



***United Nations Environment Assembly***

**Topic A: Capacity Building for the Achievement of SDG 13**

Nearly 10 years ago, all UN Member States signed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and set out to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>1</sup> SDG 13 outlines the commitment of Member States to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.”<sup>2</sup> To achieve this goal, Member States set individual targets such as increasing resilience and adaptivity against natural disasters, implementing and improving educational programmes and national policies regarding environmental protections, and bolstering capacity building measures for the most vulnerable States.<sup>3</sup> While SDG 13.A and 13.B address financial assistance and climate change management for developing and least-developed States, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), other UN entities, and developed Member States have supported additional capacity-building measures throughout the years. For example, the UN Development Programme has provided policy advice and over \$100 million in grants to Middle Eastern projects to develop sustainable access to water through biodiversity and ecosystem restoration.<sup>4</sup>

**Topic B: Protection of Oceans, Seas, and Coasts**

Over 75 percent of the world is covered by oceans and seas, with about 40 percent of the population residing in coastal regions.<sup>5</sup> Since these water resources are vital to human survival and well-being, the UN has called for the protection of these areas through countless treaties, reports, program creations, and the precedent of SDG 14: Life below water.<sup>6</sup> The SDG Report of 2023 declared a “state of emergency” regarding our oceans, citing increased eutrophication, acidification, ocean warming, and plastic pollution are damaging water ecosystems while overfishing and human-induced coast degradation are compounding these issues.<sup>7</sup> UN-Oceans plays a facilitatory role among UN organizations to strengthen coordination and promote resource and information-sharing, but the main actor in providing resources and expertise on oceans, seas, and coasts is the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).<sup>8</sup> UNEP funds global, regional, and local projects as well as provides technical and logistical support for Member States in regards to strengthening blue ecosystems, climate and blue financing, and scientific innovation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>

<sup>3</sup> [https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13#targets\\_and\\_indicators](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13#targets_and_indicators)

<sup>4</sup>

<https://www.undp.org/publications/dfs-accelerating-green-transition-socioecological-systems-and-future-development>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/14-life-below-water/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://unsceb.org/un-oceans>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unep.org/topics/ocean-seas-and-coasts>