

# A green recovery in Asia: opportunities for concerted action

Summary report of the virtual conference presented by ELEVATE  
in partnership with Huawei on January 20, 2021

**ELEVATE**  
Strategic Partner



# INTRODUCTION

This report summarises discussions at the virtual conference “A green recovery in Asia: opportunities for concerted action” which took place on 20 January 2021.

The conference set out to engage expert speakers in discussing ways in which a post-COVID recovery could embrace the challenges of climate change and other environmental imperatives.

With an emphasis on Asia, it sought to consider the specific challenges and opportunities that face the region. Specifically, the conference set out to address four major themes:

- + How to build and transform economies post-COVID 19 while confronting the climate crisis
- + Insights into latest government plans, commitments and measures for a green recovery in Asia
- + The role of digital technology and nature-based solutions in achieving climate-resilient recovery
- + Opportunities for concerted, cross-sector action involving governments, civil society and the business sector

Access the recording of this event at <https://www.elevatelimited.com/engage/webinars/green-recovery-post-covid-virtual-conference/>



# SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES

Convening leaders, decision makers and actors from different sectors from across Asia, this conference highlighted the priorities for a post COVID-19 recovery in Asia and opportunities for engagement, cooperation and partnership amongst key stakeholders.

Speakers stressed the need to address the challenges of the pandemic and the environment and to ensure a more sustainable recovery, tackle inequalities, drive economic growth and transform economies to be more inclusive and low carbon.

We hope that this conference has contributed to fostering an understanding and dialogue amongst a range of stakeholders. This can form the basis of plans to build an agenda for transformation in Asia including the important roles for governments, civil society organizations, businesses and others.

It is clear, that both leadership and cooperation will be important to build back better, turning a crisis into an opportunity.

## The virtual conference in numbers



**400+**

More than 400 registrations

**50%**

More than 50% from the business sector



**50+**

Registrations from more than 50 countries

**70%**

More than 70% from the Asia-Pacific region



# KEY MESSAGES FROM OUR SPEAKERS

# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND PANELISTS



**Catherine Chen**

Corporate SVP, Director of the Board  
Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.



**Dr. Vong Sok**

Head of Environment Division, Assistant  
Director of Sustainable Development  
Director, The ASEAN Secretariat



**Yeon-chul Yoo**

Ambassador for Climate Change,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea



**Asad Naqvi**

Head, Secretariat of the Partnership  
for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)



**Ma Aimin**

Deputy Director, National Center for Climate  
Change Strategy and International Cooperation  
(NCSC), Ministry of Ecology and Environment, PRC



**Hyeon Jenny Kim**

Deputy Director General,  
Global Green Growth Institute  
(GGGI)



**Meng Liu**

Head, Asia Pacific Networks,  
United Nations Global Compact  
(UNGC)



# KEY MESSAGES



## The enabling role of technology

**Catherine Chen, Corporate Senior Vice President and Director of the Board, Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.** emphasized the important role that technology companies such as Huawei can play in addressing the climate crisis by tackling its own emissions and by enabling ambitious climate action across multiple industries. She stressed the important role of the business sector in driving technological progress to address the world's most daunting challenges.



## Concerted action is key

**Yeon-chul Yoo, Ambassador for Climate Change, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea** pointed out that COVID-19 as well as the challenges posed by climate change have no respect for boundaries. He stressed that the sustainability of our planet cannot be assured by efforts of a single country but requires combined efforts of the international community and multi-stakeholder action. He referred to Korea's Green New Deal and 2050 carbon neutrality goal and expressed his hope for the Asia-Pacific region to lead global efforts to address climate change through ambitious policies and the engagement of all stakeholders.



## Technological innovation to tackle the dual challenge of the pandemic and climate crisis

**Dr. Vong Sok, Head of Environment Division, Assistant Director of Sustainable Development Director, The ASEAN Secretariat** pointed out that the drastic economic slow-down in the ASEAN region has compounded pre-existing threats to the environment. He stressed the importance of protecting the region's peatlands, biodiversity and wildlife to reduce risks from emerging zoonotic diseases and to combat climate change. He called upon the business sector to drive technological innovation to help fight wildlife trafficking, engage local communities and raise public awareness to help accelerate efforts for the protection and rehabilitation of critical ecosystems.



# KEY MESSAGES



## A green recovery has to be inclusive

**Asad Naqvi, Head of the Secretariat of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)**, stressed that there has never been a better time to reset our economies, our business model, governance structures and individual lifestyle choices to achieve the dual goals of a “green economy”: achieving high Human Development Index and reducing our Ecological Footprint.

He pointed out that a green economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis is focused on increasing human development and tackling inequalities without degrading the ecological foundation of our economies. Achieving this inclusive green recovery demands synchronized efforts at global, regional, national and community levels as well as across governments, international community, private sector, civil society and community organizations.



## The importance of strong policies

**Hyeon Jenny Kim, Deputy Director General, Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)** stressed the importance of creating a strong policy environment for climate action to avoid that short-term decreases in greenhouse gas emissions are swiftly reverted when economic activities resume after the pandemic. She highlighted the opportunities provided by ecosystem conservation and rehabilitation efforts to not only enhance environmental assets and mitigate the impacts of climate change, but also for employment creation and income growth. She also emphasized increasing green investment in renewables and greening the industry through economic recovery measures.

She referred to the example of Indonesia which – during the pandemic in 2020 - adopted 11 policies to enhance green growth and climate resilience through forest management and launched forest management plans for 2020-2029. She also stressed the importance of leadership from some of the more developed economies in Asia, providing strategic cooperation with less developed countries.



# KEY MESSAGES



## Governments to lead the way and incentivize business action

**Ma Aimin, Deputy Director, National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation (NCSC), Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China** provided an update on the Chinese government's strengthened climate commitments including achieving a peak in carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060. He stressed the ambitiousness of the commitments and the tremendous efforts needed to achieve them, stressing the role of technology in driving change.

Highlighting the important role that businesses play in developing those new technologies and driving a low-carbon transition, he referred to initiatives aimed at driving business climate action such as the national emissions trading scheme and green financing policies. He cited a number of examples of companies aligning corporate efforts with national commitments for carbon neutrality.



## The need for ambitious and measurable business action

**Meng Liu, Head, Asia Pacific Networks, United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)** pointed out the critical role of the infrastructure sector in tackling Covid-19 and the climate crisis. She emphasized the important and cross-cutting role of digital infrastructure which will be even more pronounced in the post-pandemic era and the need to overcome the digital divide which is vital to realizing technology benefits.

She stressed the importance of the private sector in driving a green recovery. Beyond helping drive the digital transformation and bridge the digital divide, she called upon the business sector to take ambitious and measurable climate action by adopting science-based targets and tackling greenhouse gas emissions across the business' entire value chain.





# OUR CALL TO ACTION

# CALL TO ACTION

**Decision-makers and experts convened at the virtual conference provided a clear call to action to all sectors to collectively drive a green and inclusive recovery in Asia:**

- + Strengthen economic stimulus packages with long-term investments in climate mitigation and adaptation, in order to support Asia's most vulnerable populations that have been impacted hardest by both the pandemic and the climate crisis.
- + Strengthen the participation of a range of stakeholders in joint efforts to accelerate moves towards an inclusive green economy with a particular emphasis on public-private partnerships, mobilizing public and private finance.
- + Encourage businesses to recognize their role in facilitating the move to an inclusive green recovery, integrating climate action into their plans, developing science-based targets and emphasizing innovations around technologies that can drive low carbon economies.
- + Recognize the importance of nature-based solutions that protect, sustainably manage and restore natural ecosystems to address societal challenges as well as provide economic and environmental benefits.
- + Emphasize the need for engagement and cooperation with developing and emerging economies to achieve economic growth and environmental sustainability, together with tackling inequalities and driving a new pathway towards green and inclusive growth.



# ANNEX 1: SPEAKER SLIDES



**PAGE**

**PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION  
ON GREEN ECONOMY**

**Asad Naqvi**

Head, Secretariat of the Partnership  
for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)

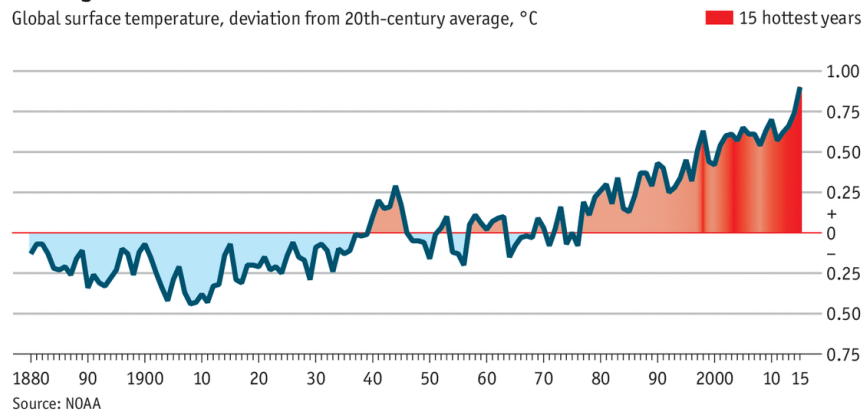
UN Environment Programme



## Mega trends and Need for New Economy

### Sizzling

Global surface temperature, deviation from 20th-century average, °C



Amphibians  
**40%**



Conifers  
**34%**



Reef corals  
**33%**



Sharks and rays  
**31%**



Selected crustaceans\*  
**27%**



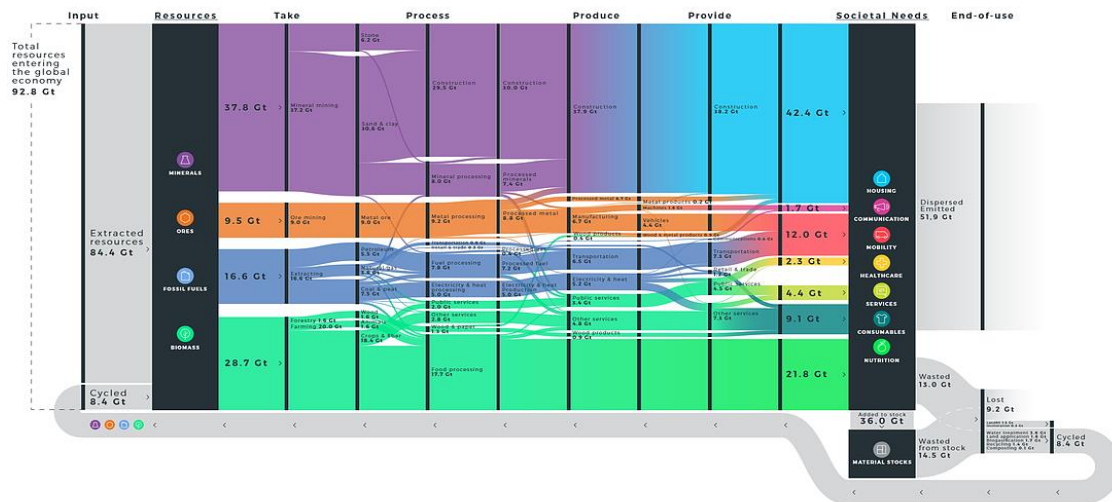
Mammals  
**25%**



Birds  
**14%**

\*Assessed species include lobsters, freshwater crabs, freshwater crayfishes and freshwater shrimps

Source: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species



RICHEST

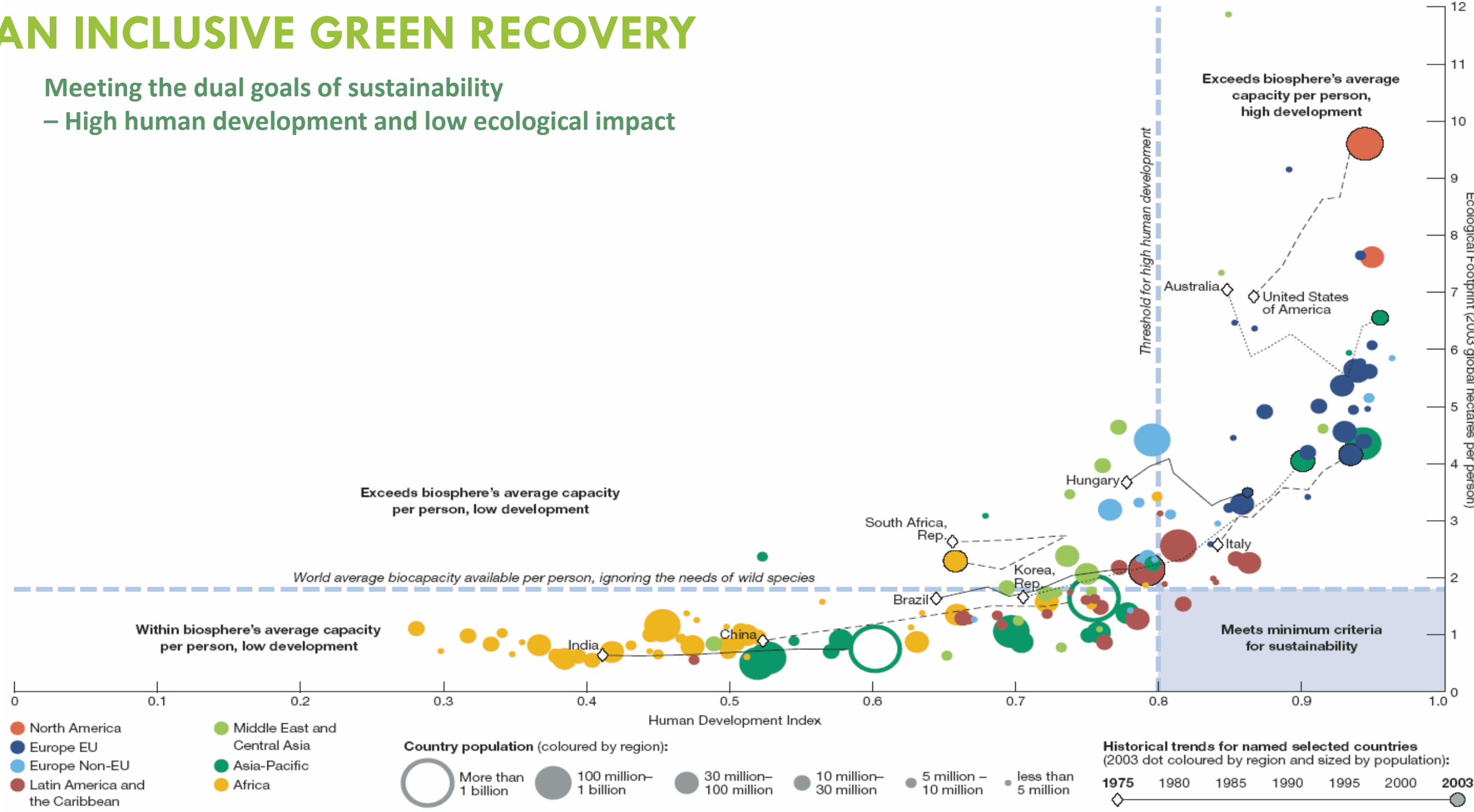
Each horizontal band represents an equal fifth of the world's people

POOREST

World population	World income
■ Richest 20%	82.7%
■ Second 20%	11.7%
■ Third 20%	2.3%
■ Fourth 20%	1.9%
■ Poorest 20%	1.4%

# AN INCLUSIVE GREEN RECOVERY

Meeting the dual goals of sustainability  
 – High human development and low ecological impact



# PAGE SUPPORT FOR GREEN RECOVERY

Supporting economic policymaking and greening of economic recovery options

## ACTION AREAS

Green the economic stimulus policies

Build capacity for green economic recovery policies

Strengthen public participation in green recovery

Mobilise public and private finance

### DATA OBSERVATORY

PARTNER COUNTRIES IN A COVID-19 WORLD

### ANALYTICAL TOOLS

FOR SUPPORTING GREEN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

## RESOURCES

Now is the time to build back better.

LEARNING FOR A GREEN ECONOMIC RECOVERY

### COVID-19 HUB

POLICY RESPONSES TODAY WILL SHAPE FUTURE ECONOMIES



PAGE PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION  
GREEN ECONOMY

Green Recovery Support Programme



un-page.org

## Approved Proposals

Senegal	
Argentina	
South Africa	
Brazil	
Thailand	

## Proposals under consideration

Indonesia	
Ghana	
Mauritius	
Uruguay	
Mongolia	
Kyrgyz Republic	
Barbados	
Burkina Faso	
Kazakhstan	





# Recover Better, Stronger and Together in Asia

Meng Liu  
Head, Asia Pacific Networks  
UN Global Compact

20<sup>th</sup> January, 2021

# Sustainable Infrastructure for the Belt and Road Initiative to Accelerate the SDGs Action Platform

**Start in 2023** ◀

Agriculture | 01

Food | 02

**Start in 2021**

01 | Financial Inclusion

▶ 02 | Digital Infrastructure

03 | Energy

## Infrastructure Sector Roadmap

Technology and Information  
Infrastructure Throughout

**Start in 2022** ◀

Manufacturing | 01

Construction | 02

Transportation | 03

**Start in 2020**

Healthcare | 01 ▶

Interested in joining the Action Platform, please contact [bri@unglobalcompact.org](mailto:bri@unglobalcompact.org)



A STATEMENT FROM COMPANIES IN THE SCIENCE BASED TARGETS INITIATIVE AND ITS BUSINESS AMBITION FOR 1.5°C CAMPAIGN

## UNITING BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENTS TO RECOVER BETTER

IN A TIME OF GLOBAL DISRUPTION, AMBITIOUS CLIMATE ACTION IS AS URGENT AS EVER

With the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are facing a global pandemic that is devastating people and their livelihoods, disrupting supply chains, profoundly deepening inequalities and undoing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, we continue to face a global climate emergency with irreversible impacts for people and all the natural systems that sustain us. In the face of these interconnected crises, we cannot afford to tackle one or the other. Human health depends on planetary health. We can — and must — tackle both.

**As countries work on economic aid and recovery packages in response to COVID-19, and as they prepare to submit enhanced national climate plans under the Paris Agreement, we are calling on Governments to reimagine a better future grounded in bold climate action.** As we are setting ambitious corporate emission reduction targets through the Science Based Targets initiative and its Business Ambition for 1.5°C campaign, we remain committed to do our part to achieve a resilient, zero carbon economy. We are now urging Governments to prioritize a faster and fairer transition from a grey to a green economy by aligning policies and recovery plans with the latest climate science.

We must move beyond business-as-usual and work together in solidarity to deliver the greatest impact for people, prosperity and the planet. To recover better from COVID-19, we will continue to:



**BUSINESS AMBITION FOR 1.5°C**

- 1 Demonstrate that the best decisions and actions are grounded in science.**  
By implementing ambitious science-based targets, we aim to set the world on a 1.5°C trajectory leading to healthier and safer people, and a healthier and safer planet.
- 2 Invest in recovery and resilience for a systemic socio-economic transformation.**  
By divesting from fossil fuels and innovating in low-carbon, resilient solutions, we are prioritizing green jobs and sustainable growth, protecting nature and people, and delivering on the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.
- 3 Work with Governments and scale up the movement.**  
By advocating for enabling policies aligned with a 1.5°C trajectory and zero carbon economy, we look to policy-makers to give businesses the confidence and clarity they need to take ambitious climate action.

**To ensure we recover better, we are calling on Governments and policy-makers to match our ambitions in their recovery efforts aligned with reaching net-zero emissions well before 2050.**

If we work together, these efforts will help reduce vulnerability to future shocks and disasters, and build community resilience. A systemic shift to a zero-carbon and resilient economy is within our reach — our only future depends on making this vision a reality.

We hope you will join us.

# Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi)

553

with science-based targets

1129

companies taking action

373

commitments to 1.5°C

Source: SBTi official website



SCIENCE BASED TARGETS

**BUSINESS AMBITION FOR 1.5°C**



# Statement from Business Leaders for Renewed Global Cooperation



United Nations  
Global Compact | 20 years  
Uniting business for a better world

UN75  
2020 AND BEYOND | SHAPING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

## UNITED IN THE BUSINESS OF A BETTER WORLD A Statement from Business Leaders for Renewed Global Cooperation

The 75th anniversary of the United Nations comes at a time of **unprecedented disruption and global transformation**, serving as a stark reminder that international cooperation must be mobilized across borders, sectors and generations to adapt to changing circumstances. This message emerged loud and clear from the hundreds of thousands of people who participated in global dialogues initiated by the UN this year.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and converging crises — including climate change, economic uncertainty, social inequality and rising disinformation — **public and private institutions** need to show they are accountable, ethical, inclusive and transparent. This is the only way to strengthen public trust and achieve a more sustainable future for all.

Over time, the **UN has sought to unite stakeholders everywhere** to tackle the world's greatest challenges. Yet our multilateral system is being threatened by those who want to go it alone rather than work together.

We, the business peoples, recognize that **peace, justice and strong institutions** are beneficial to the long-term viability of our organizations and are foundational for upholding the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### In the spirit of renewed global cooperation, we commit to:

- Demonstrate ethical leadership and good governance through values-based strategies, policies, operations and relationships when engaging with all stakeholders
- Invest in addressing systemic inequalities and injustices through inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels of our business
- Partner with the UN, Government and civil society to strengthen access to justice, ensure accountability and transparency, provide legal certainty, promote equality and respect human rights

### In making that commitment, we also call on Governments to:

- Protect human rights, ensure peace and security, and uphold the rule of law so that businesses, individuals and societies can flourish
- Create an enabling environment to serve the interests of people and planet, prosperity and purpose, through strengthened international cooperation and national legal frameworks
- Enhance multilateralism and global governance to combat corruption, build resilience and achieve the SDGs

Now is our opportunity to learn from our collective experiences to **realign behind the mission of the UN** and steer our world onto a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable path. We are in this together — and we are united in the business of a better world.

Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten

- **1,294 Chief Executive Officers** from companies in over 100 countries have demonstrated their support for the United Nations and inclusive multilateralism by signing onto a powerful **Statement from Business Leaders for Renewed Global Cooperation**.

Full List of Signatories at <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/news/4589-09-21-2020>



United Nations  
Global Compact

**+ELEVATE**