# Exploiting the Synergies Between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainability

**Kariuki Muigua**

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## Abstract

*This paper critically evaluates the areas of synergy between the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how these areas can be exploited and strengthened in order to achieve sustainability for the current and future generations. The author argues that there is a need to exploit the corresponding goals in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Goals in order to combat the triple planetary crises of pollution, climate change, and loss of nature and biodiversity for sustainable lives, environment and human rights for all.*

## 1. Introduction

The Special Edition of the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Report states that there is a limited amount of time left to prevent the worst effects of climate change, ensure climate justice for individuals, communities, and nations that are most affected by the phenomenon, and keep global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. As carbon dioxide continues to climb, it has reached a level not seen in two million years.[1] As such, since 2015, there has been an increase in the number of people experiencing food insecurity and hunger, which has been made worse by the pandemic, conflicts, climate change, and widening disparities.[2]

The negative consequences of climate change have caused significant harm and more irreparable losses to ecosystems and human life. They have also led to food shortages, population displacement, and the destruction of buildings and infrastructure. As temperatures rise, these extreme events will become more intense and challenging to regulate. Additionally, the effectiveness of adaptive techniques decreases with increased global warming.[3]

In order to ensure that global warming stays far below 2 degrees Celsius, and ideally stays at 1.5 degrees Celsius, above pre-industrial levels, nations united to obligate themselves through the Paris

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[1] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN.
[2] Ibid, p. 14.
[3] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p.38

Agreement. Being the first legally binding pact in the history of climate action, the accord represents a significant turning point in global collaboration to combat climate change.[4]

A popular strategy for success in the fight against climate change is to focus on specific activities that have measurable effects and minimise trade-offs on several fronts in order to advance quickly in the race against climate change.[5] The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which represent the global action plan for attaining sustainability and resilience for both people and the planet, are strongly related to climate change and the 2030 Agenda.[6] By utilising the synergies between the Climate and SDGs, it is possible to maximize the connections between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, which might lead to the accomplishment of both goals and ensure that future generations will live in a habitable world.[7]

Thus, swift, coordinated action and policy solutions are needed to address structural inequities, restructure food systems, finance sustainable agricultural techniques, and minimise the impact of conflict and the pandemic on global nutrition and food security if we are to reach zero hunger by 2030.[8]

This paper critically assesses the areas in which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement have common ground, as well as the ways in which these areas may be enhanced and leveraged to achieve sustainability for present and future generations.

## 2. The Paris Agreement and Sustainability

A legally binding global climate agreement, the Paris Agreement was ratified by 196 Parties on December 12, 2015, during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France. It became operative on November 4, 2016.[9] Under the rules of the Paris Agreement, all countries must pledge to cut their emissions. In order to keep global average temperature from rising 2°C (3.6°F) beyond preindustrial levels, governments must set goals known as nationally determined contributions

[4] *Climate Action and Synergies | Department of Economic and Social Affairs* (no date). Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/topics/climate-action-synergies#description (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[5] *Climate Action and Synergies | Department of Economic and Social Affairs* (no date). Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/topics/climate-action-synergies#description (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p.14.

[9] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 2 April 2024).

(NDCs) and work to keep it below 1.5°C (2.7°F). Furthermore, it aims to attain global net-zero emissions in the latter half of the century, which denotes a situation in which the amount of greenhouse gases extracted from the environment and the amount emitted into it are equal.[10] The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates that crossing the 1.5°C threshold risks unleashing far more severe climate change impacts, including more frequent and severe droughts, heatwaves and rainfall. To limit global warming to 1.5°C, greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 at the latest and decline 43% by 2030. The Paris Agreement is considered a landmark in the multilateral climate change process because, for the first time, a binding agreement brings all nations together to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.[11]

Based on the most recent scientific findings, the Paris Agreement's implementation calls for significant social and economic change. The Paris Agreement is based on a five-year cycle of countries taking more and more aggressive climate action. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), or national climate action plans, have been submitted by nations since 2020. Every new NDC is intended to represent a progressively greater level of ambition than the one before it.[12] Countries outline the steps they will take to cut their greenhouse gas emissions in their NDCs in order to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Additionally, nations outline in their NDCs the steps they plan to take to increase resilience so they can adapt to the effects of climate change.[13]

It is worth pointing out that the Paris Agreement called on all nations to establish emissions targets, acknowledging that climate change is a shared burden, in contrast to the Kyoto Protocol, which primarily obliged developed countries to decrease emissions.[14]

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[10] *Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures* (no date) *Council on Foreign Relations*. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/paris-global-climate-change-agreements (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[11] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 2 April 2024).
[12] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).
[13] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).
[14] *Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures* (no date) *Council on Foreign Relations*. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/paris-global-climate-change-agreements (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

## 3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainability

Adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a common roadmap for peace and prosperity for people and the planet both now and in the future.[15] Its core tenets are the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which represent a pressing need for global cooperation and action from both wealthy and developing nations.[16] They recognise the interdependence of tackling poverty and other forms of deprivation, halting climate change, preserving our forests and oceans, and fostering economic development. Increasing access to healthcare and education, reducing inequality, and fostering economic growth are some of these strategies.[17] The impoverished are disproportionately impacted by higher living costs as a result of the interruptions to global trade caused by the Ukraine crisis. The battle against poverty also faces significant threats as a result of climate change. By the end of 2022, some 670 million people, or 8.4% of the world's population, may still be living in extreme poverty.[18] According to estimates, 575 million people, or 7% of the world's population, would still be living in severe poverty by 2030 if present trends continue, with the majority of them being in sub-Saharan Africa. According to this estimate, poverty has decreased by less than 30% since 2015.[19]

SDG 6 requires countries to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.[20] Water stress and shortage are still issues in many places of the world, despite a 9% increase in water usage efficiency. 2.4 billion people were living in water-stressed nations in 2020. Climate change and conflict exacerbate the problems.[21] Increasing sector-wide investment and capacity-building, encouraging innovation and evidence-based action, improving cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders, and implementing a more integrated and holistic approach to water management are important tactics to refocus Goal 6.[22]

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[15] UN General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, 21 October 2015 [accessed 10 April 2024].
[16] *THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development* (no date). Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[17] *THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development* (no date). Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[18] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p.12.
[19] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p.12.
[20] *Goal 6 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs* (no date). Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal6 (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[21] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p.24.
[22] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p.24.

Water-related ecosystems sustain biodiversity, control floods and droughts, and supply clean water. However, a number of risks to these ecosystems exist, including as overexploitation, pollution, and climate change.[23] Around the world, surface water bodies, including lakes, rivers, and reservoirs, are changing quickly. Over the previous three centuries, wetland habitats have lost an estimated 85% of their area due to drainage and land change.[24] A startling 81% of species that depend on inland wetlands have dropped since 1970, outpacing losses in other biomes, and a growing proportion are in danger of becoming extinct. Large-scale wetland preservation and restoration must be given top priority.[25]

SDG 13 requires countries to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.[26] Target 13.1 thereof requires countries to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.[27] Target 13.2 requires countries to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. Target 13.3 requires countries to improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. Target 13.a requires countries to implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly $100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible. Target 13.b requires countries to promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.[28]

SDG 14 requires countries to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.[29] However, according to the 2023 SDGs Special Report, due to the worsening effects of plastic pollution, ocean warming, acidification, and eutrophication, the ocean is

[23] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p.25.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] *Goal 13 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs* (no date). Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13 (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[27] SDG 13, Target 13.1.
[28] SDG 13, Target 13.b
.[29] SDG 13.

currently in a state of emergency. Furthermore, the concerning pattern of overfishing continues, depleting more than one-third of the world's fish populations.[30] Furthermore, although considerable progress has been made in enlarging marine protected areas, battling illicit, unreported, and unregulated fishing, outlawing fishing subsidies, and aiding small-scale fishermen, these efforts are not proceeding at the rate or scope necessary to achieve Goal 14.[31] The Report thus recommends that fast and well-coordinated international action is needed to reverse these trends. To protect the planet's greatest ecosystem, this means boosting financing for ocean science, stepping up conservation efforts, developing nature- and ecosystem-based solutions, addressing the linkages and effects of human-induced stresses, and quickly reversing the course of climate change.[32]

SDG 15 calls on countries to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.[33] 2023 SDGs Report observes that because they support more than half of the world economy and a wide range of cultural, spiritual, and economic values, terrestrial ecosystems are essential to the continuation of human life. Nonetheless, pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change provide a triple catastrophe for the global community.[34] The earth and human population are seriously threatened by the increasing trends of forest loss, land degradation, and species extinction.[35]

The majority of accomplishments have been little, despite some gains in protected areas, sustainable forest management, national biodiversity values adoption, and natural capital accounting. Goal 15 is given fresh life by the newly enacted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which outlines 23 objectives to be met by 2030 and four outcome-oriented goals to be accomplished by 2050.[36]

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[30] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 40.
[31] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 40.
[32] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 40.
[33] *Goal 15 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs* (no date). Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal15 (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[34] *What is the Triple Planetary Crisis? | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/news/what-is-the-triple-planetary-crisis (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[35] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 42.
[36] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 42.

In addition to quicker action to address the underlying causes of these interrelated problems and greater appreciation of nature's immense worth, a fundamental change in humanity's relationship with nature is necessary to achieve Goal 15.[37]

## 4. Strengthening the Synergies Between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainability: Challenges and Prospects

Governments generally agree on the science behind climate change, but they disagree on who is most responsible, how to track emissions-reduction goals, and whether to compensate harder-hit countries.[38] This has been noted despite the fact that countries have been debating how to combat climate change since the early 1990s, with these negotiations yielding several important accords, including the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.[39]

By 2035, the world is likely to have surpassed the crucial 1.5°C tipping point, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says, unless cross-sectoral measures are tightened.[40] The decisions we make now will determine how habitable the planet is for both present and future generations. Starting today, all sectors must reduce their GHG emissions quickly, deeply, and sustainably in order to slow down climate change.[41] Global climate-resilient development initiatives, expedited adaptation and mitigation strategies, and the utilisation of SDG synergies are all necessary for this. More funding, political will, well-coordinated legislation, global collaboration, ecosystem management, and inclusive governance are all critically needed for fair and successful climate action.[42]

There is still work to be done to further create the new and potentially helpful policy architecture that the Paris Agreement lays forth. This effort includes developing the various regulations and guidelines that are required and providing more explicit instructions for how they should be implemented.[43] In

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[37] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 42.
[38] *The What, When, and How of Net-Zero Emissions | World Resources Institute* (no date). Available at: https://www.wri.org/insights/net-zero-ghg-emissions-questions-answered (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[39] *Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures* (no date) *Council on Foreign Relations*. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/paris-global-climate-change-agreements (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[40] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 38.
[41] Ibid, p. 38.
[42] Ibid, p. 38.
[43] Stavins, R.N. and Stowe, R.C., 2016. The Paris agreement and beyond: International climate change policy post-2020. *Harvard Project on Climate Agreements*, p. 1; See also Cochran, I. and Pauthier, A., 2019. A framework for alignment with the Paris Agreement: why, what and how for financial institutions. *Institute for Climate Economics: Paris, France*, p.56; Roelfsema, M. *et al.* (2022) 'Developing scenarios in the context of the Paris Agreement and application in the integrated assessment model IMAGE: A framework for bridging the policy-modelling divide', *Environmental Science & Policy*, 135, pp. 104–116.

addition to considering the barriers to the Paris Agreement's efficacy, governments, other interested parties, and scholars should look for institutions and procedures that could enhance both the Agreement and the UNFCCC process in general.[44] Some experts contend that other venues are the only places where significant climate action can take place. They believe that rather than concentrating on national emissions caps, nations should negotiate a worldwide carbon price as the most effective means of reducing global emissions.[45] In order to supplement the Paris Accord, some propose other accords that pertain to certain industries or emissions.[46]

The 2023 Special Report on SDGs observes that Global warming of 1.1°Celcius over pre-industrial levels has been directly attributed to human activity, namely over a century of burning fossil fuels, unsustainable energy and land use, and unsustainable consumption and production patterns, according to the most recent IPCC synthesis report.[47] Every region has experienced an increase in extreme weather and climate events as a result, and this is now the daily face of climate change. Communities who are vulnerable suffer disproportionately even when they have made the least contribution to climate change.[48]

### 4.1. Financing Mechanisms

In addition to encouraging voluntary contributions from other Parties for the first time, the Paris Agreement reiterates that wealthier nations should lead the way in giving financial aid to less developed and more vulnerable nations. Since huge expenditures are needed to considerably cut emissions,

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Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2022.05.001; Cogswell, N. and Dagnet, Y. (2019) 'Why Does the Paris Climate Agreement Need a Rulebook? 7 Questions and Answers'. Available at: https://www.wri.org/insights/why-does-paris-climate-agreement-need-rulebook-7-questions-and-answers (Accessed: 10 April 2024); Hermansen, E.A.T., Boasson, E.L. and Peters, G.P. (2023) 'Climate action post-Paris: how can the IPCC stay relevant?', *npj Climate Action*, 2(1), pp. 1–8. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-023-00058-1.

[44] Stavins, R.N. and Stowe, R.C., 2016. The Paris agreement and beyond: International climate change policy post-2020. *Harvard Project on Climate Agreements*, pp.1-114.

[45] *Why Countries Must Cooperate on Carbon Prices* (2022) *IMF*. Available at: https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/05/19/blog-why-countries-must-cooperate-on-carbon-prices (Accessed: 10 April 2024); Gianluca Di P.G.G.E.& I.L. and F.C. (no date) *Can a universal carbon price be fair for everyone?* Available at: https://www.ey.com/en_gl/insights/government-public-sector/can-a-universal-carbon-price-be-fair-for-everyone (Accessed: 10 April 2024); cf. Pearse, R. and Böhm, S. (2014) 'Ten reasons why carbon markets will not bring about radical emissions reduction', *Carbon Management*, 5(4), pp. 325–337. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17583004.2014.990679.

[46] *Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures* (no date) *Council on Foreign Relations*. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/paris-global-climate-change-agreements (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[47] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 38.

[48] Ibid, p.38.

climate financing is necessary for mitigation.[49]. Climate finance is equally important for adaptation, as significant financial resources are needed to adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of a changing climate.[50]

At COP 28, countries came up with new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage.[51] The purpose of the Fund is to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to economic and non- economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events.[52] The fund is meant to provide finance for addressing a variety of challenges associated with the adverse effects of climate change, such as climate-related emergencies, sea level rise, displacement, relocation, migration, insufficient climate information and data, and the need for climate-resilient reconstruction and recovery.[53] It is also meant to provide support for responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.[54] This support may include funding that is complementary to humanitarian actions taken immediately after an extreme weather event; funding for intermediate or long-term recovery, reconstruction or rehabilitation; and funding for actions that address slow onset events.[55] The Fund is

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[49] *Climate Finance in the negotiations | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/topics/climate-finance/the-big-picture/climate-finance-in-the-negotiations (Accessed: 10 April 2024); *Developed Countries Must Deliver on Climate Change, Finance Commitments, Delegates Stress, as Second Committee Continues Its General Debate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases* (no date). Available at: https://press.un.org/en/2022/gaef3566.doc.htm (Accessed: 10 April 2024); *Climate Funds for Fragile States, Action to Reach Net Zero, Not Mere Promises, Only Way to Build Low-Carbon Future, Speakers Stress on Day Three of General Debate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases* (no date). Available at: https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12534.doc.htm (Accessed: 10 April 2024); Bos, J., Gonzalez, L. and Thwaites, J. (2021) 'Are Countries Providing Enough to the $100 Billion Climate Finance Goal?' Available at: https://www.wri.org/insights/developed-countries-contributions-climate-finance-goal (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[50] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).

[51] United nations, Annex I: Decision 1/CP.28, Operationalization of the new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4, FCCC/CP/2023/11/Add.1, *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty- eighth session, held in the United Arab Emirates from 30 November to 13 December 2023. Addendum. Part two: Action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-eighth session*, FCCC/CP/2023/11/Add.2.
Available at: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2023_11a02_adv.pdf (Accessed: 5 April 2024).

[52] Para. 2, Operationalization of the new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4.

[53] Para. 6, Operationalization of the new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4.

[54] Chandra, A. *et al.* (2023) 'Climate-Induced Non-Economic Loss and Damage: Understanding Policy Responses, Challenges, and Future Directions in Pacific Small Island Developing States', *Climate*, 11(3), p. 74. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/cli11030074.

[55] Para. 8, Operationalization of the new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4.

able to receive contributions from a wide variety of sources of funding, including grants and concessional loans from public, private and innovative sources, as appropriate.[56]

According to the 2023 SDGs Report, in order to address the climate catastrophe, climate funding is essential. As per the UNFCCC, there was a 12% surge in global climate financing flows from 2017 to 2020, with an average yearly amount of $803 billion.[57] This expansion is explained by both an increase in adaptation financing and mitigation measures in infrastructure, transportation, and buildings. Though it has increased over the past ten years, climate money is still considered insufficient to stop global warming. Additionally, there is an unequal allocation of funds throughout areas. In 2020, fossil fuel-related flows also surpassed climate finance for mitigation and adaptation.[58] Developed nations have not yet fulfilled their pledge to raise $100 billion in climate money yearly by 2020–2025.[59]

A comprehensive strategy combining mandatory and voluntary measures, together with the mobilisation and alignment of funds for biodiversity, is needed to stop and reverse the loss of biodiversity.[60] Economic tools are essential for encouraging the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.[61] They may also be used to raise funds and mainstream biodiversity in a variety of industries.[62] These comprise legislative tools including taxes, levies, and charges pertaining to biodiversity, positive subsidies, payments for environmental services, and offsets for biodiversity.[63] One such source of funding for biodiversity is Official Development Assistance (ODA), such as those proposed under COP 27 and COP 28, among others.[64] The need to increase the use and ambition of

[56] Para. 54, Operationalization of the new funding arrangements, including a fund, for responding to loss and damage referred to in paragraphs 2–3 of decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4.
[57] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 39.
[58] Ibid, p. 39.
[59] Ibid, p. 39.
[60] *A Comprehensive Overview of Global Biodiversity Finance | System of Environmental Economic Accounting* (no date). Available at: https://seea.un.org/content/comprehensive-overview-global-biodiversity-finance (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[61] Fernández-Pons, X., 2021. Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the International Regulation of Trade in Goods. *Biological Diversity and International Law: Challenges for the Post 2020 Scenario*, pp.79-99; Ekpe, E. (2012) 'A Review of Economic Instruments Employed for Biodiversity Conservation', *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development*, 9, pp. 16–32; Rice, R.E. (2021) 'Biodiversity Conservation, Economic Growth and Sustainable Development', in *Biodiversity of Ecosystems*. IntechOpen. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.99298.
[62] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 42.
[63] Ibid., p. 42.
[64] Ibid, p. 42.

economic tools to conserve biodiversity is highlighted by the fact that, despite advancements in international financing, there is still a budget shortfall for biodiversity conservation.[65]

### 4.2. Technology

The goal of fully realising technological development and transfer for enhancing climate change resilience and lowering greenhouse gas emissions is included in the Paris Agreement.[66] It establishes a technology framework to provide overarching guidance to the well-functioning Technology Mechanism. The mechanism is accelerating technology development and transfer through its policy and implementation arms.[67] It has been documented that subsidies for fossil fuels distort the energy market, obstruct the switch to greener, more sustainable alternatives, and weaken initiatives to mitigate climate change.[68] Global statistics indicated that governments were once again subsidizing the purchase of coal, oil, and gas in 2021, with an estimated $732 billion being spent on these projects—nearly twice as much as in 2020, when just $375 billion was invested. This was mostly ascribed to energy costs rising again in 2020 following a decline in 2020, which restored subsidies to levels seen in 2014.[69] Embracing technology in transitioning to greener technologies is important if reduction of fossil fuels is to be realised.[70]

Beyond plans and pledges, decisive action that is both urgent and transformative is essential.[71] Raising aspirations, addressing whole economies, and advancing climate-resilient development are necessary, along with providing a clear route to net-zero emissions.[72] There is not much time left, therefore quick

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[65] Ibid, p. 42.
[66] Sajid, M.J., Zhang, Y. and Janjua, L.R. (2024) 'Breaking barriers: Assessing technology transfer for climate-resilient development', *Environmental Technology & Innovation*, 33, p. 103471. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eti.2023.103471; *Chapter 16: Innovation, technology development and transfer* (no date). Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/chapter/summary-for-policymakers/ (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[67] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).
[68] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 36.
[69] Ibid, p. 36.
[70] Wang, Fang *et al.* (2021) 'Technologies and perspectives for achieving carbon neutrality', *The Innovation*, 2(4), p. 100180. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xinn.2021.100180.
[71] Martin (no date) 'Climate Change', *United Nations Sustainable Development*. Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/ (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[72] Stern, N. and Valero, A. (2021) 'Innovation, growth and the transition to net-zero emissions', *Research Policy*, 50(9), p. 104293. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2021.104293.

action is required to prevent disastrous outcomes and ensure future generations have a sustainable future.[73]

In Decision 9/CP.28 adopted at COP 28 on 'Enhancing climate technology development and transfer through the Technology Mechanism', the Conference of the Parties noted the Technology Mechanism initiative on artificial intelligence for climate action, the aim of which is to explore the role of artificial intelligence as a technological tool for advancing and scaling up transformative climate solutions for mitigation and adaptation action in developing countries, with a focus on the least developed countries and small island developing States, while also addressing the challenges and risks posed by artificial intelligence, such as energy consumption, data security and the digital divide.[74]

They also noted the insufficient transfer and deployment of technology in developing countries, encourages the Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre and Network to continue collaborating with the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism and relevant financial institutions with a view to enhancing the capacity of developing countries to prepare project proposals, facilitating their access to available funding for technology development and transfer and for implementing the results of their technology needs assessments and the technical assistance of the Climate Technology Centre and Network, and strengthening the transfer and deployment of technology and calls for regional balance in this work.[75]

It has been observed that investing in better data is key to supporting a rescue plan for people and planet.[76] As such, building data capacity is more important than ever as governments need better data to help policymakers in the face of several health, food, energy, and climate issues. Additionally, it is crucial to make sure that the SDGs are effectively monitored and reported on.[77]

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[73] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 38.

[74] Para. 6, United Nations, Decision 9/CP.28, Enhancing climate technology development and transfer through the Technology Mechanism, 5th plenary meeting, 11 December 2023.

[75] Para. 9, United Nations, Decision 9/CP.28, Enhancing climate technology development and transfer through the Technology Mechanism, 5th plenary meeting, 11 December 2023.

[76] *Bridging Data Gaps Can Help Tackle the Climate Crisis* (2022) *IMF*. Available at: https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/11/28/bridging-data-gaps-can-help-tackle-the-climate-crisis (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[77] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN.

### 4.3. Capacity-Building

Not all developing countries have sufficient capacities to deal with many of the challenges brought by climate change.[78] As a result, the Paris Agreement places great emphasis on climate-related capacity-building for developing countries and requests all developed countries to enhance support for capacity-building actions in developing countries.[79]

In addition to technical capacity building, the 2023 Special Edition of SDGs Report reports that to get ready for a greener future, youth and students throughout the world are calling for comprehensive and high-quality climate education as well as climate action.[80] The majority of nations (94%) state that their curricula contain instruction on climate change. But the data seems to indicate otherwise. Nearly half (47%) of the national curricular frameworks in 100 nations do not even address climate change, according to a research.[81] The Report also points out that based on their schooling, one in five young people feel unprepared for climate change and want further information to fully understand its intricacies.[82] Youth have highlighted the need for proper teacher support as well as multidisciplinary, action-oriented education that is both globally relevant and customized to local conditions.[83]

### 4.4. Tracking Progress

Countries created an enhanced transparency framework (ETF) with the Paris Agreement. Beginning in 2024, governments will be required by the ETF to disclose in a transparent manner their activities and advancements in mitigating and adapting to climate change, as well as any assistance given or received..[84] It also provides for international procedures for the review of the submitted reports.[85]

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[78] *Poor and Vulnerable Countries Need Support to Adapt to Climate Change* (2022) *IMF*. Available at: https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/03/23/blog032322-poor-and-vulnerable-countris-need-support-to-adapt-to-climate-change (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[79] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).

[80] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 39.

[81] Ibid, p. 39.

[82] Ibid., p. 39.

[83] Ibid, p. 39.

[84] *Preparing for the Enhanced Transparency Framework | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/transparency-and-reporting/preparing-for-the-ETF (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[85] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).

Every five years, countries must assess how well they are implementing the agreement through a process known as the global stocktake.[86] Governments were alerted by the first of these studies, which was published in September 2023, that "the world is not on track to meet the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement."[87] The information gathered through the ETF will feed into the Global stock-take which will assess the collective progress towards the long-term climate goals. This will lead to recommendations for countries to set more ambitious plans in the next round.[88]

At the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which takes place every July, governments, corporations, civil society, policymakers, and influencers come together to assess the state of affairs and expedite worldwide efforts to produce significant advancements on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.[89] Checks and balances are the focus of the High-Level Political Forum, which is run by the UN Economic and Social Council.[90] In light of the world's escalating geopolitical tensions, escalating climate emergency, and precarious global economy, the Forum has emerged as a crucial platform for the worldwide community to evaluate the status of the Goals and determine how best to expedite action.[91] In addition, the Forum aims to highlight accomplishments, draw attention to novel and developing problems, and propose suggestions for carrying out the Goals.[92]

In order to accomplish the SDGs and make sure they stay ambitious and relevant, countries present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) to the Forum.[93] Annually, the Forum also evaluates specific goals. The following objectives will be reviewed for the next Forum, which is scheduled for July 8–

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[86] *What is the global stocktake of climate action and why does it matter?* (no date). Available at: https://www.climatechangenews.com/2023/04/27/what-is-the-global-stocktake-of-climate-action-and-why-does-it-matter/ (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[87] *Global Climate Agreements: Successes and Failures* (no date) *Council on Foreign Relations*. Available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/paris-global-climate-change-agreements (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[88] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).

[89] Martin (no date) 'Monitoring and Progress', *United Nations Sustainable Development*. Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/monitoring-and-progress-hlpf/ (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[90] Ibid.

[91] *4 ways geopolitical tensions are increasing carbon emissions* (2024) *World Economic Forum*. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2024/03/geopolitics-carbon-emissions-ukraine-red-sea/ (Accessed: 10 April 2024); *With Climate Crisis Generating Growing Threats to Global Peace, Security Council Must Ramp Up Efforts, Lessen Risk of Conflicts, Speakers Stress in Open Debate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases* (no date). Available at: https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15318.doc.htm (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[92] Martin (no date) 'Monitoring and Progress', *United Nations Sustainable Development*. Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/monitoring-and-progress-hlpf/ (Accessed: 10 April 2024).

[93] Ibid.

18, 2024: Goal 1 is to end poverty; Goal 2 is to end hunger; Goal 13 is to combat climate change; Goal 16 is to promote inclusive and peaceful societies; and Goal 17 is to form partnerships.[94]

These reporting mechanisms are relevant in creating synergies between ensuring that the goals under each of the two Frameworks-Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda. Stakeholders should continually make use of these to achieve synergy.

## 5. Conclusion

By 2030, zero-carbon solutions could be competitive in sectors representing over 70% of global emissions.[95] The lives of 1.3 billion people, who are thought to be directly exposed to land degradation, were impacted by the loss of at least 100 million hectares of productive and healthy land annually between 2015 and 2019.[96] This loss is equal to twice the size of Greenland and has a significant impact on global food and water security. Around the world, human activities such as urbanization, deforestation, and conversion of grasslands, in conjunction with climate change, are the primary causes of land degradation. Governance issues, technological and investment disparities, and developments in the economy and population all play an indirect role.[97]

Restoring land and ecosystems can help mitigate the effects of disasters, biodiversity loss, climate change, and food and water scarcity at a reasonable cost.[98] Hence, in order to preserve natural areas, increase the production of food that is beneficial to the environment, and create green urban areas, infrastructure, and supply chains, governments, corporations, and communities must work together.[99]

It has rightly been pointed out that halfway to the 2030 deadline, the grim image of the Sustainable Development Goals in reverse serves as a stark reminder to the world to step up efforts to end poverty and hunger, promote gender equality, and combat the triple planetary crises of pollution, climate change, and loss of nature and biodiversity.[100] If we ignore that appeal, we will see more political unrest

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[94] Ibid.
[95] *The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC* (no date). Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement (Accessed: 5 April 2024).
[96] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 43.
[97] Ibid, p. 43.
[98] Nations, U. (no date) *Biodiversity - our strongest natural defense against climate change*, *United Nations*. United Nations. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/biodiversity (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[99] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 43.
[100] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 48.

and displacement, a decline in public confidence in government agencies, economic collapse, and permanent damage to the environment.[101] Above all, it will bring about great pain for present and future generations, particularly for the most vulnerable and impoverished people and countries on the planet.[102]

The preservation of the air, water, land, and ecosystems that serve as the basis for life is critical to human well-being and is closely linked to environmental stewardship.[103] Securing these resources for sustainability, equality, and justice is essential to achieving the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[104] The development of the Sustainable Development Goals may come to an abrupt halt if the present course towards climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and ecosystem degradation is not reversed.[105] This would exacerbate public health emergencies, hunger, poverty, and conflict. On the other hand, taking immediate action in these areas might assist the pledge to leave no one behind and accelerate progress towards the Goals.[106]

It is indeed possible to achieve sustainability by creating synergies between the SDGs, Paris Agreement and all the other relevant legal instruments that are geared towards achieving sustainability and respect for the environment and human rights.

Exploiting the synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda is necessary for sustainability.

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[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid, p. 48.
[103] *Earth Stewardship: science for action to sustain the human-earth system - Chapin - 2011 - Ecosphere - Wiley Online Library* (no date). Available at: https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1890/ES11-00166.1 (Accessed: 10 April 2024).
[104] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. UN, p. 53.
[105] Ibid., p. 53.
[106] Ibid., p. 53.

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