



## **2024 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

### **Side event**

#### **Insights from UN staff for the Summit of the Future to build a sustainable world welfare model**

#### **Concept Note**

"You can't solve a problem with the same way of thinking that created it", Albert Einstein

#### **Background**

Humanity is facing the greatest threat it has ever had to face in its history: global warming, and more generally the transgression of planetary boundaries<sup>1</sup>. The latest IPCC report is without appeal, we will most likely reach 1.5°C of warming by the end of 2020s or early 2030s. Moreover, we have already crossed 6 of the 9 planetary boundaries, and on track for 8.

The UN Secretary-General has urgently called for action to combat CO2 emissions and the broader destruction of life on Earth, terming inaction as "collective suicide." Despite efforts and agreements, such as the 2022 biodiversity pact, the dominant socio-economic model persists, heavily reliant on fossil fuels, which still make up 82% of energy use.

The 2023 Africa Climate Summit's declaration emphasizes the need for a new global order to achieve shared prosperity and protect the planet. This critical situation demands an immediate shift from business as usual to a comprehensive transformation of our global welfare system, encompassing the economy, society, and governance, to address climate change effectively.

The fight against climate change and adaptation to its potentially devastating consequences will totally transform human societies, their way of producing, consuming, moving, trading, etc. This cannot be tackled based on a single strategy. This cannot be understood through the prism of past models. It should be the role of the UN to help "think" the foundations of this new world that must quickly emerge before the old one puts an end to all hope of keeping a habitable

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<sup>1</sup> For ease of writing, global warming will refer to the overstepping of planetary boundaries, because global warming is not the only degradation of our environment that constitutes an existential threat for humanity.

planet. The UN system has a leading role in finding a path for humanity to escape the social trap of climate “inaction”. The Summit of the future could mark the beginning of such a challenge of building a new global welfare order for humanity.

The proposed side event is in the spirit of UN 2.0's inclusive approach, which invites employees to make their own contribution and to contribute to innovative thinking both to increase the efficiency of the UN system in its leading role and to fight climate change.

### **Objective**

The aim of this side event is to provide a forum for United Nations staff to come up with bold, innovative ideas (in line with the challenges of climate change) that can feed the Summit of the future.

### **Format**

Call for ideas is expressed for the following critical questions:

1. What is lacking in the current approach to climate change mitigation?
2. How to rethink progress and innovation to avoid a +2°C world?
3. Is there a new possible angle from which to view SDGs?
4. How to address the lack of global coordination and cooperation to fight climate change?
5. How to increase our capacity to design innovative solutions to tackle climate change issues?
6. How can the UN better contribute to the emergence of a new global welfare order for Humanity?
7. How to increase coordination of the UN system and other International Organizations?
8. How to tackle the transformation of the financial system for sustainability transition?
9. How to reshape the COP to make them more efficient in reaching ambitious and actionable engagements?
10. How can Africa leapfrog to a greener, more sustainable future while creating enough jobs for its growing population?
11. How can Africa reconcile its development needs with planetary boundaries?

### **Expected Outcomes**

**The expected outcomes of the side event are:**

- Elicit a cross-entity debate on role and actions of the UN system

- To bring forth new ideas for the UN system and member States to escape “climate inaction” from UN staff: these ideas will lead to a document as a contribution of UN staff to the Summit of the future

### **Participants**

The side event will gather Un staff from different UN entities and involve Member States, development partners.

### **Programme**

12h – 12h50: Panel

Zoubir Benhamouche, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Ekkehardt Ernst, International Labor Organization



Habiba Ben Barka, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development



Adebayo Adekola, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund



Michael Stanley-Jones, Plastic-free Mediterranean Sea Initiative and former UNEP Staff



12h50 – 13h 30: Discussion

**Date and Venue**

The side event will take place virtually on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 12h – 13h30 CET.

**Contacts**

For additional information regarding the meeting, please contact:

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