



REGIONAL  
CLIMATE  
WEEKS

Virtual Roundtables

3-4 March 2021

POST EVENT REPORT  
Regional Climate Weeks - Roundtables

2021

*“Virtual Roundtables: Setting the scene in terms of regional priorities, challenges and opportunities for climate action”*

## Regional Climate Weeks - Roundtables

*On 3-4 March 2021, the Virtual Roundtables, gathered over 1500 representatives from national and subnational governments, cities, the private sector, financial institutions and civil society, to jointly discuss opportunities for climate action and how to build back better from the COVID19 pandemic.*

*During the 2-day series of regional roundtables, a selection of the leading experts, debated on three thematic tracks:*

- 1) seizing transformational opportunities,*
- 2) managing climate risks and*
- 3) national action and economy-wide approaches*

*Find out more watching the recordings [HERE](#)*



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## PROGRAMME

### The Virtual Roundtables 3 March 2021

#### High level Opening 14:00 – 14:15 pm (CET)

Master of Ceremony: Ms. Sarah Marchildon, UNFCCC

- Ms. Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary
- H.E. Carolina Schmidt, COP25 President
- H.E Alok Sharma, COP26 President Designate
- Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP
- Haoliang Xu, Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP

#### Latin America and Caribbean Virtual Roundtable 14:15 pm - 15:45 pm (CET)

**Moderator:** H.E. Ambassador Carlos Fuller, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and immigration, Belize

**Opening remarks:** H.E. Dr. Max Puig, Executive Vice President of the National Council on Climate Change

**Speakers:**

Alicia Barcena, Executive Secretary, UN-ECLAC

Una May Gordon, Principal Director, Climate Change Division, Ministry of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, Jamaica

Leo Heileman, Latin America and the Caribbean Office, UNEP

Arnoldo Pineda, Presidential Delegate for Climate Change Presidential Office, Honduras

Manuel Otero, General Director of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Ligia Castro de Doens, Director of Climate Change, Ministry of Environment, Panamá

Ricardo Bertolino, Managing Director Argentine Network of Municipalities against Climate Change (RAMCC)

Ana Belén Marín, Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador, 2nd Vice-President of ParlAmericas. President of Parliamentary Network on Climate Change

Graham George Watkins, Chief of Climate Change Division of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Eduardo Piquero, Managing Director, MexiCO2 Plataforma Mexicana de Carbono

Keyvan Macedo, Director of Sustainability, Group Natura & Co



## The Virtual Roundtables 4 March 2021

### Asia Pacific Virtual Roundtable 9:00 am – 10:30 am (CET)

Master of Ceremony: Judith Adrien, UNFCCC

**Moderator:** Ms. Linh Do, Leaders of Global Sustainability, University of Melbourne

**Opening remarks:** H.E. Shinjiro Koizumi, Minister of Environment, Japan

**Speakers:**

H.E Malik Amin Aslam Khan, Minister for Climate Change, Pakistan

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, UN-ESCAP

Kosi Murray Latu, Director-General, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP)

Celine Dyer, Climate Coordinator, Office of the Prime Minister, Cook Islands

Arun Prakash Bhatta, Under Secretary(Technical) NPM, Nepal Climate Change Support Program (NCCSP), Ministry of Forests and Environment, Nepal

Rubana Huq, President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

Sonam Tashi, Chief Planning Officer from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Bhutan

Peidan Yang, Executive Director, China Champions for Climate Action

Punyapha Visavakornvisisd, Youth representative, Thailand

### Africa Virtual Roundtable 11:30 – 13:00 (CET)

**Moderator:** Ms. Musonda Mumba, PhD. Director the Rome Centre for Sustainable Development, UNDP

**Opening remarks:** Hon. Sam Cheptoris, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda

**Speakers:**

H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment Arab Republic of Egypt

H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma, Chair of the H.R.H Princess Abze Djigma Foundation, initiator and leader of Initiative MAMA-LIGHT for Sustainable Energy

Mr. Serge Ekue, CEO West African Development Bank (BOAD)

Mr. James Murombedzi, Senior Climate Governance Expert, Economic Commission for Africa

Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Expert in the adaptation and mitigation of indigenous peoples to climate change, Chad

Mr. Al Hamdou Dorsouma, Manager for Climate and Green Growth Division, African Development Bank (AfDB)

Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General United Cities and Local Governments, Africa (UCLG)

**Wrap-up message** by Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

**The Virtual Roundtables**  
**4 March 2021**

**MENA Climate Week**  
**13:00 pm – 13:10 pm (CET)**

**Master of Ceremony:** Danielle Magalhaes, UNFCCC

**Speakers:**

H.E. Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed Belhaif Al Nuaimi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, United Arab Emirates

H.E. Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, Chairman, World Green Economy Organization

**Wrap up Session**  
**13:10 pm - 13:30 pm (CET)**

**Speakers:**

Gonzalo Muñoz, High-Level Climate Champion of Chile

Nigel Topping, High-Level Champion of United Kingdom

**Forward Looking Session**  
**13:30 - 13:50 (CET)**

**Speakers:**

James Grabert Director, UNFCCC

John Christensen, UNEP DTU Partnership Director, UNEP

Cassie Flynn, Head of the Climate Promise, UNDP

Venkat Ramana Puri, Program Manager, Carbon Markets and Innovation, World Bank



## HIGH-LEVEL KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

### Regional Climate Weeks Hosts of 2021



H.E. Shinjiro Koizumi  
Minister of Environment  
Japan



H.E. Sam Cheptoris  
Minister of Water and  
Environment  
Uganda



H.E. Dr. Max Puig  
Executive Vice President  
Dominican Republic



H.E. Dr. Abdullah bin Mohammed Belhaif Al  
Nuaimi  
Minister of Climate Change and Environment  
United Arab Emirates

### Regional and Global Partner Organizations



Patricia Espinosa  
Executive Secretary,  
UNFCCC



Inger Andersen  
Executive Director  
UNEP



Haoliang Xu  
Assistant Secretary General and Director of the  
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support  
UNDP



Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana  
Executive Secretary  
UN ESCAP



Ibrahim Thiaw  
Executive Secretary  
UNCCD



Alicia Bárcena Ibarra  
Executive Secretary  
UN ECLAC



Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer  
Chairman  
WGE Organization



Mr. Serge Ekue  
CEO  
BOAD

### UNFCCC COP-25 and COP-26 Presiding Officers and Climate Champions



H.E. Carolina Schmidt  
COP25 President  
Chile



H.E. Alok Sharma  
COP26 President Designate  
UK



Nigel Topping  
High-Level Climate Action  
Champion of the UK  
COP26



Gonzalo Muñoz  
High-Level Climate Action Champion  
of Chile  
COP25

### High-Level Speakers



H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad  
Minister of Environment  
Arab Republic of Egypt



H.E. Malik Amin Aslam Khan  
Minister for Climate Change,  
Pakistan



H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma,  
Chair of the H.R.H Princess Abze  
Djigma Foundation



## THE VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLES 2021

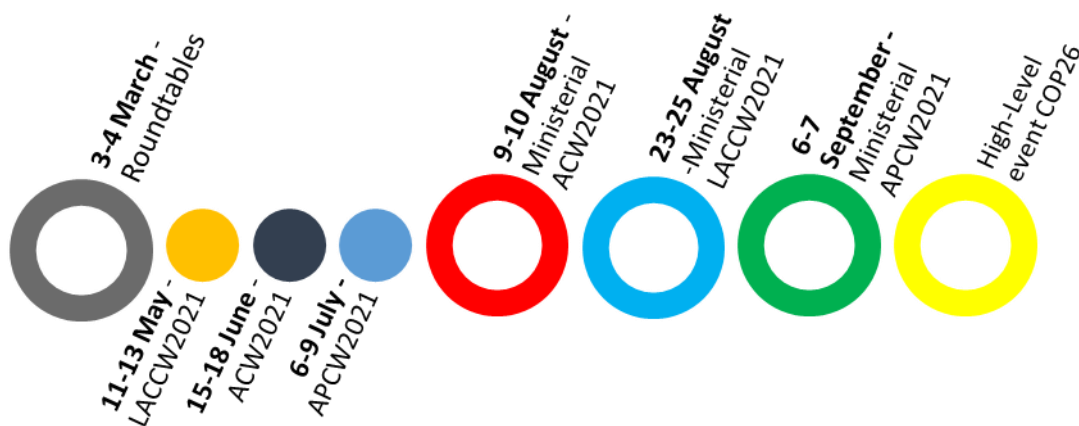
### Summary and Outcomes

On 3-4 March 2021, the core partners<sup>1</sup> together with the Host Countries<sup>2</sup> and the High-level Climate Champions<sup>3</sup> convened the first event as part of the 2021 edition of the Regional Climate Weeks (Figure 1), called the Virtual Roundtables. The Roundtables focused on collecting messages and inputs from a diverse range of stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities for climate action. The discussion also serves to shape next steps in the development of each of the thematic areas defined for this year, which are: national action and economy-wide approaches, integrated approaches for climate-resilient development, and seizing transformational opportunities.

During the event, national and sub-national government representatives, businesses, non-profit organizations and civil society shared opinions, thoughts and suggestions for consideration during the upcoming Regional Climate Weeks Thematic Sessions.

There were three Roundtables this year – one for Latin America and the Caribbean (hosted by the Dominican Republic), one for Asia-Pacific (hosted by Japan) and another for Africa (hosted by Uganda). The Roundtables were interpreted in three languages, English, Spanish and French, and are available [here](#). Additionally, a special event was held on 4 March to launch a Regional Climate Week for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) hosted by United Arab Emirates.

**Figure 1:** Events scheduled in 2021 as part of the Regional Climate Weeks.

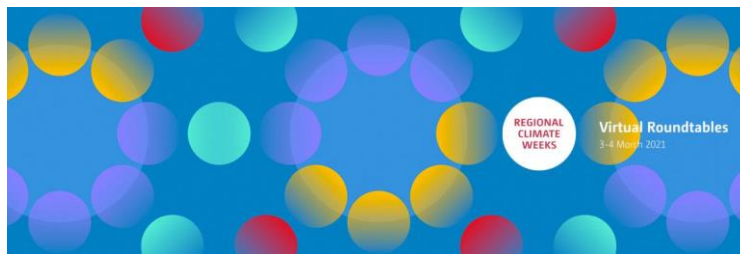


<sup>1</sup> World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Bank Group, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Climate Change (UNFCCC)

<sup>2</sup> Dominican Republic in Latin America and the Caribbean, Japan for Asia-Pacific and Uganda for Africa

<sup>3</sup> Gonzalo Muñoz, High-Level Climate Champion of Chile and Nigel Topping, High-Level Champion of United Kingdom





More specifically, these roundtables set the scene ahead of the Regional Climate Weeks in terms of the priorities and the challenges and the opportunities for each region. The roundtables were designed to:

- a) Identify national actions and economy-wide approaches when it comes to addressing climate change;
- b) Explore integrated approaches for climate-resilient development; and
- c) Seize transformational opportunities to drive forward regional implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

*“What are your regional priorities, challenges  
and opportunities for climate action?”*

The Virtual Roundtable was a key meeting to help build momentum on the road towards COP26 in November and to drive forward regional implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Ms. Patricia Espinosa, both UNFCCC COP Presiding Officers, H.E. Carolina Schmidt, COP25 President and H.E Alok Sharma, COP26 President Designate, UNEP Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen and Assistant Secretary General of UNDP, Mr. Haoliang Xu joined attendees at the event opening.

The keynote speaker was H.E. Dr. Max Puig, Executive Vice President of the National Council on Climate Change for the Latin America and Caribbean region, H.E. Shinjiro Koizumi, Minister of Environment, Japan for the Asia and Pacific roundtable, Hon. Sam Cheptoris, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda for the Africa regional roundtable and H.E. Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed Belhaif Al Nuaimi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, United Arab Emirates, for the MENA Climate Week special event.

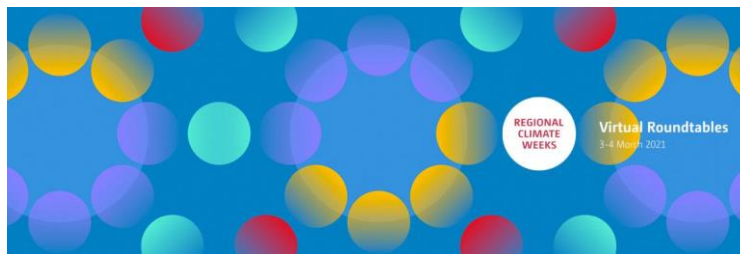
At the conclusion of the two-days event, the recommendations developed during the 3 regional roundtables were presented to the three thematic tracks by the High-Level Champions, Gonzalo Muñoz, High-Level Climate Champion of Chile and Nigel Topping, High-Level Champion of the United Kingdom.

**Ambition** – Overall, it became evident in all regional discussions that more ambitious National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and implementation action plans are needed. These transitions are going to require an approach to planning that incorporates the whole of society and all levels of government and the private sector.

**Nature-based Solutions** – There is growing awareness that ‘nature-based solutions’ (NbS) can help to safeguard humanity from climate change impacts. There are also inherent benefits to working with nature in ways that harness its natural services and is therefore important that cities mainstream this approach in urban planning and design. Outlining the existing efforts and commitments to incorporate nature-based solutions by local and subnational governments is fundamental determine the value of natural capital.

**Local communities** – It became evident across all regions that civil society organisations and private citizens have an opportunity to contribute to the transition by driving societal





behaviour change to create more sustainable consumption, mobility and production patterns. Solutions need to be inclusive and relevant to all levels of society, to indigenous and local communities and youth. Governments need to be open-minded towards young people and make them know their perspectives and action matters through transparent and dedicated engagement.

**Circular economy** – Moving towards a more circular economy could deliver benefits and it was mentioned as one of the key transformative solutions for all regions, not only as an avenue to reducing pressure on the environment but also to stimulate innovation and boost economic growth.

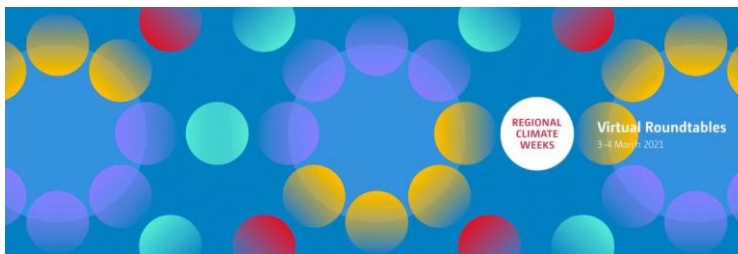
**Covid recovery** – Prioritising long-term planning and integrated policy making in response to climate change and to Covid is the only way countries and non-state actors are going to achieve the Paris goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees and creating climate resilient communities. In rebuilding from Covid-19, every government has the opportunity to set out a strategy that confronts systemic risks and makes us more resilient to shocks. This is society's best opportunity to create shifts in thinking and practise. It will only be through collaborating and bringing all stakeholders together to inform action that put countries on the low-emission, resilient pathways.

**Climate risk** – mainstreaming climate risk management strategy needs to be prioritized at the highest level by governments. The challenges of facing climate change have benefitted from established regional partnerships and cooperation. It has been also brought to the attention that significant information and financial gaps exist between national and municipal governments on climate action and that there continues to be a challenge to move from the planning stages of National Adaptation Plans to implementation action on the ground.

**Finance and carbon pricing** – Participants agreed that climate finance is still a key factor in all regions to implement climate plans and policies. Whilst substantial financial resources are available, they must be channelled to build carbon neutral and resilient societies, especially in developing countries. There was also a shared understanding that financial tools such as green bonds increasingly need to be used to finance future infrastructure. A common message in all the roundtables was the call from stakeholders for a clear price on carbon and recognition of the value of nature and the costs of its destruction. Placing an adequate price on GHG emissions can help to mobilize the financial investments required to stimulate clean technology and market innovation, fuelling new, low-carbon drivers of economic growth. This instrument is of fundamental relevance in setting economic incentives for a cleaner development.

At the Forward Looking Session, the Regional Climate Weeks organizing partners, James Grabert Director at UNFCCC, John Christensen Director at UNEP, Cassie Flynn the Head of the Climate Promise of UNDP and Venkat Ramana Puri, Program Manager, Carbon Markets and Innovation at World Bank, summarised the main takeaways from the regional sessions. The partners reminded of the importance of the Regional Climate Weeks in stepping up climate ambition if nations are to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

They further stressed that all regions expressed the need for more capacity building and dissemination of information with respect to finding solutions in these challenging times. Organizing partners agreed to include more discussion on cross-cutting issues such as



climate ambition, nature-based solutions, circular economy and finance in particular through the use of tools such as putting a price on carbon. They have also committed to be as inclusive as possible in the events to come by underlining the words of collaboration with action and further announcing that these key findings from each region will be taken forward towards the success of COP26.

## HIGH-LEVEL OPENING

The High-Level Opening event convened on 3 March 2021 from 14:00 to 14:15 hours (Central European Time) and featured a series of welcome remarks by the Organizing Partners and by current and incoming COP Presidencies. Video messages from each speaker can be watched at the links provided below:

### **Ms. Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary**

Ms. Espinosa stressed that COP26 in Glasgow – the most important COP since the Paris Agreement was adopted – is only eight months away. She called for urgent action to build on recent commitments by countries, businesses, cities and societies to embark on the transformations required to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees. “This year is crucial. We need your support like never before. This first Regional Climate Week event can support you in setting the pace that will result in a successful COP26 in November,” the UN’s top climate official said.

Video message [here](#)

### **H.E. Carolina Schmidt, COP25 President**

Ms. Schmidt said that the series of regional meetings represent “a unique platform for multiple actors throughout society to share the experience and vision necessary to construct robust climate plans while also ensuring an inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19”. She added that “for governments to successfully deliver on their commitments under the Paris Agreement, their efforts must be tailored to regional and local realities that communities face”.

Video message [here](#)

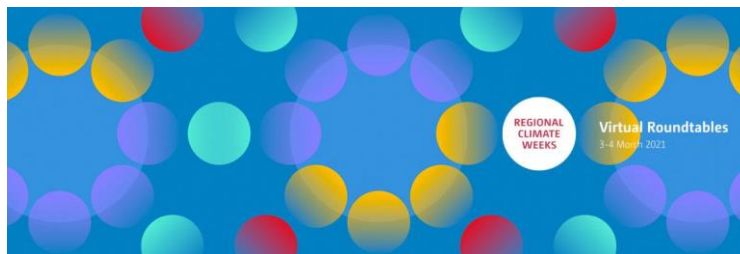
### **H.E Alok Sharma, COP26 President Designate**

Mr. Sharma expressed his support and said, “We’re backing these regional climate weeks to the hilt”. He pointed to enhancing collaboration internationally and across society as a central theme of the UK’s COP26 Presidency. He called the Regional Climate Weeks “a unique opportunity to come together and drive practical action in every region and sector to help implement the Paris Agreement, to build partnerships and share solutions between governments and across society.”

Video message [here](#)

### **Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP**

Ms. Andersen put her remarks into the context of our planetary climate crisis and highlighted the opportunity the Regional Climate Weeks present. She offered solutions, saying “it is time for the greatest push humanity has ever made to move our economies to



net-zero”. She went on to point out that “a climate-smart recovery could cut about 25% of emissions we would otherwise see by 2030... and the right investments can bring nature back to our communities”.

Video message [here](#).

### **Haoliang Xu, Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP**

Mr. Xu reiterated the opportunity to build back better from COVID-19 and outlined the support being offered to integrate a low-carbon transition and risk-based approach to recovery strategy, imploring all countries to “join forces, ramp up climate ambition and climate action now.” He set the tone of the discussions to come by encouraging participants to “keep building the momentum towards Glasgow to ensure a successful outcome for planet and people”.

Video message [here](#)

### **HIGHLIGHTS: LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN ROUNDTABLE**

This Roundtable took place on 3 March 2021, from 14:15 - 15:45 (CET) it was one of a series of three regional events. The session was moderated by H.E. Ambassador Carlos Fuller, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and immigration from Belize.

An opening remark video message was delivered by H.E. Dr. Max Puig, Executive Vice President of the National Council on Climate Change. The video message can be accessed [here](#).

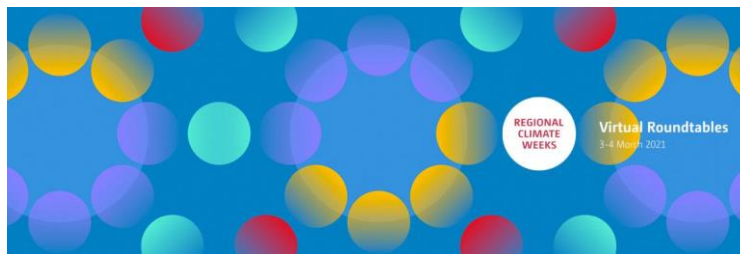
Over the course of an hour and a half, discussions took place around the three thematic tracks: 1) national action and economy-wide approaches, 2) managing climate risks and 3) seizing transformational opportunities. A summary of each thematic track is provided:

#### ***National action and economy-wide approaches***

**Ms. Alicia Bárcena**, the Executive Secretary of UN-ECLAC delivered key messages on the need for aligning all financial flows with net-zero emissions and climate resilience to achieving the Paris goals. She further conveyed on what are the most appropriate approaches for aligning financial flows and achieve the necessary scale, including domestic public finance, international finance and domestic public finance. She reiterated that financing for adaptation to climate change in the region is urgent.

Eleven countries in the region have submitted their NDCs but they are limited in ambition. Of all the 7 dynamic sectors identified by ECLAC, the matrix for decarbonization is the most important at the regional level. Ms. Bárcena further highlighted that the commitment in the region to meet the net emissions goal is highly necessary. The private sector increasingly plays a strategic role in decarbonization and in the transformation towards renewable energies, however, private sector investments are concentrated in only a few countries: Chile, Argentina and Brazil. The Caribbean receives the least of all. Carbon tax mechanisms should be further promoted.





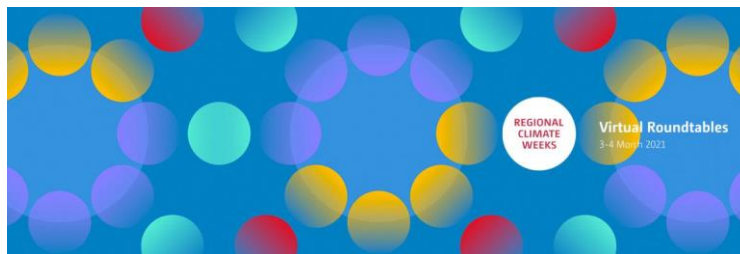
Latin America and the Caribbean Region are vulnerable to climate change impacts but is only responsible for 4.2% of global emissions. For climate justice, emission providers must make greater efforts. Multilateral banks are the main investors in the region but focused on few and countries and for renewable energy with imbalance between Latin America and Caribbean. The LAC region needs finance from north to south as well.

**Ms. Una May Gordon**, Principal Director, Climate Change Division, Ministry of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change of Jamaica spoke about the drivers of climate change cut across the responsibilities of various ministries and agencies: energy, transport agriculture, water, health, forestry and very importantly finance. She further enumerated how can an all of government approach be harnessed and delivered in a very short space of time. Ms. May highlighted that people and governments must recognize that climate change is affecting us all and therefore Governments must to ensure speed and scale in climate action. The interdependence among all sectors of the economy must be recognized and addressed. All line Ministries need to integrate CC into their portfolios, especially finance and planning. There is an urgent need to build the capacity of the public workforce to enable the transformation. She concluded by saying that political systems should be aligned. Political integration both at national and regional levels. Need to design fiscal policy to commit to climate target. Incentivize both public and private sectors. Public sector is major force in this issue. Alignment with private sector is crucial. Governments must make commitment and demonstrate work and special consideration is needed on climate change.

**Mr. Leo Heileman**, Latin America and the Caribbean Office, UNEP, discussed what are the key national government action and policies that can empower stakeholders, unlock and enable further action on the ground and how could Non-Party Stakeholders support this action, including by providing data and relevant information. His key messages included the fiscal inability of LAC governments to hamper their possibility to deal with climate change issues. Other key points mentioned includes investment in deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency as the cheapest sources of power generation; reducing fossil fuel subsidies and its emissions; promote circular economy; put a price on carbon; shift subsidies from fossil fuel to low carbon fuels and nature-based solutions; direct investment to policies that protect and restore nature, and change our lifestyles, our diets, the way we travel, our behaviour, etc.

Mr. Heileman complemented that there is an enormous economic and job creation potential in changing the way we produce food in a way that makes us more adapted to climate and restores the value of ecosystems and biodiversity. Nature-based solutions are extremely cost-effective to help ecosystems produce services for the economic development of local populations, enabling them to cope with the impacts of climate change and disease. With regards to making cities more resilient, he listed electromobility to reduce air pollution, as clean air delivers health gains and a avoids deaths.

**Mr. Arnoldo Pineda**, Presidential Delegate for Climate Change Presidential Office, Honduras focused on the sectors with greater need and/or opportunity for real society and economy wide transformation. His remarks highlighted that Honduras is one of the most vulnerable countries with great potential in terms of climate change to improve the economic models. Facilitate mechanisms to enable finance for small producers, coffee and cacao producers allowing low-cost resources in long term and give access to banks. Need to change economic model to have access to resources and need other mechanism



for both Mitigation and adaptation actions need to reach out to the people. He concluded by mentioning that the Climate Weeks are a great opportunity to reach out to region, especially for Honduras to find climate finance mechanisms needed.

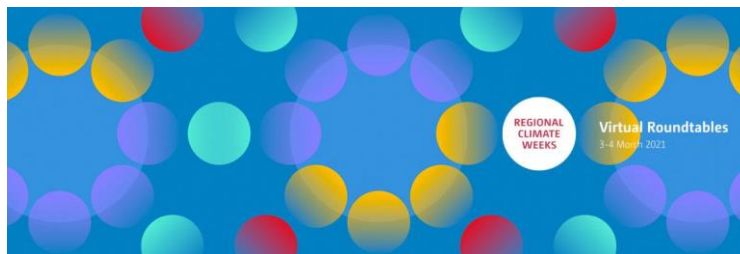
### ***Managing risk***

**Mr. Manuel Otero**, General Director of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), addressed the transformational changes required across society in terms of managing the evolving risks and how can this all of society engagement and action best be delivered given the scale and urgency of the task. He mentioned that IICA promotes model transformation through technical cooperation. LAC is the most important export source of food, 14% share of world market. Social and economic impact in rural areas, 51% of jobs created are with agriculture. Family producers receives low share of what consumers pay, preservation and best practices are not possible to apply. Triggers social impacts, aggregate vision of food system producers should be focus areas. The empowerment of producers in rural areas is needed. Need policies to empower the producers regarding adapting to climate change; Central America corridor's productivity crisis is due to water scarcity; vulnerability of the Caribbean (e.g. Haiti) and smaller nations of east Caribbean, higher vulnerability to nature disasters to food scarcity.

**Ms. Ligia Castro de Doens**, Director of Climate Change, Ministry of Environment from Panama, gave remarks on how we can ensure that these vulnerabilities can be better identified before they are exposed. She mentioned that vulnerability index and sectorial vulnerability considering the impact to all communities and all chain value of the productive sectors must be defined by LAC countries. Access to climate change vulnerability data will provide awareness of the impacts and identify sectors of the economies that affect national economic development.

Panama has developed 17 indicators for the 10 adaptation measures included in the updated NDC. Environmental Impact assessments include climate change vulnerability and risk, prioritizing nature-based solutions and creating new green jobs. Its second Biennial Update report will describe how Panama has become a carbon neutral country.

**Mr. Ricardo Bertolino**, Managing Director Argentine Network of Municipalities against Climate Change (RAMCC) observations were around the question on how sub-national and municipal action best support countries efforts in adapting to climate change and managing future climate risks. Mr. Bertolino highlighted that RAMCC has created climate change network on local governments to support mitigation and adaptation. After 10 years, only 15 municipalities have plans for climate change adaptation. He expressed concerns with the lack of awareness and resources from local governments, as they don't know the targets sets on international level. Investments in climate planning on local governments are needed as well as empowerment of local governments in terms of climate risks, aligned to national NDC. Development of trust fund with municipalities and local governments resources, to support implementation of mitigation projects. He concluded by saying that relying on international financial and technical resources only will not be enough to achieve carbon neutral targets.



Ana Belén Marín, Member of the National Assembly, Ecuador, 2nd Vice-President of ParlAmericas. President of Parliamentary Network on Climate Change has technical difficulties to participate in the roundtable discussion.

### ***Seizing transformational opportunities***

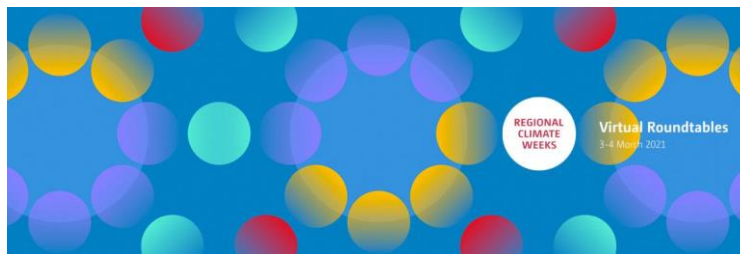
**Graham George Watkins**, Chief of Climate Change Division of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), spoke about the sectors would benefit from stronger collaboration between national governments, cities, subnational regions, companies, investors and civil society. Before discussing about green recovery support should be provided to those countries that are still fighting against the pandemic. Transversal planning is needed to promote the transformation at the sectoral level, together with vertical integration. The role of the cities is critical to drive action against climate change. Energy systems, transport systems and land use are critical sectors to focus on.

The IDB recognizes the crisis that the Latin American region still faces due to the pandemic. We need to think how to restart the economy before discussing about the future. Planning, long-term thinking considering carbon neutrality in 2050 and to avoiding investments lost is needed. Land use, transport and cities need transformation, policies, citizens, governments, private sector, everyone should be part of changes needed, all these will be supported by the financial system and private sector.

**Eduardo Piquero**, Managing Director, MexiCO2 Plataforma Mexicana de Carbono What, enlisted the sectors that are ripe for breakthroughs in technology or business models. He emphasized that multilateral fund and Green Climate funds are not enough to mobilize climate funds as needed. Private sector through Capital markets, Pension fund, Green Bonds, has contributed to accelerate the climate finance flows during the past years. Most of the available fund are directed to renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, circular economy, waste management and agriculture, also Hydrogen, electro mobility represent important opportunities. Need to set price on carbon. In Chile and Colombia there are good design for tax and emission trading system in place. Next worldwide financial crisis will be related to environmental factors, according to the Bank for International Settlements.

**Keyvan Macedo**, Director of Sustainability, Group Natura & Co, deliberated on which data and information is available and needed to identify these sectors and how can this information be managed. Low carbon shift is necessary and desired. There is a huge overlap between climate change agenda and biodiversity agenda. Enhancement of NDCs, good examples of emission cap 70% lower in Colombia, Chile committed to 26% lower than initial plan. Measurable targets and Means of Implementation (monitoring mechanisms and finance mechanisms) and need to deliver solution on Article 6 at COP26, to unleash all potential we see about nature-based solutions. Environmental themes cannot be disassociated from social themes. We need to ensure solutions include indigenous and local communities.





## HIGHLIGHTS: ASIA AND PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE

This Roundtable took place on 4 March 2021, from 9:00 am to 10:30 am (CET) was the second of a series of three regional events. The session was moderated by Ms. Linh Do, Leaders of Global Sustainability, University of Melbourne.

An opening remark video message was delivered by H.E. Shinjiro Koizumi, Minister of Environment, Japan. The video message can be accessed [here](#).

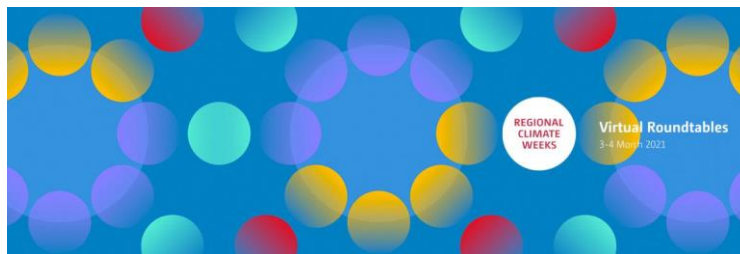
Over the course of an hour and a half, discussions took place around the three thematic tracks: 1) seizing transformational opportunities, 2) managing climate risks and 3) national action and economy-wide approaches. A summary of each thematic track is provided:

### ***Seizing transformational opportunities***

**H.E Malik Amin Aslam Khan**, Minister for Climate Change, Pakistan elaborated on what are the main challenges with creating national visions towards mid-century climate neutrality and have short- medium-term results aligned with these visions in your country and across the Asia and Pacific region. H.E. started by sharing that the Prime Minister created a cross ministerial task force (with 5 ministries) to discuss climate change issues in Pakistan. They put the discussion to the highest level (PM) in the country. The drivers of climate change cut across the responsibilities of various ministries and departments (energy, transport, agriculture, finance, etc.). Pakistan aims to address these challenges by working across ministries in our taskforce on climate change, introducing new economic instruments such as green bonds and including youth as major stakeholders in this process. H.E. emphasised that youth must be engaged as a major stakeholder in this process. Green jobs for youth as well as involvement of youth at the governmental level. H.E. also highlighted that data to support to the national action plans is needed and MRV is important to keep track of progress. Political commitment to climate action, not just climate talks. Transformative finance and a redesign of our economic frameworks. Pakistan wants to focus strongly on nature-based solutions; planting trees, restoring and protecting forests as well as investing in clean energy to create green jobs in the recovery from COVID-19, and see clean energy as key. The economic frameworks of the 20<sup>th</sup> century need to be redesigned to survive the threats of the 21st century.

**Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana**, Executive Secretary, UN-ESCAP, what are the key national government action and policies that can empower stakeholders (businesses, cities, regions, investors and civil society) unlock and enable further action on the ground? Clear commitment and direction are needed to enable environment for action on the ground and implementation of Paris commitments. Key sectors in the region: forestry, energy (including transport) agriculture, industry, waste management. Energy transition is key to achieve the net zero commitment by 2050 for a country in the AP region. Private sector requires enabling environment for mobilizing the required investments. Youth as source of innovation to drive transformative behaviour, key to achieving our shared climate goals.

Empower stakeholders, a country first needs a strong commitment from the government – setting out the vision, direction and creating the enabling environment for implementation



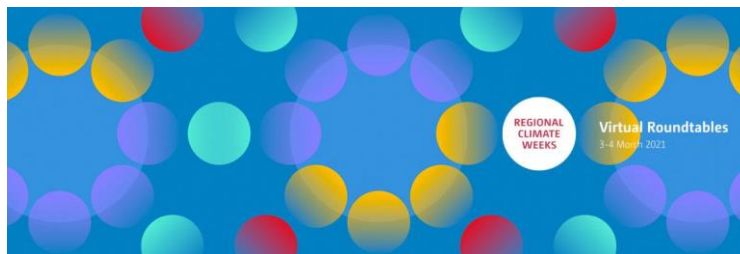
of that commitment. Governments must take the lead prepare and implement a national action plan that can cascade down to the different regions in the country. Such as Net-zero emissions by 2050. This should be translated in their NDCs. In the Asia-Pacific region, three key stakeholder groups are the middle-class, the young people and the cities. These are all growing quickly and play an important role in terms of sustainable consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, awareness raising and mobilizing climate action. Access to specific-sector data and information that allows for MRV is needed. Data related to opportunities for NBS need to be available. Businesses need to understand this. Key sectors in the region: forestry, energy (including transparency) agriculture, industry, waste management. Energy transition is key to achieve the net zero commitment by 2050 for a country in the AP region. Private sector requires enabling environment for mobilizing the required investments. Youth as source of innovation to drive transformative behaviour, key to achievement of our climate change goals.

### ***Managing risk***

**Kosi Murray Latu**, Director-General, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) discussed the key productive systems in the Pacific that are at risk from the changing climate in the coming decades, and how is SPREP supporting countries managing climate change risk, including through the formulation and implementation of NAP. For the Pacific region there is a long-standing history of regional cooperation and partnership. While initiated for various economic purposes, the challenge of climate change has benefitted from regional approaches since the early 1990s. Mr. Latu acknowledged that it is not possible to separate climate change from disaster risk management. They are 2 sides of the same coin. The Regional Climate Weeks are an opportunity to highlight these cooperative actions so that further support may be attracted to the region.

There continues to be a challenge to move from the planning stages to implementation of action on the ground, and countries in the Pacific face many hurdles to prepare the necessary documentation to the various funding agencies. In the Pacific it is also the case that the private sector has low financial capacity as well as a lack of expertise to address climate change. There has been ongoing work to engage the private sector, but it is a challenge. Public donor finance appears to be the most likely source of adaptation funding for the foreseeable future.

**Celine Dyer**, Climate Coordinator, Office of the Prime Minister, Cook Islands and **Arun Prakash Bhatta**, Under Secretary (Technical) NPM, Climate Change Support Program, Ministry of Forests and Environment from Nepal, reacted on the question on how the impacts from the pandemic have informed the way a country should manage risks comprehensively in order to pre-empt development setbacks from a small island context and least developed country context. The key messages of this discussion were to switch from BAU models to climate foresight scenario through circular economy. Creating green jobs, developing critical health systems and having independent food supply systems are essential to overcome the pandemic in Nepal. Creating green jobs systematizing local economic cycle which is very important re-strengthening the health service systems to develop critical health service. Secure food supply systems are critical cause in the case of pandemic, the next line international supply systems didn't work. Capacity building for local government in the area of natural resource management and disaster risk management. Support on climate finance to the implementation of NDC (USD 25 billion).



Enabling environment: partnerships between countries. Regional partnership specially in data sharing is crucial in the region in managing climate risks.

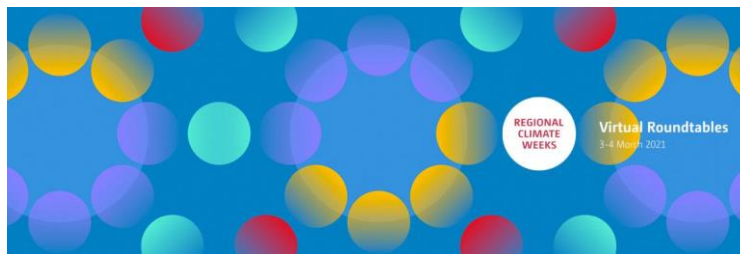
**Ms. Rubana Huq**, President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, spoke about the emerging good practices and lessons learned around efforts to protect productive systems and supply chains from the private sector perspective. She mentioned that Bangladesh is taking two major steps to managing climate risks: is implementing a business continuity plan and heavily investing in green factories. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer has been impacted significantly during COVID-19. Total loss was as high as USD \$2.18 billion. Bangladesh is a manufacturing country requiring a scheme to protect their workers and industry from climate risks. Combined national action, strategic long-term and coordinated regional actions a must which are cross-cutting in nature. Resilience is very needful for any plan for a manufacturing industry; external shock absorber policies are required. “Let’s all learn from this experience with the pandemic to make a system to be resilient to such risks” including green finance with governments providing incentives. “Business continuity plan” of Bangladesh to include forecasting techniques; an example to heavily invest in green technologies including Solar panels and UN Fashion Charter. Circular economy policies and interconnectedness at every level, integrating to NBS is very essential. Coordination across three levels of governments equally important and the need to capacitate the LGs in DRR plans to realize the NDCs and national climate plans. Technology transfer and climate finance was highlighted where cooperation across countries is required. Optimal use of resources – agriculture, forestry for addressing DRR possible with Green jobs and creating local livelihoods. Regional coordination mechanism on data sharing can help to deal with disasters, mainly around early warning systems. Integration of adaptation with development plan.

### ***National action and economy-wide approaches***

**Sonam Tashi**, Chief Planning Officer from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Bhutan, messages were around the overlooked opportunities for new investment in net-zero, climate resilient development across the region that can drive immediate results and examples of the recent innovations that have huge potential to drive change across the region. Started by drawing attention to possible regional and national social economic impacts caused by of reaching a net-zero climate resilient model. Need to consider countries’ particularities to achieving the net-zero in the first place. Need to look at the energy sector as transformation to take place there. Transport is one of the highest emissions sources and there is a lot of potential to create a more sustainable and efficient system. Infrastructure is another promising sector for improvement, the region needs to needs to pay attention to changing amendments in the law to promote the use of sustainable materials, technology and design. Another sector mentioned is tourism. This is a great sector to develop by creating sustainable and climate friendly destinations. Mr. Tashi also mentioned agriculture, which is about surviving emission. For this sector, heavy investments need to be made for the use of modern agri-technology. As for waste management, he focused on the need to modernize and make use of waste heat in the industry sector by employing new technologies to recover waist and heat to generate electricity.

**Peidan Yang**, Executive Director, China Champions for Climate Action, remarks were on the sectors that are “low-hanging fruit” and ripe for breakthroughs in technology and





innovation and what do entrepreneurs and private enterprises need from governments or other stakeholders in order to scale up embed ambitious climate action in their business models. He mentioned the need to start investing in the low-hanging fruits in key sectors in the Asia-Pacific region, including energy transition, transport, construction, tourism, agriculture and waste, as well as disaster risk management. There are several emerging technologies, but an overreliance on technology can be counterproductive if solutions are not suited for the local context. The government should work together with industry stakeholders to first adopt the solutions that we already know works well in the national circumstances.

**Punyapha Visavakornvisid**, Youth representative, Thailand, spoke about the needs in order for youth to lead and contribute to the development of ambitious climate solutions and technologies and what the youth needs in order to feel empowered and engaged. She emphasised that young people need to be given meaningful opportunities to engage in climate action where they are not invited as “tokens” for youth engagement, but where their voices and ideas are really considered.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS: AFRICA ROUNDTABLE**

This was the last of a series of three Roundtable which took place on 4 March 2021, from 11:30 to 13:00 am (CET). The session was moderated by Ms. Musonda Mumba, PhD. Director the Rome Centre for Sustainable Development, UNDP.

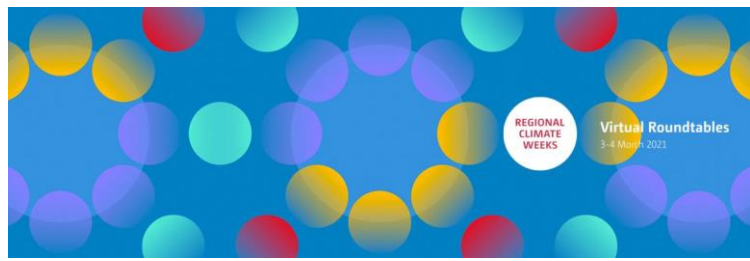
An opening remark video message was delivered by Hon. Sam Cheptoris, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda National action and economy-wide approaches. The video message can be accessed [here](#).

Over the course of the session, discussions took place around the three thematic tracks: 1) national action and economy-wide approaches, 2) managing climate risks and 3) seizing transformational opportunities. A summary of each thematic track is provided:

**H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad**, Minister of Environment Arab Republic of Egypt  
[NOTE: Minister could not join due to connection issues]

**H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma**, Chair of the H.R.H Princess Abze Djigma Foundation, initiator and leader of Initiative MAMA-LIGHT for Sustainable Energy. Your Royal Highness the drivers of climate change cut across the responsibilities of various ministries and agencies; energy, transport, agriculture, water, health, forestry and very important finance. Making progress in one sector alone is not enough so how can all of government approach be effectively delivered? Africans are green – already focused on circular economy. The youth are willing to drive this but need support from financial institutions. We need to walk the talk. Bring the successes to the regional level (BF to ECOWAS to East and South). Are a major market – build on informal sector, fintech will be crucial, need an asset clash for women. Women, youth and jobs – supported by the right financial tools to empower their participation.

**Mr. Serge Ekue**, CEO West African Development Bank (BOAD), obviously achieving the Paris goals will require aligning all financial flows with net-zero emissions and climate



resilience. This includes domestic public finance, international finance and domestic private finance. What are the most appropriate approaches for aligning financial flows and achieve the necessary scale?

Global capital markets have the liquid assets available. 2 ways forward: internal externalities, the right dialogue with the asset owners. "What does not get measured does not exist" - degradation of ecosystem is a result of this misalignment (water, CO<sub>2</sub>, ecosystem services). Must bring Earth in the equation. Links between climate and financial stability, value of CO<sub>2</sub> sinks, value of. Pricing externalities is the only way to put Earth in the Equation. Sustainable finance is a survival matter. Capital markets. 750 million raised through sustainable bond. Market would have bought 4 billion at concessional rate – the market is starting to align.

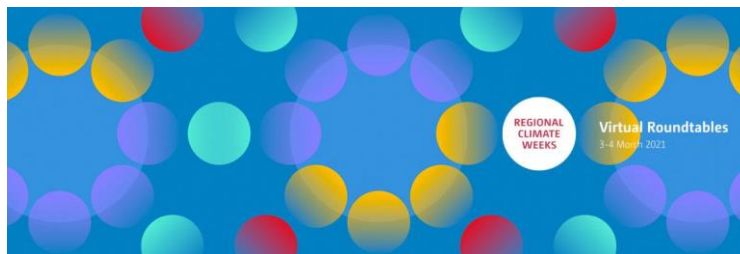
### ***Managing risk***

**Mr. James Murombedzi**, Senior Climate Governance Expert, Economic Commission for Africa, explained about the work that the Economic Commission is undertaking now to manage climate risks to pre-empt development setbacks for the coming ten years and the risks and exacerbated a range of existing social and ecological vulnerabilities exacerbated by the COVID19 pandemic. The pandemic has exposed the weaknesses in social systems and interconnectivity. Response has been far more urgent. 40% reduction in water availability for southern Africa (population increasing) - huge stresses on food systems, energy and this will drive migration. Conflict probabilities increase. The response has not met the urgency of the problem. Greater need to mobilize resources and get greater collaboration is needed. "Building Forward better for a Green Recovery" report by ECA to be published in the coming days. The health crisis needs to be managed, but need plans for sustainable recovery, pandemic is a strategic opportunity, it is a chance to leapfrog. ECA is looking at supply chains and commodity trade systems for at risk commodities. Energy access is obstacle to resilience. Private sector plays a key role in driving investment.

**Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim**, expert in the adaptation and mitigation of indigenous peoples to climate change, Chad responded the question on how the regional risks are being experienced today and what measures are most critical to reduce immediate vulnerability. Food systems impact is already creating conflict in Sahel and Chad reaction. The tackle it, use the existing traditional solutions is fundamental but the question is "how can we fund those?". Africa needs its own Green Deal based on its own realities and built by its own communities. The NDCs and NAPs need to drive this Green Deal, and we need this resilient infrastructure. People need to be engaged. From farmers to foresters, we can tap the power of communities and use traditional systems of governance.

### ***Seizing transformational opportunities***

**Mr. Al Hamdou Dorsouma**, Manager for Climate and Green Growth Division, African Development Bank (AfDB), spoke about the most overlooked opportunities for new investment in low emission climate resilient development across the continent. Mr. Dorsouma highlighted that 88% of invests are now based on climate change and green growth and the aim aims to get to 100%. Modernizing agriculture, 141 million people to access to heat resistant crops. Africa climate smart agriculture is mobilizing 5 million. For energy, USD \$20 billion program in Sahel is being developed – greatest solar zone in



Africa. With regards to water, African Water Facilities, need build capacity to manage resources through natural resource governance, greening infrastructure, green bonds. There is room to do more improvement, sustainably managing own resources, barriers in accessing finance, but mainly regulatory environment.

**Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi**, Secretary General United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Africa, touched on the sectors that are ripe for breakthroughs in technology or business models and where will the jobs of the future be generated for the current youth of Africa. Opportunities for green jobs in the construction sector, circular economy. The Ourzaante solar energy project in Morocco created 2000 direct jobs. 2800 jobs in largest wind project. He added that AfDB is fully committed to this transition.

**Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw**, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification delivered a wrap-up message. He painted a stark picture facing Africa: heat waves, crop failure and desertification. On the other hand, he underlined how Land is also the solution for Africa and should be brought to the centre of climate action on the continent. Land restoration is a powerful driver for sustainable development with both adaptation and mitigation benefits – something that is urgently needed.

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA CLIMATE WEEKS

The MENA Climate Week session was a short event to show to the participants about the plans for the first MENA Climate Week taking place in 2021 and how the United Arab Emirates (the host) and the MENA region are preparing for it.

During this session, a video message by H.E. Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed Belhaif Al Nuaimi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, United Arab Emirates, reaffirmed the UAE's commitment to transition towards a green economy during the 2021 Regional Roundtables. His video message can be accessed [here](#).

A message by H.E. Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, Chairman, World Green Economy Organization was the delivered. His remarks stressed the urgency of prioritizing climate action and he shared the UAE's goals for the Regional Climate Week in 2022. His video message can be accessed [here](#).

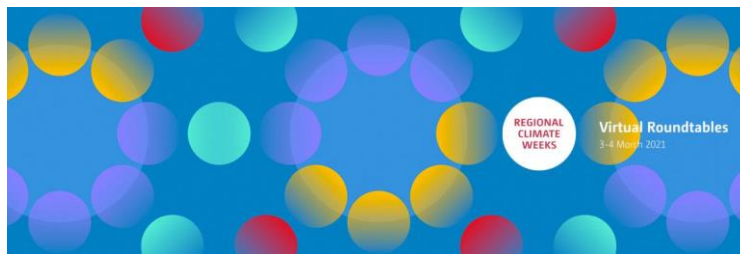
## HIGH-LEVEL CLIMATE CHAMPIONS WRAP-UP SESSION

In this wrap up session, the high-level champions presented a summary of the key outcomes from the roundtables in relations to the three tracks.

At the wrap-up session of the roundtables, the COP26 High-Level Champion Nigel Topping of the United Kingdom and COP25 Champion Gonzalo Muñoz of Chile spoke of the crucial importance of non-Party action.

Mr. Topping said: "What we have seen this week is exactly what we need: state and non-state actors, young people and entrepreneurs coming together to advance action on





tackling the climate challenge we are facing. We cannot have any region or community left out of this work.”

Mr. Muñoz said the discussions showed that investing in climate resilience is not just the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do. “By understanding what the impact of extreme weather events will be, what disruption they will cause to different sectors and the different levels of governance involved, we can get to work forming the partnerships and collaborations needed to make sure we more than just withstand climate shocks,” he said.

The Climate Champions stressed the importance of the UN’s Race to Zero campaign, with the goal of net zero GHG emissions by 2050, and the Race to Resilience campaign, designed to build the resilience of four billion people to climate change by 2030.

Gonzalo Muñoz the High-Level Climate Champion of Chile and Nigel Topping, High-Level Champion of the United Kingdom, summarised the three thematic areas as follow:

On the first ***National actions and economy-wide approaches*** track discussions, it became evident that more ambitious National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and implementation action plans are needed. These transitions are going to require an approach to planning that incorporates the whole of society and all levels of government and the private sector. There is a need also to mainstream science-based climate mitigation and adaptation into national, regional and local development agendas.

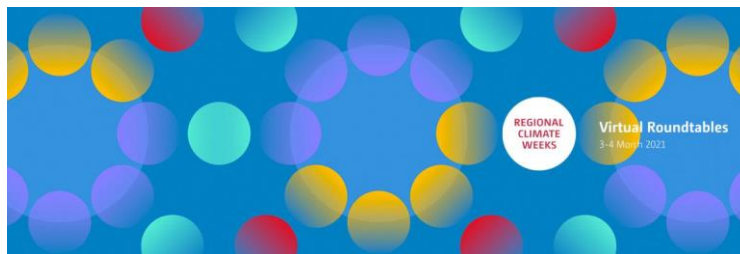
To achieve the transition, regions require both international financial support, but also new approaches for national budgeting and innovation in finance to create new financial resources.

There is growing awareness that ‘nature-based solutions’ (NBS) can help to safeguard humanity from climate change impacts. For these transformations to be successful we need to reconsider our relationship with nature and determine the value of natural capital. Therefore, prioritising nature-based solutions is fundamental.

It became evident across all regions that Civil society organisations and private citizens have an opportunity to contribute to the transition by driving societal behaviour change to create more sustainable consumption, mobility and production patterns.

Prioritising long-term planning and integrated policy making in response to climate change and to Covid is the only way countries and non-state actors are going to achieve the Paris goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees and creating climate resilient communities.

The second theme of the roundtables was ***Managing Climate Risks***. It came out across all regions that, mainstreaming climate risk management strategy needs to be prioritized at the highest level by governments. The challenges of facing climate change have benefitted from established regional partnerships and cooperation. It has been also brought to the attention that significant information and financial gaps exist between national and municipal governments on climate action and that there continues to be a challenge to move from the planning stages of National Adaptation plans to implementation of action on the ground.



Updating regularly the current climate risk models was evidenced as essential to understand the climate risks in critical productive systems and the economy-wide impacts of climate change that would setback development.

In every region there are sectors which are vulnerable to climate shocks but also the source of livelihoods for many rural and non-urban communities. This creates sensitives in how we manage risks but also serve as an entry point for solutions. Investing in climate resilience, addressing the risks should be the prioritized by governments and financial institutions.

Capacity building needs to focus on the long term and empower agricultural producers and farmers to implement environmentally conscious practises, lowering risks to their livelihoods and increasing their competitiveness.

Covid has shown how interconnected we are and brought us face to face with long-standing risks -- a system failure or disaster in one corner of the world can trigger disruption in food and medical supplies, jobs and economic stability far and wide.

The last track of the roundtables focused on ***Seizing transforming opportunities***. Technological innovation will drive the transformations we need to see through renewable energy, electric grids, nature-based solutions and low and zero carbon fuel sources. However, those sectors still remain under leveraged. Investing in low-carbon, resilient transformations will create tens of millions of jobs and will reduce costs by hundreds of billions compared to our current fossil fuel reliant systems. Investing in nature-based solutions will increase agricultural productivity while preserving and restoring our ecosystems. Helping local governments become net-zero will enable countries to be net-zero.

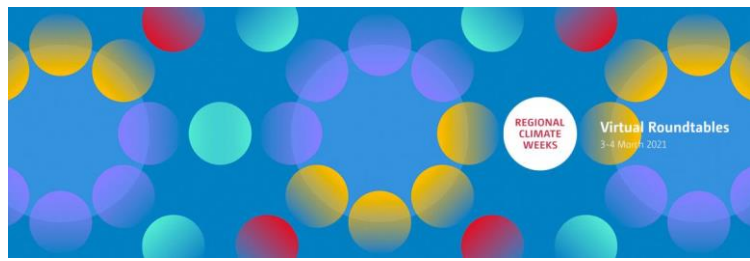
Solutions need to be inclusive and relevant to all levels of society, to indigenous and local communities and youth. Governments need to be open-minded towards young people and make them know their perspectives and action matters through transparent and dedicated engagement.

In rebuilding from Covid-19, every government has the opportunity to set out a strategy that confronts systemic risks and makes us more resilient to shocks. This is the best opportunity society has to create shifts in thinking and practise and it will only be through collaborating and bringing all stakeholders together to inform action that put countries on the low-emission, resilient pathways.

## FORWARD LOOKING SESSION

The core organizing partners are UN Development Programme, UN Environment Programme, UN Climate Change, and World Bank Group.

This last session called Forward Looking took place to take stock of the key messages that emerged from the regional roundtables and use them as key takeaways in preparing for the thematic sessions of the regional climate weeks in May, June and July.



In this session Organizing Partners presented the regional pictures that emerged from each roundtable and how organizing partners UNFCCC, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank can take these forward towards success at COP26. The recordings of the main takeaways can be found [here](#).

Organizing partners highlighted that this year is crucial and added “We need your support like never before. This first regional climate week event can support you in setting the pace that will result in a successful COP26 in November”.

The partners also reminded the importance of the Regional Climate Weeks in stepping up climate ambition as displayed last week with the publication by UN Climate Change of the Initial NDC synthesis report showing nations must submit stronger, more ambitious national climate action plans in 2021 to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Regional stakeholders framed their discussions on how to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic and how to scale up and speed up climate action capitalizing on the efforts already ongoing in the regions. Common calls made in all the regions related to:

- The importance of efficiently engaging all actors in climate action, particularly youth and women;
- The imperative of citizen- and community-led efforts to change behaviours, which is essential for more sustainable production and consumption patterns;
- The importance of nature-based solutions and “bringing Earth back into the equation.”

The role of governments in providing clear direction and targets for climate action was also a common message in all the roundtables, with many stakeholders calling for a clear price on carbon and recognition of the value of nature and the costs of its destruction.

Participants agreed that climate finance is still a key factor in all regions to implement climate plans and policies. Whilst substantial financial resources are available, they must be channeled to build carbon neutral and resilient societies, especially in developing countries. There was also a shared understanding that financial tools such as green bonds increasingly need to be used to finance future infrastructure.