris next month to the California Summit for non-party actors in San Francisco next September. Then there will be a pivotal COP Climate Conference in Katowice, Poland, and a Climate Summit in 2019 convened by the Secretary-General. NGOs looking ahead – NGOs attending the Bonn Climate Conference are looking forward to making a difference right after the COP. Hoda Baraka of 350.org said “the science is clear, we know what we need to do, and we need governments stepping up and making real commitments.” Dyana Jaye from Virginia, USA said she got involved in climate action because she was so angry about the US announcement to pull out from the Paris Agreement, and is working to make climate change matter in the 2018 elections. “We need to make politicians stand with the people. ” Other NGOs are planning actions a round the world: here in the Rhineland in Germany, where the objective is to close local coal mines; as well as in the Philippines, where the fight is against coal—and action is being contemplated at the IMF meeting next year in Bali.

Day 12 at COP 23: The Bonn Climate Conference wraps up with action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Day 12: Friday, 17 November:

The Bonn Climate Conference and the Sustainable Development Goals

The Bonn Climate Conference produced many new climate action initiatives, commitments and partnerships. Announced by governments, business and civil society representatives, the announced actions cover many of the areas covered by the Sustainable Development Goals—such as energy, water, agriculture, oceans and coastal areas, human settlements, transportation, industry, and forests. Climate finance and climate resilience were also at the center of the discussions at the conference. Sometimes it seems that climate change is its own issue that is being addressed in its own forum, quite separate from other issues, such as eliminating poverty, promoting prosperity, gender equality and human rights. Often, it is the big geopolitical stories that dominate the headlines, such as the impacts of the US announced intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, but often hidden from view is that the world is moving to take climate action. Climate action is often disguised as action in other areas as well, so we thought we would walk through the Sustainable Development Goals to see what we picked up on new trends and thinking.

Goal 1—No poverty—Climate change, without a doubt, is having the biggest impact on the poorest. In Bonn, greater attention was paid to the connection between climate change and the increasing numbers of climate refugees and migrants who are moving due to water scarcity, land degradation, depleted fisheries, and conflicts, all exacerbated by climate change. There is also a major focus on the most vulnerable, who suffer the most from the increasing number of extreme weather events. A major insurance initiative to help the most vulnerable received a boost here in Bonn. There was also a greater awareness of the need to link national climate plans with national sustainable development plans.

Goal 2—No hunger—Climate change is increasingly impacting food security—production of key staples around the world is declining— and agriculture was a major action area in Bonn. As demand for food is up around the world, largely driven by population growth, there are increased efforts to help farmers produce more food creating while less greenhouse gases. Agriculture accounts for about a quarter of all emissions. Consequently, there was an emphasis in Bonn on “low-carbon livestock,” improving soil conditions, reducing waste, and reducing meat consumption—and bringing new techniques and information to poor rural farmers. The Conference addressed areas of action on soil, livestock, nutrient and water management, adaptation and on the food security and socio-economic impacts of climate change across the agriculture sectors.

Goal 3—Good Health and Well-being—Actor and former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was the most visible messenger on the climate-health connection, focusing on the World Health Organization (WHO) reports that show that air pollution causes more than six million premature deaths every year. The solution to air pollution corresponds to the solution for reducing emissions: reduce use of fossil fuels, and switch to cleaner cooking fuels. Another health issue that figured prominently in discussions in Bonn included the growing threat of vector-borne diseases, such as the Zika virus.

Goal 4—Quality Education—While the SDG goal is about all education, the Bonn Conference focused on the need for more climate education. Education Day here focused on the growing integration of climate awareness into curricula, as well as the need for greater science literacy and an understanding of the science of climate change.

Goal 5—Gender equality—After years of negotiations, countries agreed on a Gender Action Plan, a plan that calls for greater focus on issues of concern to women, and to ensure that more women are part of the process that historically has been male dominated. Still, while gender issues were mainstreamed into a wide range of events, many of the hundreds of panel discussions that took place at the Conference were still dominated by men .

Goal 6—Water and Sanitation—The majority of national climate plans with an adaptation component which have been submitted under the Paris Climate Change Agreement prioritize action on water, yet financing would need to triple to 255 billion euros (about USD295 billion) per year to meet such targets. Water tends to be a local issue but consequences of its unwise management have global impact. Around 40% of the world’s population will face water

shortages by 2050, accelerating migration and triggering conflict, while some regions could lose up to 6% of their economic output, unless it is better managed. The European Investment Bank announced that they will provide US \$75 million for a new US\$405 million investment programme by the Water Authority of Fiji. The scheme will strengthen resilience of water distribution and wastewater treatment following Cyclone Winston, the world's second strongest storm ever recorded, which hit Fiji in February 2016.

Goal 7—Affordable Clean Energy—Discussions on energy dominated the Conference. The news is mixed, with the use of renewable energy continuing to grow, and investments in renewables continuing to far outpace investments in fossil fuels, particularly in developing countries. Renewables are also having a greater impact in communities not served by the grid, and is replacing kerosene-lamp lighting in places like Kasese, Uganda. But fossil fuel use is still rising—and are causing emissions to rise this year after holding steady for three years. Ending, or at least sharply reducing, the use of coal continues to be a major objective for many NGOs, and many governments as well. Brazil and 18 other countries launched an initiative to promote clean biofuels in Bonn.

Goal 8—Decent Work and Economic Growth—For a long time, and even today, there is an argument that taking action on climate change would wreck the economy and cost jobs. But the opposite is happening, as countries have found that they could decouple economic growth from more intensive fossil-fueled use. More job opportunities are now in renewable energy than in fossil fuel, and countries—and local governments—used Bonn to show how there are greater economic opportunities in the green, low carbon economy.

Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure—Greening infrastructure is a major area where action can reduce emissions. Buildings, in particular, are a major source of emissions and greening buildings has been a major focus of discussions here in Bonn. Transportation, which is responsible for 12 percent of global emissions, had its own day here in Bonn. The Conference itself employed a fleet of electric buses, shuttles, electric cards, and bicycles (the quickest way between two points here), emphasizing the need for sustainable transport. The focus of discussions here was on the decarbonization of the transport sector.

Goal 10—Reduced inequalities—One of the hallmarks of the negotiations over climate change is the inherent inequalities between rich and poor, developing and developed countries, and those who are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including women, persons with disabilities and indigenous people. Much of the work on building resilience discussed in Bonn, including initiatives on insurance, are aimed at assisting the most vulnerable.

Goal 11—Sustainable Cities and Communities – The role of cities and communities as major actors in climate efforts continued to grow in Bonn. Urban areas account for around two-thirds of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from global energy use. Their overall contribution to total greenhouse gas emissions is estimated at between 37% and 49% globally, depending on base assumptions of data used. Industry sectors connected to human settlements have a major impact. Buildings, for example, are responsible for some 40% of global GHG emissions yet are an essential element for countries to achieve their NDCs. 132 of the NDCs submitted explicitly mention the building sector. If these NDC pledges were achieved in addition to existing action, about 60% of buildings-related CO2 emissions would be covered. However, nearly one-third of NDCs mentioning buildings do not indicate specific actions on how to achieve their ambition.

Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production—It's fundamental that to make the point about being green, you have to walk the talk. COP23 in Bonn is the first UN Climate Change Conference to receive official certification for eco-friendly performance. All goals and measures were documented in the environmental statement, then assessed on-site over several days by environmental verifiers and subsequently validated. Such measures included waste avoidance and strict waste separation, climate-friendly catering, excellent local public transport, climate-neutral shuttle services and environmentally sound and reusable materials

also for the temporary structures. Energy supply and water consumption are also among the areas to be reviewed in the follow-up.

Goal 13—Climate Action—That’s what the Bonn conference was all about.

Goal 14—Life Below Water—The role that oceans play in climate change rarely receives top billing, but with a COP president from a small island developing country, that changed in Bonn. Oceans, after all, absorb most of the excess carbon dioxide generated by emissions, and have been subject to warming, rising sea levels, loss of biodiversity, acidification, and coral bleaching. The Fijian Presidency proposed the Ocean Pathway that calls for affirming the call for action from the UN Ocean Conference, calls on countries to insert oceans into their national climate plans, making oceans a UNFCCC agenda item, and mobilizing resources for ocean action.

Goal 15—Life on Land—There were two main areas of focus in Bonn that relate to this Goal, on reducing deforestation and preventing land degradation. Last year, forests equal to the size of New Zealand disappeared. In Bonn, initiatives from Ecuador, Gabon, Walmart and Mars Inc. were announced that included An Ecuadorean initiative to reduce 15 million tonnes of CO2 emissions in the forest sector, and a commitment to deforestation-free commodities by Walmart. Mars Inc. announced a new policy to reduce their carbon footprint 27% by 2025 and 67% by 2050 by addressing deforestation throughout their corporate value chain.

Goal 16—Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions—Climate change is playing an increasingly destabilizing role, as intensified droughts and floods are changing the landscape, and with major ecosystems disintegrating—such as the disappearance of much of Lake Chad, more people are on the move. Climate justice has been a major topic of concern, articulated mostly by civil society. But more countries are recognizing the need to build strong institutions as they develop their national climate plans—NDCs—and national plans to meet the SDGs.

Goal 17—Partnerships for the Goals—One of the most oft-repeated phrases delivered at the Bonn Conference was that governments cannot address climate change on their own. They require the involvement and engagement of civil society, business and finance. Building partnerships is at the core of the action agenda and fair amount of activity at the Bonn Conference involved groups of participants meeting in hallways discussing plans to move ahead.

UN conference closes with renewed urgency for greater ambition to tackle climate change

The United Nations Climate Conference (COP23) wrapped up on Friday in Bonn, Germany, with delegations expressing a renewed sense of urgency and a need for greater ambition to tackle climate change.

Participants focused on how to maintain momentum two years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement on climate change in the context of the recent announcement by the United States of its decision to withdraw from the accord. At COP23, cities and local governments, including American cities and states, intensified their push to achieve the goals set out in Paris. The Conference, which ran from 6 to 17 November, was chaired by Fiji, an island State particularly affected by the impacts of climate change. The Fiji Presidency announced an agreement on a Gender Action Plan, highlighting the role of women in climate action. Apart from negotiations among Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), several new climate action initiatives, commitments and partnerships were announced by States and non-State actors in the areas of energy, water, agriculture, oceans and coastal areas, human settlements, transportation, industry, and forests. Climate finance and climate resilience were also at the center of the discussions at the conference. More than 20 countries, including the Canada, Finland, France, Mexico, and the United Kingdom, launched a new global coal alliance

aimed at achieving the rapid phase-out of existing traditional coal power and at placing a moratorium on any new traditional coal power stations without operational carbon capture and storage. Businesses and other non-government partners have in turn made commitments to focus on powering their operations without coal. The 19 Member countries of the 'Biofuture Platform,' including Brazil, China, Egypt, France, India, Morocco, Mozambique, also announced on Thursday formal agreement on the development of targets for biofuels and to construct an action plan to achieve them. "Sustainable biofuels can provide solutions to the energy transport nexus. This partnership offers us that chance,"said Rachel Kyte, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and CEO, Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All). Among other initiatives announced during the Conference, a global initiative was launched Tuesday with the aim of providing insurance to hundreds of millions of vulnerable people by 2020 and to increase the resilience of developing countries against the impacts of climate change. The 'InsuResilience' Global Partnership is a major scaling-up of an initiative started by the G7 in 2015 under the German Presidency. The Conference took place one year after the entry into force of the Paris Agreement. The Agreement, which was adopted by the 196 Parties to the UNFCCC in December 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. Today, 170 Parties have ratified the treaty. The Conference, which was attended by some 27.000, took place in a sobering context of alarming scientific reports of climatic changes. A week before the opening of the Conference, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) announced that the levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere surged at "record-breaking speed" to new highs in 2016. COP23 will be followed by a series of summits and conferences on climate change which are scheduled ahead of the UN Climate Summit in September 2019, including the 'One Planet summit' to be convened by France next month and focusing on financing, a gathering in California, bringing together non-State actors, and the COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018. Brazil has offered to host COP25 in 2019.

European Union

BUDGET

EU budget 2018 approved: support for youth, growth, security

For next year's budget, MEPs have secured more support for unemployed young people and additional funding for SMEs, research programmes and Erasmus. Commitment appropriations for 2018 total €160.1 billion, and payment appropriations €144.7 billion.

On the heels of the Council's formal approval of the conciliation agreement with Parliament on the 2018 budget, Parliament approved the budget by 295 votes to 154, with 197 abstentions. It was then signed into law by President Antonio Tajani.

Youth, growth and jobs

Parliament reversed the Council's €750 million cuts in the area of "growth and jobs", and secured an increase for the Youth Employment Initiative of €116.7 million in commitment appropriations, raising the total to €350 million, to help young people desperately seeking a job. Furthermore, MEPs succeeded in securing new resources, on top of the Commission's budget proposal, for programmes they consider key to boosting growth and jobs, namely Horizon 2020 (research programmes, an increase of €110 million) Erasmus+, (an additional €24 million) and COSME (support for SMEs, up by €15 million).

Refugee and migration crisis, cutting funds for Turkey

Parliament managed to boost the Commission's draft budget for agencies with security-related tasks: Europol (gets an additional €3.7 million and 10 new posts) and Eurojust (receives €1.8 million more and 5 more posts). To continue tackling the migration crisis, the European Asylum Support Office receives an increase of €5 million. Similarly, Parliament increased the budget heading by €80 million (on top of the draft budget) for the EU's external actions on migration challenges, which include actions in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods as well as the Western Balkans. Concerning Turkey, MEPs decided to cut pre-accession funds by €105 million (with a further €70 million in commitments put in reserve), in response to the deteriorating situation in relation to democracy, rule of law and human rights.

Agriculture and climate protection

Parliament's negotiating team obtained €34 million in additional support for young farmers to reduce youth unemployment in rural areas. Also, funds to support agricultural practices which benefit the climate and environment were increased by €95 million.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Brexit: MEPs agree on key conditions for approving UK withdrawal agreement

MEPs agree to allocate 100 million euros to support civilian tasks performed by the military in third countries by beefing up the EU fund for stability and peace.

MEPs approved the informal deal clinched by Parliament and Council negotiators last month (473 votes to 163, with 7 abstentions), which for the first time, will allow the EU Fund for Stability and Peace, which covers projects in 70 countries, to finance the military in partner countries to deliver development activities. Support for the military has until now always been excluded, even though in some cases it is the only body capable of restoring security and basic services. However, this funding will only be possible if the partner country and the EU agree that the military are key to preserving peace or overcoming a crisis and civilian forces are deemed not able to cope with the challenge. Training, mentoring and advising military forces in countries outside the EU on topics such as human rights or protecting women and children, as well as the provision of non-lethal equipment or infrastructure, such as IT systems or hospitals, will now be eligible for EU support. Under no conditions can EU support be given to building up

foreign armies, buying weapons or training in combat techniques. MEPs secured a commitment to keep the Parliament duly informed about the implementation of the new rules, and asked the Commission to assess the impact and effectiveness of the EU external assistance fund by June 2020. They also convinced the Council and the Commission not to use EU development money to finance new tasks, but to use other sources available under the EU foreign affairs budget.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Helping people with disabilities: MEPs advocate positive discrimination

The EU and its member states should step up their efforts to put the European disability strategy commitments fully into practice, urge MEPs in a resolution.

The resolution assesses the workings of the Commission's European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and lists key actions in its eight priority areas: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health and external action. People with disabilities have the right to equal treatment, to live independently and to be full members of society, but in spite of a high number of programmes and laws, they are still not enjoying their rights in full. Priority measures to be taken by the EU Commission and/or the member states include:

- .making the 112 emergency number fully accessible,
- .ensuring that public spaces are fully accessible in all member states,
- .introducing positive discrimination, like a quota for persons with disabilities for jobs in the public and private sectors,
- .giving special attention to women and girls with disabilities, as they often face double discrimination,
- .ensuring that young people with disabilities can take part fully in EU initiatives such as Erasmus+, the Youth Guarantee and European Solidarity Corps, and
- .training for educational staff to support persons with more complex needs.

Enforcing EU laws

MEPs also call on the member states to apply all accessibility-related legislation in full (including the audio-visual media services directive, web accessibility directive and transport legislation). Parliament hopes that the European Accessibility Act will be passed swiftly and urges the European Council to break the deadlock in talks on a horizontal anti-discrimination directive.

Obligations of EU institutions

The EU institutions should ensure that their websites are in line with web accessibility guidelines, MEPs say. All their public meetings should be made accessible, for example by providing sign language interpretation, speech to text captioning and documents in braille. The resolution also gives the Commission some guidance on an effective disability strategy for 2020-2030, which, they say, should be reflected in all EU legislation and the European Semester process.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

MEPs vote to expand the use of an online VAT payment system for businesses which would slash compliance costs and deliver billions more to member states.

MEPs have thrown their weight -- by 540 votes to 30 votes, with 68 abstentions -- behind a proposal to expand the use of the "mini one-stop shop" (MOSS), currently used to calculate and collect VAT on e-goods, telecoms and broadcast services functioning across borders. The proposal is to broaden the use of the MOSS, so that businesses selling tangible goods and non-electronic services across EU borders could enjoy the same efficiency benefits when calculating and paying VAT, by allowing them to pay a single member state for all their sales within the EU. The European Commission says businesses currently operating outside of MOSS have to pay an average of € 8,000 a year to each Member State that they supply. An extension of the MOSS system could reduce regulatory costs for firms by €2.3 billion, while member states could see their VAT receipts rise by more than €7 billion annually. MEPs also supported a separate, but related measure, by 576 votes to 30, with 32 abstentions, aimed at improving coordination between tax authorities on information about taxable persons, which would facilitate the functioning of the online system.

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

World Aids Day

(1 December 2017)

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message for the World Aids Day

The world is well on its way to meeting the target of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Nearly 21 million people living with HIV now have access to treatment – a number that should grow to more than 30 million by 2020. AIDS-related deaths and new HIV infections are declining. There is great hope that the world can deliver on its promise – but much more needs to be done. Sadly, some parts of the response to HIV are lagging behind. In some regions of the world, hard-won successes are being reversed, with rising numbers of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. Women and girls continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV, particularly in Africa. Men are less likely to know that they are living with the virus, less likely to seek treatment for it, and more likely to transmit HIV as a result. Too many people are unable to access the services they need to treat their illness or to stay healthy. On this World AIDS Day, I call for a renewed commitment to finish what we have started and to make the AIDS epidemic a thing of the past.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

(3 December 2017)

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres' message for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Resilience is central to achieving sustainable development. In its pledge to leave no one behind, the 2030 Agenda embodies a commitment to building the capacities of those who face marginalization and exclusion, in order to reduce their vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks. In recent years, the international community has achieved notable progress in advancing the rights of the world's one billion persons with disabilities. Disability is recognized as a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. Yet, persons with disabilities remain too often excluded from the design, planning and implementation of policies and programmes that have an impact on their lives. Too often they face discrimination in labour markets and in access to education and other services. To overcome this challenge, the path towards inclusive, accessible, usable facilities, technologies, infrastructure, services and products must be ensured by, for and with persons with disabilities. We must build on their agency, working together to design, develop and implement affordable and innovative solutions to realize equality for all. On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us remove physical and cultural barriers, build resilient societies and create opportunities that truly leave no one behind.

International Volunteer Day

(5 December 2017)

International Volunteer Day (IVD) mandated by the UN General Assembly, is held each year on 5 December. It is viewed as a unique chance for volunteers and organizations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values, and to promote their work among their communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, government authorities and the private sector. Apart from mobilising thousands of volunteers every year, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development by advocating for the recognition of volunteers and working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming.

2017 Theme: Volunteers Act First. Here. Everywhere.

IVD 2017's theme #VolunteersActFirst. Here. Everywhere. recognizes the contributions of volunteers as first responders in times of crisis. Volunteers are present, all around us, answering calls in times of need, helping save lives today, and supporting those who want to continue living their lives with dignity tomorrow. Risking their lives every day to care for people affected by conflict, violence and humanitarian crises, volunteers brave many dangers to help others, driven by the desire to make a difference in the face of human suffering. This year, IVD promotes the contributions of such volunteers at the local, national and international level.

International Civil Aviation Day

(7 December 2017)

The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States, and of the unique role of ICAO in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind. As the UN and world nations have now adopted Agenda 2030, and embarked on a new era in global sustainable development, the importance of aviation as an engine of global connectivity has never been more relevant to the Chicago Convention's objectives to look to international flight as a fundamental enabler of global peace and prosperity. Every five years, coinciding with ICAO anniversaries (2014/2019/2024/2029/etc.), the ICAO Council establishes a special anniversary theme for International Civil Aviation Day. Between these anniversary years, Council representatives select a single theme for the full four-year intervening period. For 2015-2018 inclusive the Council has selected the following theme: **Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind**. The campaign highlights ICAO's efforts to assist States in implementing ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs). The main goal of this work is to help ensure that SARP implementation is better harmonized globally so that all States have access to the significant socio-economic benefits of safe and reliable air transport and can address safety, security and emissions-related issues.

Human Rights Day

(10 December)

This year, Human Rights Day kicks off a year-long campaign to mark the upcoming 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document (available in more than 500 languages) that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being -- regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. The principles enshrined in the Declaration are as relevant today as they were in 1948. #StandUp4HumanRights

International Mountain Day

(11 December)

Almost one billion people live in mountain areas, and over half the human population depends on mountains for water, food and clean energy. Yet mountains are under threat from climate change, land degradation, over exploitation and natural disasters. "Mountain under Pressure: climate, hunger, migration" is the suggested theme for 2017. It provides an occasion to ensure that sustainable mountain development is integrated into the 2030 Agenda and in the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Unipax

Global Revolution for New Humanism

Multimedia Project to set up a New Humanism

The Author of this project is Orazio Parisotto (Past President and Founder member of UNIPAX), thanks also to the essential contribute of the Master Silvio Amelio, weighty sculptor and humanist responsible of the "Artists for the Peace" Department of the Unipax and also its Ambassador at UN.

Orazio Parisotto and Silvio Amelio launch an important social-cultural and ethical initiative, with the cooperation of the UNIPAX, that involves more than 100.000 associations, institutions, famous bloggers and opinion leaders from all the Countries.

This social-cultural initiative draws attention to the problems and the emergencies of the humanity, also thanks to the young people, worried about their future, who ideally address their requests to the Head of Government of all world.

The main work of this project consists in an interactive book named "The Global Revolution for a New Humanism".

The book is also available in e-book size. Unipax backs the promotion of the book, through the collection of the adhesions, sharing and participations to the proposals and initiatives launched towards the Book. The aim of the book is to provide incentives in order that a peaceful revolution (Gandhi style) could be launched through a general project that prefigures a "New Democratic Institutional Architecture", a "New International Ethical Economy" and a "Worldwide Regulation for the Civil Cohabitation" at the international level, specifying the "Ways Out" from the global crisis.

The general project aims to involve about 100.000 NGO and other organisms committed in the safeguard of the human rights and of the peace at international level, the project will be presented to the Head of the Government with a maxi petition (developed in 10 points).

The aim of the maxi petition is to ask concrete answers to cope with the problems that trouble the humanity and in particular the problems connected with the environmental safeguard, the social justice, the crazy arms race, the dangers produced by the use of the new technologies, the promotion of the culture.

The achievement of the "Artistic Cultural Current of the New Humanism" is part integrant of this project. The artists, the men of culture and the leaders of the associations of the social utility (that with their commitment are already contributing, as peacemakers, for change) will arrange this Document. Together with the young people, they can define a "Artistic cultural Decalogue of the New Humanism" that if properly widespread may launch the creative imagination of the men of good will from all over the World and from every culture.

It's a multimedia global project which aims to provide to the citizens and specially to the young people, the "ways out" from the current difficulties and new hopes for a better future demanding also their direct cooperation.

The entire project will be promoted with a multimedia advertisement during 3 minutes and will be backed by a Documentary-movie during about 30 minutes.

All will be carried out in two languages (Italian and English).