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Climate Security and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

By Margareth Sembiring

The Paris Agreement's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) had seen 193 Parties pledging emission reduction goals. The UNFCCC's latest NDC synthesis [report](#) projects that the pledges will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 0.3 per cent by 2030 compared to 2019 levels. While such reduction will clearly be an achievement, it will unfortunately fall far short of the 43 per cent emission reduction target that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) urged the world to attain to be on track the 1.5°C pathway.

Fossil fuels are largely responsible for global warming. Their primary use is to support global economic development that hinges upon the utilisation of natural resources. Over time, increased production and consumption volumes had placed massive pressure on the environment, thereby generating pressing concerns over resource shortage and rising GHG emissions. This was evidenced in Southeast Asia where the [regional](#) carbon emissions have risen by 400 metric tons of carbondioxide between 2010 and 2018 alongside its growing economy.

The consumption of natural resources is marked by disparities between import-oriented and export-oriented countries, and high-income and low-income countries. For example, in [2019](#), the material footprints in Northern Africa and Western Africa, and in Europe and Northern America, were higher than their domestic material consumptions. This means that the populations in these regions consumed more resources than what they produced domestically, and the excess consumption was satisfied from imports. The situations were re-

IN THIS ISSUE

CLIMATE CHANGE

ENERGY SECURITY

FOOD SECURITY

HEALTH SECURITY

HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE AND
DISASTER RELIEF

MIGRATION

versed in Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa where the material footprints were lower than domestic material consumption. This implies that a greater volume of goods produced in these regions goes for export instead of being consumed domestically.

In terms of GHG [emissions](#), however, lower income countries that rely on industrialisation to support their economic growth are likely to emit more GHGs compared to higher income countries whose economies comprise mainly of services. International trade thus plays a big role in resource consumption and GHG emissions.

Similar disparities are likewise observed between [cities](#) and rural areas. Higher number of populations, greater economic activities and higher purchasing power in cities translate to higher consumption rate.

This phenomenon reflects unequal attribution of responsibilities in addressing environmental concerns and GHG emissions. Thus far, this is translated to developed countries taking the lead in decarbonising their economies and providing financial and technological assistance to developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

In view of GHG emissions, efforts are already in place to switch fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. Additionally, the circular economic model has been put forward to taper the rate of resource consumption and achieve a more sustainable production-consumption cycle. However, given the tripling amount of resources used to support economic activities since the 1970s, which has reached about 95 billion metric tonnes in 2019, more initiatives and policies need to be taken to mainstream circular economy at the regional, national and local levels.

With the current pledges in the [NDCs](#) set to bring the world to 2.5°C of temperature rise at the end of the century, the case for responsible consumption and production is imperative to bring down emissions.

SUGGESTED READINGS

United Nations. (2023). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet.*

Joy Blessilda Sinay, Erwin Andreas Tumengkol, and Okti Zendra. (2022). *ASEAN Transition Towards Circular Economy. ASEAN Policy Brief No. 05/ December 2022.* Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2022). *Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. Synthesis Report by the Secretariat.*

Margareth Sembiring. (2021). *For Southeast Asian Nations, Summit a Good Start but Holistic Approach Needed.* Council of Councils, Council on Foreign Relations.

Margareth Sembiring. (2020). *Decarbonisation on a Finite Planet: A Preliminary Assessment of Environmental and Social Impacts.* NTS Insight No. IN20-08. Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies.



Photo Credit: Freepik.com

CLIMATE CHANGE



Photo Credit: freedomnaruk on Freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Bill Gates sees ‘a lot of climate exaggeration’ out there: ‘The climate is not the end of the planet.

So the planet is going to be fine’

Gates cited a reason for thinking it won’t be as bad as it once looked: Since 2015, until last year, the world went on a “gigantic” innovation binge in efforts that could help curb climate change.

Seth Borenstein, Fatima Hussein and the Associated Press
Fortune | 20 September 2023

Over 1,400 attend SG Climate Rally highlighting pervasive impact of climate change

This year’s climate rally in Singapore focused on inclusiveness and the pervasive nature of climate change. It emphasised that marginalised persons disproportionately bear the negative impacts of climate change and need to be heard when policies are introduced.

Nikki Yeo

Channel News Asia | 23 September 2023

Why planting and growing trees matters for climate, people and biodiversity

Our first step must be to end our reliance on fossil fuels, but restoring the world’s forests will help safeguard the future of the planet.

John Lotspeich

The World Economic Forum | 10 October 2023

Breaking the vicious cycle of haze and climate change in Southeast Asia

Climate change does not only make the haze worse; the haze itself is a serious driver of climate change. In this regard, the present momentum in the region in using carbon pricing instruments and the establishment of voluntary carbon emission trading markets (as Indonesia has recently done) could be a window of opportunity to incentivise stakeholders to scale-up their conservation efforts and generate quality carbon credits that can be monetised.

Sharon Seah and Helena Varkkey

Fulcrum | 11 October 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Strong influence of climate change in uncharacteristic early spring heat in South America

The spring heat in South America would have been 1.4 to 4.3°C cooler had humans not warmed the planet by burning fossil fuels.

Sarah Kew et al.

World Weather Attribution | 2023

Scoping out: Tracking nature across the supply chain

Climate is just one part of the bigger picture. A company’s environmental impact goes beyond climate; forests, water and biodiversity all desperately need our attention. For most companies, such broader focus will only be possible if they look beyond the impact of their direct operations. They need to exert their full influence by engaging suppliers and bringing them along on this journey.

CDP

2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

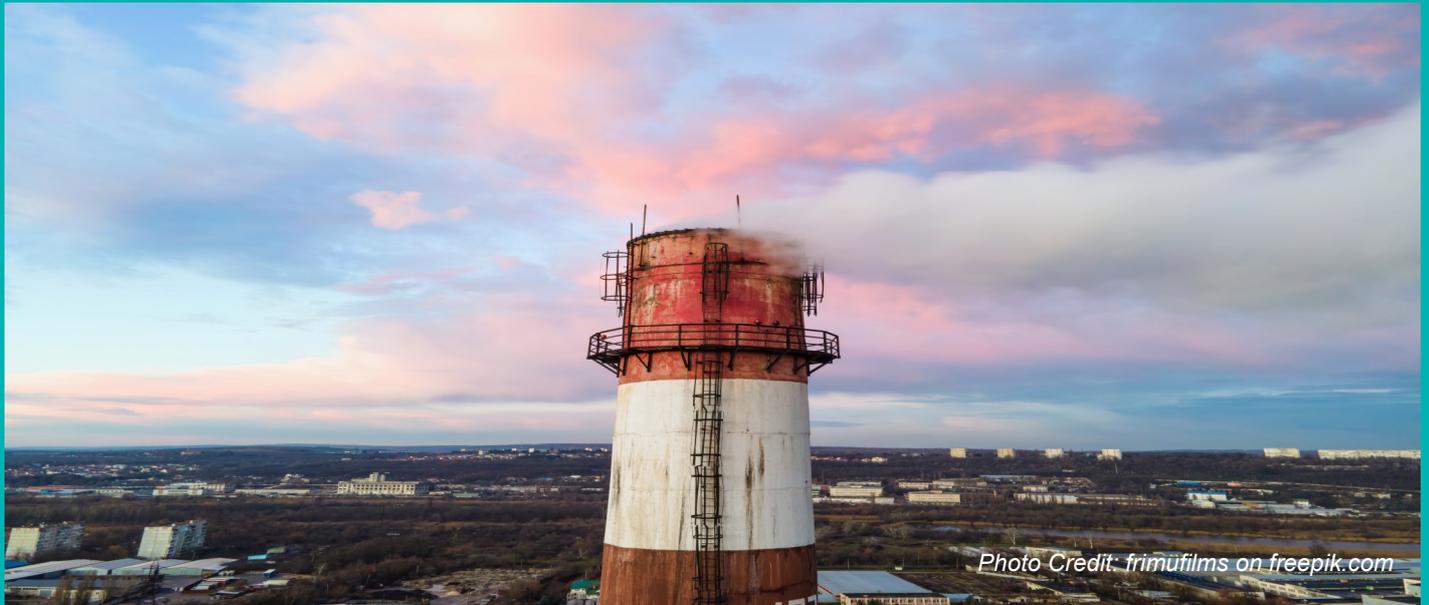
Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2023

Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW) 2023 provides a platform for policymakers, practitioners, businesses and civil society to exchange on climate solutions, barriers to overcome and opportunities realised in different regions.

Johor Bahru, Malaysia

13-17 November 2023

ENERGY SECURITY



NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Japan begins releasing second batch of treated Fukushima water

Following the initial water release, tritium levels in seawater and fish near the nuclear plant were measured by government officials, but no detectable amount has been found.

Kathleen Benoza

Japan Times | 5 October 2023

Renewable energy stocks are struggling

Southeast Asian nations are feeling the urgency to switch to clean energy to combat climate change. As a result, a 20-year-old plan for the region to share power is being revitalized.

Roberto Bocca

World Economic Forum | 9 October 2023

IAEA Annual Projections Rise Again as Countries Turn to Nuclear for Energy Security and Climate Action

IAEA now sees a quarter more nuclear energy capacity installed by 2050 than it did as recently as 2020, underscoring how a growing number of countries are looking to this clean energy source to enhance their energy security, climate action and economic development.

IAEA News

9 October 2023

Oil prices surge on fears of Mideast conflict adding to supply tightness

An analyst pointed out that the most serious outcome for crude is that the conflict escalates into a more devastating proxy war which could affect crude supply.

Arathy Somasekhar

Reuters

10 October 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Thailand's energy landscape and the potential role and place of nuclear technology

The chapter shows Thailand has had an interest in nuclear energy but efforts to bring it to fruition never paid off, most recently in the final years of the 2010s. Going forward, however, small modular reactors (SMRs) could potentially break the wall of resistance to nuclear power development in Thailand.

Doonyapong Wongsawaeng

Southeast Asia's Clean Energy Transition: A Role for Nuclear Power? Edited by Carl Baker and David Santoro | 2023

What is net zero? What is the role of nuclear power and innovations?

Novel reactor designs are entering the scene along with new modular manufacturing methods, all of which provide opportunities and challenges for deployment.

Joanne Liou

IAEA Bulletin, Vol. 64, No. 3
2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

Call for Abstracts: International Conference on Nuclear Security

The conference will feature presentations on best practices, lessons learnt, and policy recommendations to enhance nuclear security.

Vienna, Austria

Deadline for submission of abstracts 16 October 2023

FOOD SECURITY



Photo Credit: user6702303 on Freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Is the global rice crisis coming again? (全球大米危机又要来了?)

Less than 10% of rice produced is traded, making for "thin" trading market. Adding to this, rice exports are concentrated in only a few countries, namely, Thailand, India and Vietnam. As such, a move by of these three countries can trigger a domino effect across the other countries, according to RSIS Research Fellow, Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros.

Ruide Chen

Lianhe Zaobao | 25 September 2023

Japan eyes bill for food security in emergencies

Japan's agricultural ministry is exploring legislation which would urge private companies to present import and shipment plans for agricultural and livestock products in the event of emergencies, to prevent hoarding. It will complement this with financial support to the private sector to reduce private sector losses in such events.

Jiji Press

Arab News Japan | 3 October 2023

ASEAN steps in to resolve food shortage

During the 45th ASEAN Ministers of Agricultural and Forestry (AMAF) Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the ministers gave priority to food supply to member countries amid soaring global rice prices. Thailand and Vietnam gave assurance of giving priority to ASEAN member states in rice shipments, and the floor lauded the contribution of ten thousand tonnes of rice from Plus Three Partners (China, Japan and South Korea).

Prime Sarmiento

China Daily | 10 October 2023

Addressing undernourishment and climate change adaptation in agriculture

The political declaration of the 2023 SDGs summit showed a strong sense of policy continuity in still seeking to meet the SDGs by 2030, despite its slow progress and, at times, regression in targets below the 2015 levels. This applies to agriculture and food security, and signals the need to address the "wicked problem" amidst trade-offs between meeting growing demand for food supplies to meet future consumption requirements, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

Council of Councils Global Perspectives | 10 October 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Is rice production becoming a wicked problem?

This article argues that the international community is facing a "wicked problem" of contrasting goals of producing more rice to meet future food security requirements (SDG2) while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, given that rice is a significant source of the latter (SDG13). It proposes science-based solutions to addressing these interrelated challenges.

Paul Teng and Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

NTS Insight | 2023

Risks of synchronized low yields are underestimated in climate and crop model projections

This article argues that current crop-related climate change projection modules underestimate the food security risks in the case of interlapping weather anomalies. The risk of concurrent crop-failures thus need to be accounted for as these pose a systemic risk that can lead to food price spikes and potential conflict within and across impacted countries.

Kai Kornhuber et al.

Nature Communications | 2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

Export Restrictions Rules to Promote Global Food Security in the Context of Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events

This webinar explored how WTO Agriculture Negotiations on Export Restrictions can limit the impacts of these trade-restrictive measures on the food security of trading partners, especially those that are least-developed countries or in net food-importing developing countries. It brought together agricultural trade and climate experts to discuss the extent to which different approaches reflected in recent proposals on export restrictions promote global food security in the context of climate change and extreme weather events.

Recorded Webinar

3 October 2023



Photo Credit: DC Studio on Freepik.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Advancing the digital health ecosystem in South-east Asia

COVID-19 catalysed significant development of digital health in Southeast Asia. This article argues that infrastructure, trust and innovation are essential for this sector to thrive in Southeast Asia.

Katrina Navallo and Keith Detros

Fulcrum | 21 September 2023

Doctors Without Borders: The climate crisis is a health crisis, especially in Asia Pacific

The author points out that climate-induced natural disasters have led to severe health consequences in 2023, referring to examples such as Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar, wildfires in Canada, and heatwaves in Europe.

Maria Guevara

The Jakarta Post | 4 October 2023

A dangerous disease spreads in a hotter Nepal

Changing weather patterns as a result of climate change is leading to higher risks of mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria in regions where such diseases were not prevalent.

Bibek Bhandari

Foreign Policy | 6 October 2023

Unvaccinated people who recover from Covid-19 at higher risk of heart complications: Study

US FDA authorises updated Covid-19 shots from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. The updated vaccines target the XBB.1.5 subvariant of the virus.

Judith Tan

Straits Times | 9 October 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Think global, act local: Using a translocal approach to understand community-based organisations' responses to planetary health crises during COVID-19

This study examines how community-based responses to planetary health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can integrate concerns about livelihoods, equity, health, wellbeing, and the environment.

Geordon Shannon et al.

The Lancet Planetary Health | 2023

Environmental violence: A tool for planetary health research

The concept of environmental violence offers a potentially robust frame for engaging the issue of environment and health. The authors argue that a more specified and structured framework and definition of environmental violence—focusing on human-produced harms by way of pollution emissions—is both timely and beneficial for engaging the complexities of global public health.

Richard Marcantonio and Agustín Fuentes

The Lancet Planetary Health | 2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

54th Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health (APACPH) Conference 2023

The conference will serve as a forum for knowledge sharing and dissemination in the field of public health; assistance in developing policies and strategies to improve the quality and relevance of educational, research, and training programmes in the field of public health; and demonstration of effective interventions.

Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

30 October - 1 November 2023

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF



Photo Credit: EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Everybody's hiding their skeletons': A gloves-off conversation on aid diversion and double standards

Humanitarian groups should be more transparent about aid mismanagement when it occurs despite potential fall-out. There is also double-standards at play, with international organisations given more of a pass than local organisations.

Irwin Loy

The New Humanitarian | 3 October 2023

Has the UN been letting the people of Myanmar down?

The UN's actions regarding the 2021 Myanmar coup have led to questions regarding the appropriateness of maintaining neutrality in the face of junta abuses, and the limits of their condemnation of the junta authorities.

Rebecca L. Root

The New Humanitarian | 10 October 2023

Changing mindset on disasters preparedness difficult but happening: UN rep

Despite evidence and research that spending early on disaster prevention can save more money later in terms of response and recovery, governments are still reluctant to invest. This is particularly true even of states with limited financial resources.

Raphael Bosano

ABS – CBN | 13 October 2023

Environmental protection sought as solution to disaster risk

Environment protection-based solutions should be a key strategy to deal with climate and disaster risks during the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. The midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework will be a key document for conference participants to refer.

Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

Business World | 15 October 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

The impact of disasters on agriculture and food security 2023: Avoiding and reducing losses through investment in resilience

This report presents the first-ever global estimation of the impact of disasters on agricultural production focused on crops and livestock. It also outlines the report outlines three key priorities for action: improving data and information on the impacts of disasters on all subsectors of agriculture.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
2023

Natural disaster data book 2022 (An analytical overview)

This report provides statistical and analytical perspectives of disaster data including comparisons with previous disasters, comparison of COVID-19 situations between the global, regional and local levels. This report also looks at the increase in climate-related disasters.

ADRC
2023

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fighting inequality for a resilient future

This webinar explores the reciprocal relationship between disasters and inequality. It examines the causes and consequences of the growing disaster risks, and suggests potential measures that can be adopted moving forward.

Recorded Webinar
2023

MIGRATION



Photo Credit: UN Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid on Flickr.com

NEWS & COMMENTARIES

Rights groups, refugees wary of Thailand's new asylum program

Undocumented foreigners who fear persecution in their home country can now apply to the Thai government for “protected persons” status and be given temporary legal residence if approved. However, the lack of transparency behind the selection process is still worrying factor.

Zsomer Peter

VOA | 20 September 2023

Where are all the climate migrants? Explaining immobility amid environmental change

While migration is one way to adapt to the intensifying impacts of climate change, this is not an option for some “trapped populations.” There are several reasons for this, the most cited of which is poverty.

Caroline Zickgraf

Migration Policy Institute | 4 October 2023

The silent decay of international aid to Rohingya refugees

Amidst a turbulent global backdrop, the WFP cuts are part of a broader trend in declining support for crises in the global south – even though foreign aid for humanitarian assistance and refugee is now at an all-time high. This seems to be due in part to the conflict in Ukraine and other shifting priorities.

Jake Porter

Dev Policy Blog | 11 October 2023

Rohingya problems deepen as violence surges in Bangladesh refugee camps

With violence in the camps increasing on one side, and repression by Bangladeshi authorities on the other, the ability of Rohingya refugees to access protection is reduced. Accountability from Bangladesh is also limited

Amy Sood

South China Morning Post | 15 October 2023

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Bridging the digital divide: Assessment of the digital skills of migrant workers and the perspective of employers in Thailand

This report assesses the current usage of digital technology among migrant workers, including their skills level and needs across different digital competence areas, as well as the perception of employers regarding digital skills.

International Organization for Migration

2023

Mental health of refugees and migrants: Risk and protective factors and access to care

This report provides an overview of the available evidence on patterns of risk and protective factors and of facilitators and barriers to care at all levels for the mental health needs of refugees and migrants.

World Health Organisation

2023

EVENT & ANNOUNCEMENT

Panel Discussion on Decolonising Migration Studies?

In response to growing calls in migration studies to decolonise the intellectual and methodological foundations of migration studies, this panel discussion looks at the relationship between colonialism and migration studies and addresses the future of the field in a time of intellectual decolonization.

Hybrid Panel Discussion

20 November 2023