

# Green and Circular – Can it be Fair? Joining Forces for a Just Transition



Date: 23 September 2024

Time: 5.30 - 7.00 pm with reception

Location: 304 E 45th St, FF-Building, Doha Room, New York, USA

Format: High-Level moderated panel discussion

Organisers: PAGE, GACERE, GFPN, GGKP, GEC, and the EU SWITCH to Green Facility.

Concept Note

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## THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The world faces a complex set of interlinked and multidimensional challenges that threaten human well-being, biodiversity, ecosystems, and climate. Vulnerabilities associated with traditional, linear consumption and production systems, patterns, and value chains are growing. Conflicts are having a cascading impact within and across countries and regions and exposing systemic governance and market-based risks and instability. This includes growing levels of food and energy insecurity, public and private debt, inflation, migration, and unemployment in the formal and informal sectors. Many such challenges are being exacerbated by the triple planetary crises of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

To accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda, a just transition to more sustainable forms of consumption and production is needed, notably through circular economy approaches, while ensuring that the social dimension of the transition is adequately addressed. To promote such a transition, a range of capacities, tools, and incentives are needed across disciplines and institutional boundaries at all levels including in the public and private sectors. These include financing, investment, fiscal, budgeting and linked economic policies to address public wealth, reduce inequality, and promote enterprise development.

Financial institutions play a key role in advancing the growth of circularity by investing in businesses that take a more circular approach to consumption and production and providing financial products that conserve natural resources and reduce waste. They also promote social equity and a just transition, ensuring that Indigenous Peoples, women, young people, and small farmers benefit from a greener, more circular economy. Ministries of Finance are at the heart of this economic transformation given their role in coordinating economic and fiscal policy, and regulating the financial system within and across sectors.

The transition from a linear to a circular economy also requires a coordinated, systematic and coherent efforts to leverage systemic action across government, private sector and employers' organizations, workers' organisations and civil society. The transition towards just, circular, resilient, job-rich and sustainable economies requires strong social consensus and meaningful participation. Promoting sustainable enterprises, equity enhancing Artificial Intelligence (AI), skills development and lifelong learning policies are equally important. Coherence must be strengthened across macroeconomic and growth policies, industrial and sectoral policies, enterprise policies, occupational safety and health, social protection, active labour market policies, rights, as well as social dialogue and tripartism.

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Much is being done, but the global community needs to do more, much faster, and at scale, to respond successfully to the complex crises we face, and to accelerate progress on the goals of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. An economic and financial transformation is needed to support a more systems-driven transformative approach, including higher ambition National Determined Contributions, and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and by integrating nature, climate, and circularity into Integrated National Finance Frameworks.

## THE EVENT

The Summit of the Future will bring together UN Member States, UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs, academic institutions, the private sector, and youth under the theme, 'Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow'. The Summit aims to forge a new global consensus on what our future should look like, and what we can do today to secure it. The Pact for the Future, which will include a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations as annexes, will be adopted during the Summit.

This high-level event aligns with the long-term priorities identified by the Summit and Pact. It will evaluate the multifaceted challenges posed by the prevailing global crises on achieving a just, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic transformation and its connection with the Pact of the Future. It aims to:

- Showcase solutions for advancing a just transition including fiscal and enterprise policies and repurposing harmful subsidies through whole-of-government approaches;
- Advocate for integrated solutions within and across the agendas of the three Rio Convention COPs in 2024 and linked MEAs, and for the incorporation of green, circular and social considerations into national and sectoral policies;
- Provide a platform for South-South and Triangular Cooperation on green and circular economy including a transition from the informal to the formal economy through the promotion cooperatives and MSMEs and other enterprises.

Speakers and participants will discuss solutions to accelerate a just green economic transformation including through green and circular economy approaches, innovative capacity and finance solutions, and partnerships for social and environmental justice. The following questions will be used to frame the high-level panel discussion:

- 1. What policy conditions, incentives, and tools can strengthen equity and human capacities as part of a just green transition to more circular economies that leave no one behind and support the workers to move from the informal to formal sector?**
  - 2. What can circular economy approaches deliver to resource-rich, labour-rich countries aspiring to increase decent jobs, incomes, and human well-being?**
  - 3. What investments are required from limited public funds to jump-start and leverage entrepreneurial capital for circular economies, particularly in the informal sector?**
  - 4. What opportunities are there for young people to influence, engage in, and benefit from circular green economy opportunities?**
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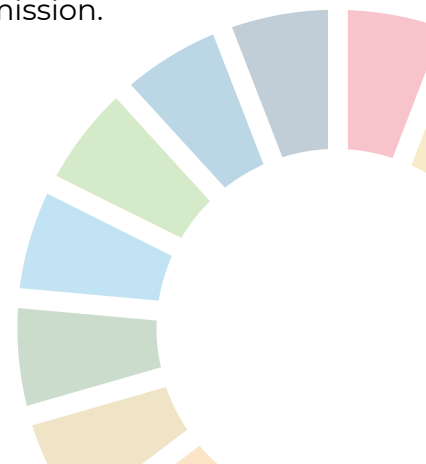
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The event is being organized by a group of global green and circular economy initiatives including PAGE, GACERE, GFPN, GGKP, GEC, and the EU SWITCH to Green Facility.

**The EU SWITCH to Green Facility** aims at contributing to the transition to green and circular economies in partner countries. The Facility promotes the overall coherence, coordination and visibility of existing and future EU-funded international cooperation initiatives on the green and circular economy. It provides short-term technical assistance, including in-country missions, for the design, implementation and appraisal of policies, programmes and investments, in support of the green and circular economy. It responds to identified needs with tailor-made support in the following areas: programming, and action design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; quality support to new actions, including technical backstopping and quality reviews; policy dialogue; programme coordination; actions complementing and/or contributing to larger bilateral support, including roadmaps, pilots, and guidelines; the development of tools and methodological support; capacity building and know-how development and sharing; awareness raising and information sharing. Related technical assistance is provided across four areas: a. Inspiring and learning: Develop awareness and knowledge to build the case for the Circular Economy transition; b. Enabling: Promote a conducive Circular Economy business environment & investment climate, notably through supporting policy and regulatory reforms; c. Financing: Facilitate access to finance for Circular Economy business models and infrastructure to scale up related investments, and d. Implementing: Apply Circular Economy business models and practices across value chains, notably through support to private sector and trade.

Since its founding in 2013, **the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)** has fostered inclusive, green economic transformation in 22 partner countries. The joint effort of five United Nations agencies, PAGE brings together the UN Environment Programme, International Labour Organization, UN Development Programme, UN Industrial Development Organization, and UN Institute for Training and Research to provide integrated and holistic support on eradicating poverty, increasing jobs and social equity, strengthening livelihoods and environmental stewardship and sustaining growth. PAGE Funding Partners include the EU, Finland, Germany, Korea, Norway, and Sweden. PAGE Countries include: Argentina, Barbados, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Jiangsu (China), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Brazil, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, and Uruguay.

The **Green Economy Coalition** is a diverse coalition of +60 organisations from around the world. Our membership is diverse, global and interdisciplinary, united by our shared belief that green and fair economies are possible, necessary, and achievable. GEC brings over 12 years of experience with civil society, governments, international agencies, development organizations, think tanks, research institutions, local businesses and citizens' groups. It convenes civil society, researchers and policy makers in dialogue and responds to societal demand for policy shifts. The GEC has built a network of local and global research and civil society actors in over 10 hubs with a growing country membership (Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean, Mongolia, India, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom, Brazil, Amazon, Peru, Senegal, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa). Its research network, convened with UNRISD, brings together around 300 members including research and civil society organizations. GEC's Secretariat is hosted by IIED and IIED Europe, and is funded by philanthropies and the European Commission.



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**The Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE)** is an alliance of governments at the global level willing to work together on and advocate for a global just circular economy transition and more sustainable management of natural resources at the political level and in multilateral fora. Bringing together governments, networks, and organizations, GACERE advocates for a global just transition to a resource efficient and circular economy for a more equitable use of resources to achieve sustainable consumption and production, contributing to the Paris Agreement goals. GACERE members include: Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, European Union, India, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Korea, Rwanda, South Africa, and Switzerland. Mexico and Singapore are observers to the Alliance. GACERE works in close collaboration with the regional circular economy networks, including the African Circular Economy Alliance and the Circular Economy Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean. Other strategic partners that contribute to the work of GACERE include: the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy (PACE), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF).

**The Green Fiscal Policy Network** was established by a partnership between the UNEP, the IMF, and GIZ to promote knowledge sharing and dialogue on green fiscal policies. Launched in 2014, the Network provides an online knowledge-sharing platform and organizes events to share country experiences and promote the international agenda on green fiscal reform. It is supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUV). The Network has produced the Global Recovery Observatory – a novel online database that brought transparency to global government spending during the COVID-19 crisis. The Observatory showcases exemplary policy solutions, identifies lost opportunities and offers options to governments for more impactful and sustainable fiscal spending.

The Network is also supporting the development of the Sustainable Budgeting Approach - an easy-to-use, evidence-based, and country-contextualised decision-support tool, designed to help policymakers identify, track, and resource strategic policy opportunities (spending and taxation) that bolster national economic development outcomes and address critical environmental and social objectives. The SBA was successfully piloted in Gabon in 2021 and has been developed by the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at the University of Oxford with support from the UNEP. It was also endorsed in the official communiqué of the International Cooperation Forum and Meeting of African Ministers of Finance, Economy and Environment in Egypt during the run up to COP 27.

**The Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP)** is a global network of experts and organizations dedicated to providing the policy, business and finance communities with knowledge, guidance, data and tools to transition to an inclusive green economy. The GGKP's three knowledge platforms – Green Policy Platform, Green Industry Platform and Green Finance Platform – offer direct access to the latest research, learning opportunities and thought leadership to empower government decision makers, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and financial institutions to make evidence-based decisions about how to green their operations. A leading engine for inter-institutional collaboration, the GGKP establishes and facilitates expert groups to assess the state of knowledge on specific green economy themes, identify gaps and catalyse coordinated responses.

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