



**Common Core Principles
for a UN System-wide Approach to Climate Action**

Executive Summary

1. Following the decision by HLCP at its 30th session, by which the Committee supported the development of a system-wide approach to coordinated climate action in a phased manner, a Task Team under the HLCP Working Group on Climate Change was established to develop “a proposal for the first part of the strategy, focused on system-wide policy and high-level programmatic coherence and coordination”. Based on consultation across the system, it was agreed to generate a set of “key principles” to guide and inform the UN system-wide approach to climate action in the post-2015 period.

2. The principles draw on successful examples of previous and current UN system-wide approaches to climate change, as well as identified gaps and opportunities for system-wide action for more effective support to Member States. The principles have been designed to guide a system-wide approach and inform and strengthen the system’s collective support to climate change action under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UNFCCC process, and the implementation of the Paris Agreement at the global, regional and national and subnational level.

Common Core Principles for a UN System-Wide Approach to Climate Change Action

- A. Support and advance inclusive sustainable development for all in line with common UN norms and standards**
- B. Facilitate integrated climate action that maximizes synergies and co-benefits across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**
- C. Advance and scale-up ambitious and transformative action on climate change**
- D. Prioritize interagency collaboration and joint action for greater collective impact**
- E. Strengthen UN system responsiveness to Member States’ needs on climate change**
- F. Base UN system climate action on the best climate science, data and knowledge**
- G. Build and strengthen partnerships, including with non-state actors**
- H. Ensure UN system-wide accountability on climate action**

Common Core Principles for a UN System-Wide Approach to Climate Change Action

- A. **Support and advance inclusive sustainable development for all in line with common UN norms and standards:** A UN system-wide approach to climate change action should be underpinned by the existing norms and standards in which UN system support to Member States is rooted, in alignment with and supportive of the ambition, vision and key guiding approaches laid out in the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes (but is not limited to): pursuing inclusive sustainable development; ensuring climate change support for all, including children, youth, women, indigenous peoples and the poorest and most marginalized; integrating human rights, gender- and age-responsive approaches; and advancing women's empowerment, social justice and equality and a just transition for all.
- B. **Facilitate integrated climate action that maximizes synergies and co-benefits across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** A UN system-wide approach to climate change action should support Member States in advancing the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Samoa Pathway, and eventually the agendas expected to emerge, in 2016, from the World Humanitarian Summit and Habitat III, under the overall umbrella of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This should also include links to relevant climate actions under conventions such as the Montreal Protocol, the Rio Conventions and key issues relevant to climate action including energy, food security, water, gender equality, health and air pollution. Specifically, a system-wide approach must foster and capitalize on synergies, opportunities for alignment and co-benefits within and across these frameworks, as well as with other common UN strategies and implementation plans that interface with climate change. The approach should ensure that UN system action on climate change is not solely about protecting development from climate change or reducing greenhouse gas emissions as an end in itself, but also about promoting climate change action that can drive sustainable development.
- C. **Advance and scale-up ambitious and transformative action on climate change:** The UN system should send a strong signal in support of efforts to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. Such a signal should include outlining pathways to a zero carbon and low emission world; supporting countries in implementing their national climate plans, including by promoting durable, sustainable and inclusive solutions for adaptation; and fostering dialogue and action for greater ambition for climate action in partnership with Member States and non-state actors. UN system-wide policy and high level programmatic coherence and coordination should support the main pillars of climate action: mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, transparency and monitoring, capacity development, facilitating technology transfer and finance.
- D. **Prioritize interagency collaboration and joint action for greater collective impact:** A system-wide approach should identify and support action areas where Member States and the UN system can benefit from joint UN system approaches. A system-wide approach should not be intended to encompass all individual activities by agencies relating to their individual mandates or decisions of their governing bodies, nor limit these activities, but instead be focused specifically on areas where joint action leads to improved results. In this way, a system-wide approach seeks to limit duplication and repetition within the system, responding also to recent JIU recommendations for improved collaboration, and encourage strengthened engagement among organizations to develop, assess and evolve approaches to climate action, based on comparative advantages of respective agencies and building on existing mechanisms and good practices.
- E. **Strengthen UN system responsiveness to Member States' needs on climate change:** Noting the universality of both the SDGs and Paris Agreement, a system-wide approach should acknowledge that UN system support to Member States on climate change will differ in accordance with national and regional contexts and country needs. This includes recognizing the differing role of UN system support to middle- and high-income countries, least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), small islands developing States (SIDS) and fragile states, as well as the need for locally specific climate change knowledge and data. A system-wide approach should facilitate joint UN system action to develop tools and approaches that help Member States to take climate action at global, regional, national and subnational level and be better equipped to implement the Paris Agreement, including through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which will play an important role in spurring climate change action at the national level.

- F. **Base UN system climate action on the best climate science, data and knowledge:** The UN system should champion and base its support to Member States on the state-of-the-art in climate-relevant science, data and knowledge- including the knowledge and experiences of populations affected by climate change, and ensuring this data is gender sensitive. Furthermore, the UN should continue and strengthen its support for the global, regional national and subnational production, dissemination and use of this data, science and knowledge.
- G. **Build and strengthen partnerships, including with non-state actors:** A system-wide approach should recognize and respond to the growing role of new partners (including the private sector, subnational actors and civil society) in supporting and strengthening UN action on climate change. This would include how the UN system complements and works with climate action, including on financing, under way outside the UN system and mobilizes partners in support of ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda. At the same time the UN system should ensure that UN action is inclusive to all stakeholders, while facilitating action that recognizes the distinct roles and responsibilities between different stakeholders, such as civil society and the private sector. The UN system can also play an important role in providing normative guidance to the private sector on climate action and support efforts on accountability. This principle should notably build on the work undertaken by the Lima Paris Action Agenda partners in catalyzing multi-stakeholder partnerships for climate action.
- H. **Ensure UN system-wide accountability on climate action:** A system-wide approach should encourage UN system support and programming that contributes to ambitious emissions reductions and reduces climate risk, and holds the UN system accountable to deliver on this to the member states and populations it will support. This includes ambitious approaches by the UN system at all levels and development and implementation of systematic tools and measures to strengthen accountability by the UN system for its own emissions, sharing climate data on current and future risks, advancing risk informed development, assessing the impact of project outcomes on vulnerability, and assessing the climate impact of implemented UN system programmes. This should encompass approaches for assessing programming that ensures climate-proofing and climate resilience, as called for in the Paris outcome.
