

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 4 March 2021
3:00 p.m. –6:00 p.m. (GMT+3)
Online Meeting

**Agenda Item 2: Presentation of the UNEP Emission Gap Report and
Adaption Gap Report.**

This document serves as a background note for consideration of Agenda Item 2: Presentation of the UNEP Emission Gap Report and Adaption Gap Report.

It includes a short briefing for Emission Gap report, which was released on 9 December 2020; and a briefing for Adaptation Gap Report 2020, released on 14 January 2021.

Member States are invited to raise questions they may have and provide any other feedback.

Emissions Gap Report 2020

The 11th edition of UNEP's [Emissions Gap Report](#) was released on 9 December 2020, ahead of the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement and the Climate Ambition Summit 2020. The report provided an update of global emissions pathways and progress towards achieving national mitigation pledges and the Paris Agreement goals, as well as the resulting 'emissions gap'. In addition, the 2020 edition of the Emissions Gap Report looked at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the extent possible and discussed the potential implications of related recovery responses.

The report found that despite a brief dip in carbon dioxide emissions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is still heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century – far beyond the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C. The report predicted carbon dioxide emissions to fall up to 7 per cent in 2020, but this only translates to a 0.01°C reduction of global warming by 2050.

However, a low-carbon pandemic recovery could cut around 25 per cent off the greenhouse emissions expected in 2030, based on policies in place before COVID-19. This far outstrips emissions savings that would be delivered under unconditional Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and provides an opportunity to put the world close to the 2°C pathway, with more needed for 1.5°C goal. While the opening for using recovery measures to accelerate a green transition has largely been missed to date, there remains a significant opportunity for countries to implement low-carbon policies and programmes and strengthen their pledges before the next climate meeting in 2021.

The Emissions Gap Report 2020 also assessed the role of shipping and aviation sectors, which account for 5 percent of global emissions, as well as the potential of lifestyles in bridging the emissions gap. Around two-thirds of global emissions are linked to private households. The top one percent of highest income earners account for more than twice the combined share of the lowest earning 50 per cent of the population.

As in previous years, the Emissions Gap Report 2020 was guided by a distinguished steering committee and prepared by an international team of over 50 lead and contributing authors. The report was extensively reviewed by a wide range of independent experts and the assessment methodology and preliminary findings were made available to the governments of the countries specifically mentioned in the report to provide them with the opportunity to comment on the findings. The production of the report is jointly managed and coordinated by UNEP and UNEP DTU Partnership.

Following the release of the Emissions Gap Report 2020, the report was widely covered in the international media. As of 8 February 2021, a total of 2,342 articles were published in 1,469 outlets across 109 countries and in 30 languages. The report has been downloaded over 36,900 times (as of 5 February 2021) from UNEP's website alone.

The Emissions Gap Report 2020, as well as all related documents, such as the executive summary in all UN languages, key messages and various communication products can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.unep.org/emissions-gap-report-2020>

Adaptation Gap Report 2020

[The 5th edition of the Adaptation Gap Report](#) was released on 14 January 2021, ahead of the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021. The 2020 edition of the Adaptation Gap Report (AGR 2020) provided the first recurrent assessment of the global status and progress of the adaptation process across three core elements (planning, financing and implementation). In addition, this report took a thematic deep dive into the status and progress of Nature-Based Solutions in adaptation. The AGR 2020 also provided an initial outlook on overall results in adaptation at the global level taking a forward-looking approach.

Adaptation – reducing countries’ and communities’ vulnerability to climate change by increasing their ability to absorb impacts and remain resilient – is a key pillar of the Paris Agreement. Given the current uncertainties around efforts to contain climate change, the world must plan for, finance and implement climate change adaptation measures appropriate for the observed and projected climate change impacts, losses and damages. The AGR 2020 found that such action was lagging far behind where it should be. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to hit the ability of countries to take adaptation actions, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable countries and population groups. However, we still have the hope to build a more resilient world in the recovery stage to confront future risks including climate change.

As indicated in the AGR 2020, while nations have advanced in planning and implementation for adaptation, huge gaps remain, particularly in finance for developing countries and bringing adaptation projects to the stage where they bring real reductions in climate risks such as extra weather events and sea-level rise. Annual adaptation costs in developing countries are estimated at USD 70 billion. This figure is expected to reach USD 140-300 billion in 2030 and USD 280-500 billion in 2050. Public and private finance for adaptation must be stepped up urgently, while faster implementation is required on adaptation projects.

The AGR 2020 had a special focus on Nature-based Solutions as one of the most cost-effective approaches in the adaptation portfolio. However, there are few tangible plans and limited financing available for them. An analysis of four major climate and development funds – the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund and the International Climate Initiative – suggested that support for green initiatives with some element of Nature-based Solutions had risen over the last two decades. Cumulative investment for climate change projects under the four funds stood at USD 94 billion. However, only USD 12 billion was spent on Nature-based Solutions – a tiny fraction of total adaptation and conservation finance.

As a UNEP flagship report, the AGR 2020 was produced in collaboration with the UNEP-DTU Partnership, with strong support from the World Adaptation Science Programme (WASP) that includes WMO, UNFCCC, IPCC, the GCF and UNEP. According to the practice, a Steering Committee was established to provide strategic guidance. Global leading experts were engaged as authors. A wide range of independent experts reviewed the AGR 2020. The UNEP regional offices were also consulted in the report development process.

The AGR 2020 has been communicated to diversified stakeholders at various international and regional conferences and webinars, as well as widely covered in the international media. As of 8 February 2021, three weeks after the AGR 2020 release, a total of 536 articles were published in 401 outlets across 62 countries in 13 languages. Especially, the AGR 2020 was referred to by United Nations Secretary-General and State Leaders at the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021.

The AGR 2020, with all related documents, such as the executive summary and key messages in all UN languages, and various communication products can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.unep.org/adaptation-gap-report-2020>.