

---

## Introduction

The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are having significant and negative impacts on the climate, emphasized the dangers of rising global mean temperatures and associated changes in precipitation patterns and extreme weather events, and provided an assessment of the means and costs of combating climate change. The message is clear: Accelerated action is urgently needed on mitigation, in order to address the causes of climate change and avoid future catastrophic consequences. At the same time, efforts for adaptation to current and future impacts must be stepped up.

The economic, social and environmental consequences of climate change, combined with its potentially irreversible nature, confront the international community with one of its most complex and serious challenges. The high-level event on climate change, convened by the United Nations Secretary-General on 24 September 2007 to galvanize political consensus, saw the unequivocal commitment of world leaders to concerted action. They agreed that the United Nations provides the appropriate multilateral framework for action and that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the only forum in which international action can be agreed.

The present document prepared by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), gives an overview of ongoing UN system actions in key climate change-related areas, in support of national endeavours and in furtherance of the implementation of mandates received through the UNFCCC and other intergovernmental bodies.

---

## Rationale for action

Observable trends of ongoing climate change and current projections indicate increasingly severe negative impacts on all countries, with the most severe impacts disproportionately affecting the poorest countries with the weakest capacity for climate resilience. Equally, within countries, climate change is disproportionately affecting the poor and vulnerable in society. The projected impacts pose a serious threat to the achievement and sustainability of the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries and the effective enjoyment of human rights in both developed and developing countries. Wide ranging implications are expected for communities in terms of increased water stress, food insecurity, abrupt changes in population dynamics, vulnerability of human settlements, livelihoods and society as a whole, as well as major negative repercussions on the health status of millions of people. A probable result of climate-induced disruption on a large-scale is an acceleration of human displacement resulting in increased competition for land, resources and housing with attendant unrest in both urban and rural settings, within and between countries. Africa, Small Island Developing States and Asian and African mega deltas are likely to be particularly affected. People living in poorly constructed settlements in high risk areas will increasingly be at the mercy of extreme weather events.

It is ultimately the human dimensions of climate change and the consequences for individuals, especially the most vulnerable around the world that mobilize us all to action to find sustainable solutions. The international community is faced with an urgent need to develop and implement ambitious programmes to respond to what the UN Secretary-General has called “the defining challenge of our times.”

Climate change presents an unprecedented challenge – but also an opportunity. An opportunity to create a new development paradigm that links policy setting with investments, as well as an opportunity for development practitioners, donors, and developing countries to ‘do development differently’, so that climate change considerations are built right into the foundations of plans to reach the MDGs and other development goals. Addressing climate change presents a new opportunity for new investment, enterprise development, decent job creation and higher incomes. Ambitious climate policy that addresses the underlying causes of climate change can provide the basis for future sustainable growth.

## The UN system delivering as one on climate change

---

As a unique international mechanism with universal membership that combines convening power, normative work, standard-setting, policy development and operational activities, the UN system in its entirety has embarked on an action-oriented and coordinated effort to support the international community to rise to this challenge. The CEB initiative that commenced in early 2007 has already established a clear framework for action with focus areas for the achievement of early results. Agencies contribute within the framework of their respective areas of expertise, mandates issued by their governing bodies and resources made available to them. Work also continues in a number of cross-cutting areas that support this effort. The overall objective is to maximize existing synergies, eliminate duplication and overlap, and optimize the impact of the collective effort of the UN system.

The convening agencies have been asked to work in close collaboration with the UNFCCC Secretariat.

At its April 2008 session the CEB decided to concentrate at this stage on five focus areas, which were identified in response to the UNFCCC negotiation process and in pursuance of the broader mandates and capacities in the UN system. To ensure better coordination, convening responsibilities were assigned to UN system entities with a large volume of activities in the respective focus areas and some additional cross-cutting ones. These areas, which may evolve as some issues are concluded and others emerge, are outlined below, along with the respective convening entities:

### Focus areas:

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| • Adaptation  | HLCP collectively |
| • Technology transfer   | UNIDO, UN-DESA    |
| • Reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) | UNDP, FAO, UNEP   |
| • Financing mitigation and adaptation action                              | UNDP, World Bank  |
| • Capacity building   | UNDP, UNEP        |

### Cross-cutting areas include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Climate knowledge: science, assessment, monitoring and early warning | WMO, UNESCO                            |
| • Supporting global, regional and national action                      | UN-DESA, UN Regional Commissions, UNDP |
| • Climate - neutral UN   | UNEP                                   |
| • Public awareness   | UNCG, UNEP                             |

Mitigation, one of the pillars of the Bali Road Map along with Adaptation, Finance and Technology Transfer, is also addressed through actions carried out or supported by the UN system in different areas. This is particularly true of activities under REDD, with elements of mitigation action also embedded in work related to Financing, Technology Transfer and Capacity Building. The United Nations system will act further in this area following the Parties' decisions in this regard.

Programmatic work at the headquarters level through the CEB's High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) is connected to UN system activities at the country level through the UN Development Group, now also a pillar of the CEB, and the individual UN Country Teams. The UNFCCC Secretariat serves as the link to the global climate change negotiation process.

In addition to the indicative examples of UN system activities provided under each area below, a system-wide inventory of UN activities on climate change is being developed on-line both as an information resource and a planning tool (accessible through [www.un.org/climatechange](http://www.un.org/climatechange)).

# THE CEB CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION FRAMEWORK

UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM CHIEF EXECUTIVES BOARD FOR COORDINATION (CEB) HAS INITIATED A PROCESS OF ALIGNING ITS STRENGTHS TO ACHIEVE A COORDINATED ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING MANDATES RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND BUILD ON THE EXPERIENCE GAINED IN DOING SO TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS FOR A GLOBAL AGREEMENT FOR THE POST-2012 PERIOD WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC). THE UN IS DETERMINED TO SUPPORT IN A COORDINATED WAY THE EFFORTS OF MEMBER STATES AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS IN TACKLING THE MULTIFACETED CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE, NOW, UP TO AND BEYOND 2012. TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IS BRINGING TO BEAR, IN A WAY PERHAPS NEVER ACHIEVED BEFORE, THE COLLECTIVE STRENGTHS OF ALL ITS ENTITIES AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO THAT CHALLENGE.

THE FIRST STAGE OF THIS WIDE RANGING INITIATIVE WAS PRESENTED AT THE 2007 UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN BALI, INDONESIA — THE 13TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC (COP 13) AND 3RD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL (CMP 3) — IN DECEMBER 2007, WHICH ADOPTED THE BALI ROAD MAP. THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CEB INITIATIVE AIMS AT CONSOLIDATING THE DELIVERY OF RESULTS, THROUGH COORDINATED COLLABORATIVE AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES OF UN SYSTEM ENTITIES, IN RESPONSE TO EXISTING INTERGOVERNMENTAL MANDATES AND IN SUPPORT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS INITIATED IN BALI. THIS PUBLICATION PROVIDES A REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE ONGOING SECOND STAGE OF THE CEB INITIATIVE, AS WELL AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2008 UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE — COP 14 AND CMP 4 — IN POZNAN, POLAND IN DECEMBER 2008. THE UN SYSTEM'S EFFORTS WILL BE INTENSIFIED ON THE WAY TO THE 2009 UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE — COP 15 AND CMP 5 — AT THE END OF 2009 IN COPENHAGEN, DENMARK.

THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, WITH ITS ESTABLISHED STRUCTURES, COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS AND COLLECTIVE EXPERTISE, REMAINS AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE PARTIES IN IMPLEMENTING EXISTING AGREEMENTS, AS WELL AS FUTURE ONES.