

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Solving the Rubik's cube of the planetary crisis: lining up policy solutions for climate risks and biodiversity loss

Wednesday 13 March 2024, 15:00 – 18:00

Room XIX, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and live on UN TV

Background

Climate-related risks and extreme events

Managing the risk of climate related disasters relies on effective prevention and preparedness actions and instruments, which can help reduce or avoid the detrimental impacts of hazardous events. The Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 identify strengthened early warning systems as a critical component of building the resilience to disasters and crises and, by extension, contributing to sustainable development. Early warning systems rely on multi-sector and multi-stakeholder coordination, community involvement, enabling environments, as well as clear roles, responsibilities and adequate capacities.

The Roundtable will focus on the importance of strengthening preparedness for and managing risks of climate extremes through multi-hazard early warning systems, building on the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative of the UN Secretary General, which aims at spearheading action to ensure every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems by 2027, while also recognizing the unique vulnerability of children.

Jointly addressing climate change and biodiversity loss

Climate change and biodiversity loss are closely interconnected: they share common drivers, they interact, and both have cascading and complex effects that impact human well-being and quality of life. Climate change is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss; at the same time, ecosystems and their biodiversity play a key role in delivering benefits for both climate mitigation and adaptation. However, nature's contribution to tackling climate change is at risk. For instance, ecosystem degradation through land-use change is a major contributor to cumulative CO₂ emissions and, therefore, a driver of climate change. Biodiversity loss also contributes to land degradation and weakens agricultural systems, food systems and livelihoods.

Although the biodiversity and climate crises are closely intertwined, previous policies have largely tackled these challenges independently. Moving forward, these crises must be tackled together with holistic policies that address both issues simultaneously. That's why integrated approaches, such as nature-based solutions, will be essential, including those that rely on nature to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

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Programme

Moderators: Co-chairs of the UN Issued-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change for Europe and Central Asia:

Marco Keiner, Director of Environment Division, UNECE

Arnold Kreilhuber, Director of Europe Office, UNEP

Magdalena Landry, Director, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe

15:00 – 15:10

Welcome - moderator

Part 1: actions to address climate-related risks and extreme events

Guiding Questions:

1. What policy and other instruments have proven most effective in reducing risks resulting from a changing climate? How can their impact be measured?
2. What inclusive adaptation policies and activities have proven effective in ensuring no-one is left behind, including women, children and youth, people living with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups?
3. How can we optimize climate financing, including for early warning system development, to ensure both resilience-building and long-term sustainable development?

Setting the scene –

15:10 – 15:25

Prof. Celeste Saulo, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization

Moderated panel – and interactions within the panel

- *H.E. Sharaf Sheralizoda, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva*
- *Mihaela Frasineanu, State Counsellor, Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Romania*
- *Senad Tutić, Director of the Center for Social Welfare, City of Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- *Blaž Lipovšek, President of the Sava Youth Parliament*

Discussion with round-table participants

Wrap-up of key messages

16:25 – 16:35

Active exercise

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Part 2: actions to address jointly climate change and biodiversity loss

Guiding questions:

4. How can we promote greater coherence between national climate, biodiversity and economic development strategies? How can we overcome the obstacles to designing holistic policies that jointly address climate change and biodiversity loss while mitigating their socioeconomic impacts?
5. How can those living in ecosystems impacted by climate change and biodiversity loss join forces with scientists and the private sector to jointly develop and demonstrate evidence-based local policy solutions?
6. How can we enhance the coherence of and promote synergies between climate and biodiversity financing in line with country priorities, including for nature-based solutions?

16:35 – 16:50	<p>Setting the scene – <i>Prof. Thomas Crowther, Department of Environmental Systems Science, Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, Chair of the Advisory Council for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and founder of Restor (platform for global restoration movement). In 2021, World Economic Forum named him a Young Global Leader for his work on the protection and restoration of biodiversity.</i></p>
16:50 – 17:50	<p>Moderated panel – and interactions within the panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Verónica Tomei, Commissioner for Sustainable Development, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, Germany</i>- <i>Teodora Grncarovska, State Counsellor on Climate Change, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia, and Adjunct Assistant Professor, South East European University</i>- <i>Dan Cronan, Assistant Professor, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, State University of New York</i>- <i>Alexandra Masako Goossens-Ishii, Soka Gakkai International</i> <p>Discussion with round-table participants Wrap-up of key messages</p>
17:50 – 18:00	<p>Concluding remarks and closing</p>

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Organized by the UN Issued-based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change for Europe and Central Asia, comprising 18 UN entities active in the region. Part 1 planned by WMO, UNDRR and UNICEF. Part 2 planned by UNEP and UNESCO. Coordinated by UNECE, UNEP and UNESCO.

