

Briefing note: UN General Assembly & Climate Week

19 September 2022

“Soaring food and energy prices, climate devastation, geopolitical tensions - as leaders gather for the UN General Assembly, there could not be a greater need for international cooperation and solidarity. The mess we are in requires leaders to use this moment to kickstart transformative action on the climate and biodiversity crises. Prime Minister Trudeau must be ready to stand up, show leadership, and set the stage for success at the upcoming global climate and nature summits.”

-Eddy Pérez, International Climate Diplomacy Director, CAN-Rac

United Nations General Assembly

13-27 September

Context

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York takes place as people and communities around the world are suffering from devastating climate impacts. As the climate crisis continues to impose itself in the political agenda, UNGA will offer global leaders the opportunity to draw out a concrete plan together to respond to extreme heat waves, droughts and floods, ongoing geopolitical tensions, and growing concerns about the social and economic impacts of endlessly rising food and fuel prices.

UNGA also represents a neutral space where all leaders can meet despite the current tense geopolitical context, which will inevitably affect the [G20 Leaders' Summit](#) and [COP27](#) negotiations taking place this November. The UN General Assembly remains a unique moment of trust where countries can come together to increase and accelerate cooperation and demonstrate solidarity in the face of common challenges.

Opportunities

UNGA will be an important moment for accountability: state and non-state actors are expected to show progress achieved since COP26 in Glasgow. This means progress on sectoral

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transformation that pushes us further away from our fossil fuel addiction (including action on the [Glasgow Breakthroughs](#)), higher-ambition Nationally Determined Contributions (called for in the [Glasgow Pact](#)), increasing finance (in particular for adaptation and loss and damage), and commitments to net-zero (in line with the UN Secretary-General's [call](#) for ending greenwashing).

UNGA and other key events taking place in September will set the stage for COP27, laying the groundwork on implementation; on collaboration to address overlapping security threats; and on shaping climate action as a solution to address interlinked energy, food, nature and economic crises.

As host of the upcoming CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) COP15, Canada has a particular role to play this week. This is a moment for Prime Minister Trudeau to share his vision, to set high expectations and to demonstrate what Canada will do to set up a successful biodiversity summit in Montreal, under the Chinese Presidency.

During UNGA, Canada must express solidarity with countries and communities which are facing acute food insecurity. The number of people facing food insecurity has increased from 135 million in 2019 to [345 million](#). Fuelled by conflict, climate shocks and COVID-19, the crisis is escalating as the war in Ukraine drives up the costs of food, fuel and fertilizers. Environmental degradation, conflict and inequality are driving fragility in the food system and pushing more people in vulnerable regions towards hunger and poverty. Canada can and must do more. This is an opportunity for Canada to make new and sustainable investments in food systems, tackle the immediate challenge of hunger and rising food prices, and provide emergency support to citizens and farmers.

[Climate Week NYC](#)

19-25 September

Now in its 14th year, this Climate Week NYC will focus on 'Getting It Done', aligning with the 'implementation' theme of the COP27 Presidency. It will aim to explore the connected challenges of global security and climate through over 500 events in New York and around the world.

Climate Week NYC will bring together business, government, and the climate community to discuss climate action, in conjunction with UNGA and the City of New York. It will provide a platform for civil society and non-state actors (cities, states and regions, businesses, and investors) to share key messages and asks on climate and nature and to apply pressure on decision makers, including demands for accountability and the delivery of high-ambition net-zero pledges.

[View the events calendar here.](#)

Climate and Development Ministerial

20 September

Context

The gap between the climate finance needed and what has been provided so far is one of the most glaring issues countries face in the lead-up to COP27.

The latest [OECD report on climate finance](#) shows that developed countries did not meet their promise to deliver USD 100 billion annually in 2020; they mobilized only USD 83.3 billion to support climate action in developing countries, with mitigation finance far outweighing funding for adaptation. The report also showed that in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, developed countries continued to provide the majority of their public climate finance - 71% - in the form of loans, contributing to the debt stress developing countries face.

The [IPCC Mitigation report](#) released in April found that to meet assessed needs for mitigation alone, climate finance flows would have to rise between 4 to 8 times in developing countries and 2 to 5 times in developed countries. Meanwhile, devastating extreme-weather events like the Pakistan floods have raised the alarm on the need for funding arrangements for climate-induced loss and damages – a key demand from developing countries, and a litmus test for solidarity from developed countries.

The Mitigation report found: “There is sufficient global capital and liquidity to close global investment gaps, given the size of the global financial system, but there are barriers to redirect capital to climate action both within and outside the global financial sector, and in the macroeconomic headwinds facing developing regions.”

Opportunities

At the Climate and Development Ministerial, ministers have an opportunity to send strong signals on the scale of reforms needed inside and outside of the UNFCCC to address climate and development finance. Minister Guilbeault as co-lead of the 2022 USD 100 billion Delivery Plan Progress report is uniquely positioned to establish trust between countries, demonstrate progress on the delivery of international climate finance obligations and express solidarity with the countries in Global South.

Minister Guilbeault must use this opportunity to:

- Pressure developed countries to deliver the USD 100 billion annually as early as possible ahead of 2023.
- Support the [calls from the Ministers from the Least Developed Countries](#), including for wealthy nations to at least double adaptation finance by 2025 through public, grant-based finance, and to provide a delivery plan at COP27.
- Support calls from the G77 and Alliance of Small Island States for a financial response to address climate-induced losses and damages by COP27, and commit to working with

the COP27 Egyptian Presidency to adopt a financial facility for loss and damage under the UN Climate Convention in Sharm El-Sheikh.

[Countdown to COP15: Landmark Leaders Event for a Nature Positive World](#)

20 September

Organized by the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, the Global Ocean Alliance and the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, and co-hosted by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, this event aims to build momentum ahead of the CBD COP15. Government leaders and partners will demonstrate progress taken on previous commitments and pledge new actions, including around resource mobilization to support the Global Biodiversity Framework. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is [scheduled](#) to speak at the opening segment and many will look to Canada as host country to share a vision for an ambitious, equitable COP15 Summit that commits to halting biodiversity loss by 2030.

[Informal Leaders' Roundtable on Climate Action](#)

21 September

In the lead-up to COP27, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, with President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi of Egypt, will bring together a group of heads of state and government to host an informal Leaders' Roundtable on Climate Action to build the momentum required to make this upcoming climate COP a success.

The roundtable seeks to increase accountability of pledges made by governments to date, including at COP26 in Glasgow. The Secretary-General is calling on all countries, in particular major emitters like Canada, to step up and commit to closing the significant gaps on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience, climate finance, as well as loss and damage, with the goal of re-energizing the multilateral system to help bridge these gaps at COP27 and sending a message to the world that a fossil-free future is our way out of climate catastrophe.

[Global Clean Energy Action Forum](#)

21-23 September

The U.S. steel city of Pittsburg has been chosen to host the first-ever Global Clean Energy Action Forum, a joint convening of the [13th Clean Energy Ministerial](#) and [7th Mission Innovation ministerial](#). The forum's theme is [Rapid Innovation and Deployment](#): accelerating the pace and scale of innovation through collaboration and shared strategies for the deployment of clean energy technologies. All eyes will be on the ministers from high-emitting countries attending this meeting to demonstrate how they intend to move beyond low-ambitious sectoral measures to transformational shifts and accountability across all sectors of the economy, with the goal of ending fossil fuel addiction and unlocking the required level of investments to meet the 1.5C goal.

[View the schedule here.](#)

Global Climate Strike

23 September

Fridays for Future is planning hundreds of strikes around the world on September 23, including more than 40 across Canada. People will be striking to demand climate reparations and justice – for policymakers to prioritize people over profit, listen to the voices of those most affected, and provide loss and damage finance.

[View the map of actions here.](#)

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