

3rd UNFCCC Capacity-building Talk

Enhancing Access to
Capacity-building

September, 2021



Summary Report

Capacity-building
Talks



United Nations
Climate Change

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Background

The Capacity-building Talks are a public event series launched by the UNFCCC secretariat to facilitate discussion and provision of information among actors and stakeholders involved in climate capacity-building. The talks offer a space to exchange knowledge and share best practices, including with a view to strengthening the focus and work on capacity-building within the UNFCCC process.

The event series aims to reach actors involved or interested in climate related capacity-building efforts. This includes UNFCCC Parties and observers, members of the PCCB network, capacity-building providers, and other interested actors. The talks cater to both novices and experts in the field of capacity-building.

The first Capacity-building Talk was held during the UN Climate Change Dialogues in November 2020 on the topic of monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building. The second talk addressed the topic of attuning capacity-building efforts to developing countries' needs and priorities" and took place in May 2021. This report provides a summary of the discussions held at the third Capacity-building Talk which took place on 30 September 2021 and examined the important issue of enhancing access to capacity-building.

The 3rd Talk

Capacity-building is fundamental for developing countries to achieve the objectives of the Convention and the Paris Agreement. More than developing practical skills and capabilities, capacity-building is about empowerment and building leadership and agency among individuals, organizations and societies. The capacity-building framework for developing countries* highlights the importance of promoting active participation of a wide range of stakeholders in climate capacity-building, including governments at all levels, national and international organizations, civil society and the private sector. Capacity-building activities should also take a whole-of-society approach and include marginalized actors and communities.

Stakeholders involved in the UNFCCC process emphasize the importance of capacity-building initiatives reaching beyond the public sector, which commonly is the key recipient of capacity-building support. The need to better target disadvantaged groups and vulnerable communities, including women, children and youth, local and indigenous peoples, the elderly and people with disabilities, is also frequently pointed out. Reaching stakeholders at local level is pivotal to empower key actors and ensure local ownership and leadership, which makes for more effective and sustainable climate capacity-building. The 3rd Capacity-building Talk explored how we can ensure better access and make capacity-building more inclusive, vertically as well as horizontally.

* The capacity building framework for developing countries was adopted at COP 7 in Marrakesh (decision 2/CP.7).

Objectives

In examining how capacity-building can become more accessible, the 3rd Capacity-building Talk provided insights and solutions for providers of capacity-building to better target and reach key stakeholders, and for recipients to better engage and get access to capacity-building support.

The virtual session brought together actors involved in capacity-building across the field to facilitate the sharing of key insights and best practices to effectively address the issue of access to capacity-building and consider how currently marginalized stakeholders can become involved.

It directly contributed to the ongoing work on capacity-building in the UNFCCC process through promoting discussions and solutions on a topic of key importance to Parties and observers.

In addition to providing space for general reflections and perspectives on access to capacity-building, the session specifically considered the following aspects:

- 1 Access to capacity-building across different sectors (e.g. public, private, civil society).
- 2 Existing structural inequalities, vulnerabilities and barriers that inhibit the access of certain marginalized stakeholder groups to capacity-building resources and funding.
- 3 Designing context-specific capacity-building services and tools that take into account local cultures, particularly of vulnerable and marginalized stakeholders and groups, including linguistical barriers in terms of both which, and how, language is used.

Meeting Information

Hosted by the
UNFCCC Secretariat

Date



30 September

Time



15:00-16:30 CET

Venue



Virtual-MS Teams

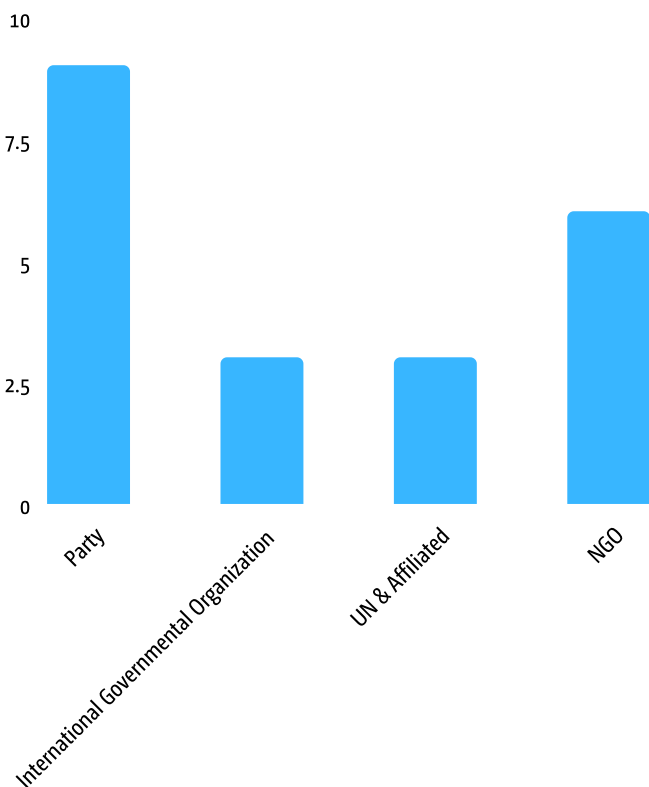
Attended by



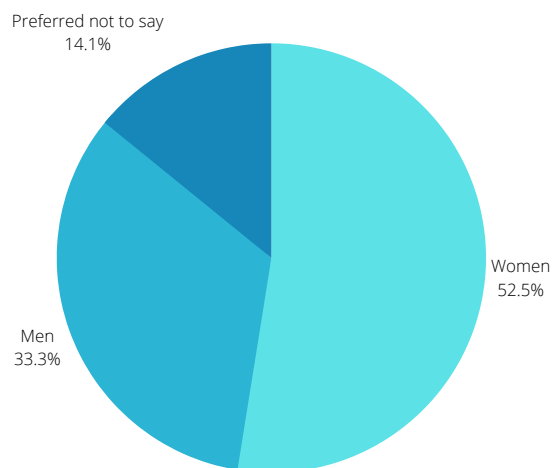
21 participants

Participants Statistics

Type of institutions:

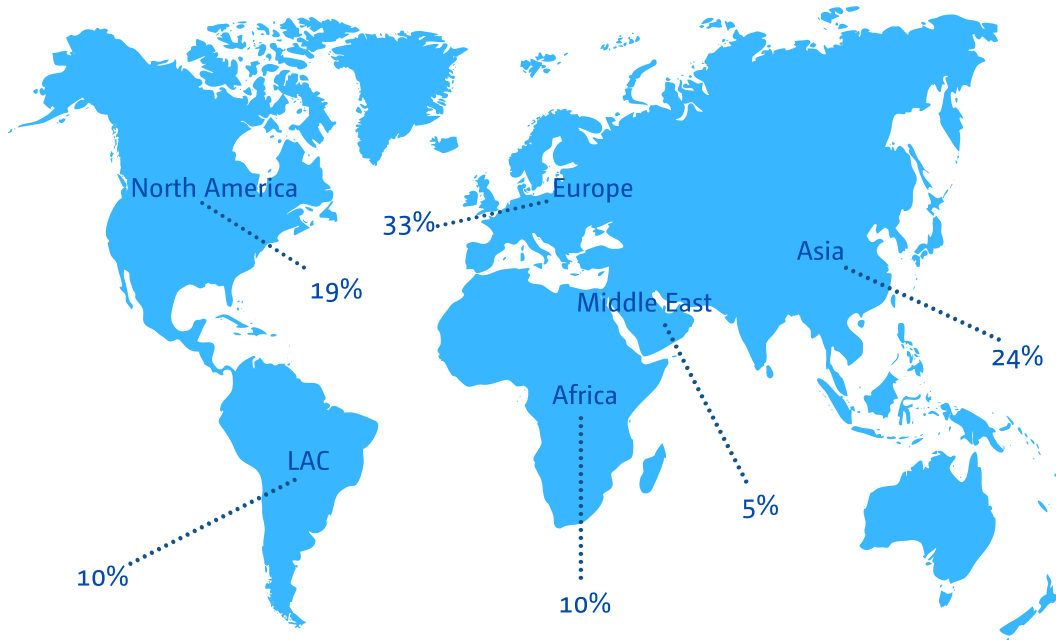


Gender Balance:



Participants' information

Located in:



Introduction with Menti

As an ice breaker, participants were asked to describe in a few words what access to capacity-building means to them. The word cloud below summarises their responses.



Summary of discussions

Panel moderator



Alejandra Lopez

Team leader
Independent Alliance of Latin
America and the Caribbean
(AILAC)

Panelists



April Nishimura

Board member
Training Resources for the
Environmental Community (TREC)



Syeda Hadika Jamshaid

Climate change expert
Ministry of Climate Change
Government of Pakistan



Robert Tippmann

Co-founder Climatekos
& Chairman German Emissions
Trading Association (BVEK)

Panel Discussion

The panel discussion focused on hands on experiences relating to barriers and challenges with regard to accessing capacity-building, as well as best practices to bridge gaps and needs in order to enhance access to capacity-building. The discussion focused on various stakeholder groups and how to enhance access to capacity-building of marginalized communities as well as SMEs within the private sector. The panellists outlined remaining challenges in regard to different capacity-building approaches but emphasized the lacking capacities in terms of financial and training resources. Another important topic raised, was the challenges in terms of language. The discussion further elaborated on the importance of providing networking opportunities and peer-to-peer learning. In the face of climate change related challenges, interdisciplinary and holistic approaches are needed, which may be maintained by mutual knowledge sharing. The section concluded with an outlook from the different panellists as well as a call for a stronger listening approach within capacity-building activities. Another crucial aspect discussed was the role of utilizing unlocked potential of marginalized communities and private-public collaboration.

Key barriers and challenges with regard to accessing capacity-building

The panellists pointed out several barriers which remain with regard to accessing capacity-building and identified different approaches for several stakeholder groups.

When working with marginalized communities, a lack of awareness of what constitutes capacity-building on the side of the communities can be a barrier. High bureaucratic processes, including burdensome application processes, and cost intensive capacity-building services may also render capacity-building opportunities inaccessible for marginalized communities.

Furthermore, it was also pointed out that even when marginalized communities access capacity-building, it might be less useful to them in comparison to dominant groups, if the experts who deliver the training are outsiders from dominant groups themselves. It was noted that a fair amount of colonialism and racism is still embedded in some of today's capacity-building practices.

Summary of discussions

Panel Discussion

While the concept that experts, as outsiders are expected to come in and teach to the communities, might be useful in terms of knowledge transfer, it was mentioned that often the best practices from outsiders can also stimulate marginalized communities to assimilate to a culture that does not align with their communities. In order to build up local ownership, applying a stronger listening approach when implementing capacity-building activities was recommended by the panellist given that there are plenty of existing skills at the local level.

With regard to capacities in the government sector, another panellist mentioned a lack of system thinking approaches in capacity-building and gave examples from her own country's health, water, and waste sector. She noted that while dealing with the pressing consequences of climate change, an exchange of active coordination across institutions is urgently required. Further, looking at research institutes, she noted that existing fragmentation of information also creates certain barriers, and stronger policies and international support would positively contribute to an enhancement of capacity and access to capacity-building services.

With reference to the business sector, one panellist specified that the focus of enhancing access to capacity-building should not lie on the big corporations, since they have the ability to buy necessary resources or outsource. Rather SMEs, particularly in the South but also in northern countries, are still lacking access to capacity-building initiatives and should be a main focus for capacity-building activities. The panellist briefly presented findings from a recent UNFCCC survey conducted in the MENA region. The findings indicate that SMEs are still lacking the access to reliable data, tools and information which they would need for transformative decision making. Also, there is a lack of training and access to finance as well as access to technical support, especially in regards to adaptation measures within SMEs.

The matter of language was raised as a key barrier across sectors. Different stakeholder groups often experience language barriers, both in terms of which language is used, and how language is used. The level of jargon, for instance, that is used in many capacity-building activities can also make them less accessible for certain stakeholders, including marginalized groups. With regard to the business sector, it was noted by one panellist that this sector tends to think about the next quarter, mostly. But when it comes to mitigating and adapting to climate change, long-term thinking is important and needs to be incorporated into the timeframe of business activities and planning. The language used by climate experts is different to business language as they use different terminologies and technicalities as business sectors. Furthermore, in businesses where the focus lays more often on a quarterly timescale, the incorporation of long-term thinking is necessary for a long-term transformation to happen.

In terms of meeting the requirements on the global level, the importance of bringing governments, civil society and private sector together was noted. Furthermore, UN and international organizations, who have experience, mandates and acceptance should help make that exchange happen. When looking at the national and local level, the panellist experienced great benefits when working together with associations, in particular with trade associations. Trade associations usually have a high expertise in their field and know much more about recent economic developments within the sectors. Also, they are very connected to governments, involved in lobbying and may bring together their constituencies in different sectors, which is highly beneficial for enabling access to capacity building. They can also be instrumental in facilitating, driving and pushing for action on the ground in parallel.

Summary of discussions

Panel Discussion

Ways to enhance different stakeholder groups' access to capacity-

In order to enhance capacity-building and to fill existing capacity gaps and needs, one panellist re-emphasized that there is a need for a stronger listening approach. Especially for interdisciplinary working groups, peer-to-peer learning was raised as a powerful tool to bridge challenges and enhance capacities within communities. One panellist brought up an example of organized meetings for indigenous people which are at risk of displacement within Canada, the US, and the Pacific Islands and had the opportunity to share their knowledge. Even though they all came from different areas, cultures, and were facing different challenges, they could learn a lot from each other and share knowledge, and best practices.

Another example was from Slum Dwellers International, an organization which aims to ensure that the needs of people from poor urban households are integrated and not marginalised by city administrations. The organization facilitated an exchange across communities in the Philippines and in India which were facing similar problems. Giving the opportunity to visit other communities and see what they had accomplished, created a powerful vision that change is possible. The panellist pointed out, that this transformational way of capacity-building is much more beneficial than traditional capacity-building approaches.

Networks across all levels were also noted to be important especially when looking at the cross-cutting issues of climate change. The value of integrating youth participants into processes was also mentioned. Against this backdrop, one participant mentioned the possibility for all interested public and private entities and initiatives to participate in the PCCB Network which supports climate-related capacity-building globally through facilitation of networking and peer learning.

One panellist pointed out, that there are still many resources from marginalized communities, that are not used, because they don't have access to the big platforms and lack in capacity to organize outreach. Further support and access to capacity should be specifically provided.

At the same time, it was mentioned that interventions must be cultural relevant. This means providing capacity-building in many different layers. In addition to technical assistance, money for employment for people to utilise their skills is needed, as well as investment in the development of leaders of different, especially marginalized, communities.

Regarding enhancing the access to capacity-building, one panellist further noted the importance of and need for more on-the-job training opportunities and greater climate-related training at schools and universities. This could range from interventions regarding energy auditing and solar installation, but also offering skills in project design and implementation. Related to this, building up institutional capacities to provide ongoing capacity-building interventions and support was another point raised.

Summary of discussions

Panel Discussion

In the context of capacity-building at the global level, the importance of South-South Cooperation, rather than only exclusive North-South learning approaches, was noted as it expands capacity-building aspects for different and broader stakeholder groups. By incorporating indigenous knowledge, as well as practices and values it is possible to develop capacities further. While greater South-South Cooperation is key, the continued value of North-South Cooperation was also emphasized by one panellist who gave the example of SMEs business to business (B2B) approaches. It was noted that B2B activities between southern SMEs and northern corporations are demonstrating that this modality can effectively support learning on the job, can be important to enhance the climate proofing of supply chains, as well as entails co-benefits of cross border action such as mitigation and minimizing economic losses. The same panellist also noted that an acceleration of such collaborations is needed in the light of the urgency of the climate crisis and the existing capacity gaps.

How would enhanced, more inclusive access to capacity-building contribute to more transformational climate action?

The panellists highlighted several points in relation to how enhanced, more inclusive access to capacity-building would contribute to more transformational capacity-building. First, the importance of local community perspectives was emphasized as these communities bear the brunt of climate change. Local and indigenous communities need to be included in capacity-building processes as they have extensive knowledge and skills to contribute. Furthermore, one panellist specified that climate change is a human problem and that as humans we need to change our attitude to exploitation and how we relate with each other. In this context, the need for deep learning and the urgency to give more centre stage and tools to previously locked out communities to enhance transformational climate action were highlighted as a central theme.

From the private sector perspective, three main points were emphasized. First, studies from the MENA region looking at the private sector found that a combination of capacity-building and theory-to-action in collaboration with academia, and other sectors was necessary to create climate action. In addition, lobbying was found to drive action as it can get all the necessary actors involved. By using existing platforms, increased action can be built and integrated, which is for instance caused by increased knowledge via capacity building and related trainings. This should lead to pushing for improved enabling environments and regulations and incentive mechanisms for actions at the local level. Climate clubs, coalitions and consortiums can be used to work with selected champions (countries & actors) within the different regions and at the level of the countries, creating success stories and showcases to lead by example. UN agencies and international organizations along with trade associations can help moderate, facilitate, and work from the regional perspective.

Second, supply chains are becoming increasingly important as they are directly affected by climate change as well as can contribute to mitigate climate change if respective measures are taken along the supply chains. Redesigning international supply chains can lower their overall impact such as deforestation free supply chains, and greater access to climate-related capacity-building for SMEs and other supply chain actors is key in this regard. At the same time such redesigned supply chains should allow for SMEs to piggyback on measures by larger corporates, for example, so that they can benefit from financial incentives as well as reduced economic losses.

Finally, access to capacity-building for SMEs through incubators should be enhanced alongside North-South and South-South partnerships that focus on local-level capacity-building.

Summary of discussions

Open Plenary Discussion

This moderated open plenary discussion session invited participants to ask questions to the panel and share their own views and perspectives on the event topic.

Best practices and real-life experiences were brought up by the different participants throughout the open plenary session. Participants and the panellists indicated that there are still many challenges in terms of collaboration and trust necessary to overcome current obstacles. But there is already a broad base of existing capacities which have the potential to be unlocked and leveraged for inclusive knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the importance of networks and peer-to-peer learning were considered beneficial to enhancing capacities and providing mutual long-term learning opportunities.

The questions addressed to the panelists and panel moderator are summarized below:

1

From your experience working on climate-related capacity-building, how do you overcome the lack of mutual action, especially when working with marginal communities?

“ I often experience, that marginalized communities undervalue the knowledge that they have. While working with indigenous people in the Philippines, which were under-resourced, I also acknowledged, that the effects of climate change also affected their ability to maintain their cultural knowledge and to transfer it to the next generation. This cyclical relationship deserves so much more attention, as we can learn so much from marginal communities and their transferred knowledge. [...] Marginal communities often have limited resources and experience only minimal support of the government, which they would urgently need to maintain their individual expertise within the communities. We have to acknowledge, that it takes time to build up trust. Especially for communities, to believe, that the government might actually be able to provide helpful support. [...] On the other hand, I see the responsibility of governments. They need to step up and to show their willingness to give support in mitigation and adaptation measures as well as in financial resources.



April Nishimura

Summary of discussions

Open Plenary Discussion

2

Do you have some specific examples of a program or initiative increasing access to capacity-building with regards to climate change?



Robert Tippmann

Traditionally we see many capacity-building activities under the umbrella of the UN organisations, like UNDP or UNEP. [...] To give one example out of many, Climatekos is involved in the big development project "The Great Green Wall"*. Along with many different agencies, rural communities, bilateral coalitions and other stakeholders, this project provides many different capacity-building initiatives or entry points, especially on the local level. What will be important in this decisive decade and the next phase of "The Great Green Wall" up to 2030 is to upgrade such capacity building efforts with a view to scale-up to the required level meeting the targets of the initiative. Unleashing the power of SMEs will require approaches such as supply chain initiatives and promotion of SMEs and start-ups via incubators."

*The "Great Green Wall" is an African-led movement with the high ambition to grow an 8,000 km natural wonder of the world across the entire width of Africa.

[...] The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is a global Human rights organisation, which also focuses on climate displacement of indigenous people. As a good practice example, they are cooperating with grassroots organizations and creating policies which can be brought to governments. Through this they are making policy recommendations about increasing funding and making government institutions more equitable and accessible.

As another example I would also like to highlight the support of peer-to-peer learning of indigenous communities, which has been a fruitful way to enhance capacity-building. The goal is to build up ongoing relationships, promoting continuous sharing of solution and lessons learned about similar challenges. [...] Workshops are of course very helpful, but from my experience the outcome is often rather short limited. A main question within our work should be, how to centre such movements within our capacity-building, we need to create networks and movements, which generate more powerful and long-term interventions.



April Nishimura

Summary of discussions

Key take-aways

The panellists identified that there is a foundational basis for potential climate action, though the scale and the pace of capacity-building efforts still needs adjustments. In order to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in line with the Paris Agreement, unlocking unused potential through enhancing access to capacity-building will become crucial. Continuous pressure on governments and politicians as well as the involvement of big corporations is also vital to enhance capacities.

It was further noted that there needs to be greater emphasis on enhancing the collaboration across different sectors and that capacity-building actors need to think about how marginalized communities, the private sector, research institutions, and governments can have more collaborative spaces to support each other.

Summary of discussions

Key take-aways

At the end of the meeting, participants communicated their key takeaways via Menti. Some participants emphasized the importance of peer-to-peer learning and networks for enhancing capacity-building. Unlocking the full potential of existing technologies and knowledge of marginalized communities as well as the application of stronger listening approaches were key takeaways for other participants.

The table below shows all responses.

Peer-to-Peer learning	New Insights	Utilized full potential of existing technologies and platforms
Systems and Thinking Approach	Unlocking Existing Potential	Utilization of Networks
Role of Incubators	Structural Long-term Solutions that include Marginalized Communities	Using UN and International Organizations to implement capacity-building
Systematic Change	Traditional, Local, and Indigenous Knowledge	Capacity-building at all levels to drive fundamental change

What is next?

The insights from this Capacity-building Talk relate to the work of the PCCB. Currently, the PCCB is preparing for its 3rd Capacity-building Hub which will take place at COP 26 in Glasgow and during which many of the issues that we have talked about today will certainly be discussed again in greater detail.

Panelists

April Nishimura



April Nishimura has a deep expertise in capacity building with marginalized communities. April is the Director of Capacity Building at RVC (Rooted in Vibrant Communities) in Seattle, USA. In this role, she supports grassroots organizations led by people of color, immigrants and refugees to fulfil their communities' dreams. She is the lead author of "Transformational Capacity Building," which outlines the key principles to using capacity building to meaningfully change power dynamics and access to resources for marginalized communities. She is on the board of Training Resources for the Environmental Community and on the board of the international human rights organization UUSC, which focuses on supporting grassroots solutions to climate forced displacement.

Syeda Hadika Jamshaid

Syeda Hadika Jamshaid is a Climate Change Policy Specialist at the Ministry of Climate Change within the Government of Pakistan. She is supporting the ministry in building climate resilience infrastructure for achieving Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and localising carbon market tools for sustainable development and air pollution control in Pakistan.



Robert Tippmann



Robert Tippmann has worked for more than 20 years in the field of environmental finance and low-carbon and climate-resilient development – including for a leading climate change services provider and with previous assignments with international, bilateral and research organizations. He is Co-founder of Climatekos, a climate action project and programme developer and environmental finance solutions provider and serves as Chairman of the German Emissions Trading Association.

Panel moderator



Alejandra Lopez

Alejandra Lopez is currently the Finance and Capacity Building Advisor to the Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC) negotiating group under the UN climate change regime. She worked for almost 10 years for the Mexican public sector, including as Director of International Affairs of the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change; Director for Climate Change at the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Director for Climate Change at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. In those capacities, she was also a negotiator on behalf of Mexico to the UNFCCC process between 2004 and 2015. Prior to her current position, she was Team Leader to the Support Unit of AILAC.

Programme

Welcome & Introduction

- Alejandro Kilpatrick, Capacity-building Subdivision, UNFCCC secretariat

Panel Discussion

The discussion focused on organizational bottlenecks and systemic challenges related to fostering ownership of capacity-building, as well as experiences, best practices and lessons learned.

- Alejandra Lopez, Team leader, AILAC
- April Nishimura, Board member, TRESA
- Syeda Hadika Jamshaid, Climate change expert, Ministry of Climate Change Government of Pakistan
- Robert Tippmann Co-founder Climatekos & Chairman, BVEK

Open Plenary Discussion

This moderated open discussion session invited participants to join the discussion, either by requesting the floor or through the chat.

What is next?

- Alejandro Kilpatrick, Capacity-building Subdivision, UNFCCC secretariat



Capacity-building Talks



Useful links

- [Recording of the 3rd Capacity-building Talk](#)
- [3rd Capacity-building Talk page](#)
- [Capacity-building Talks main page](#)

Capacity-building
Talks

Contact details

UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
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United Nations
Climate Change

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