



“Our World in Flux: How to Shape a Sustainable Future through Just Transition”

At the Summit of the Future held in September 2024, UN member states adopted the Pact for the Future, demonstrating a firm commitment to work toward a sustainable society. That commitment illustrated that world leaders are aware of the urgent need to address the triple planetary crisis. However, as discussed at last year’s ISAP, progress addressing the three main issues making up that crisis—climate, biodiversity and pollution control—has been disappointingly slow.

The slow progress can be found not only in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development but also in the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and others. For instance, only 19 Parties to the UNFCCC had submitted their 2035 emissions reduction targets to the Convention Secretariat by March this year despite the original mid-February deadline. COP16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity could not fully conclude a session in November last year, and needed to hold a resumed session in February this year. The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC5) to develop an international legally-binding instrument on plastic pollution also could not finish negotiations on time, and was extended by a year. In the meantime, international multilateralism is challenged by ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as scant hope of cooperation from the second Trump administration in the US when it comes to environmental policy development. The window of opportunity to realise a society where we can enjoy well-being within safe and just Earth system boundaries is rapidly closing.

Although the above challenges are serious, there is still hope that we can use a growing set of tools and knowledge to change course, and shape a sustainable future. Fortunately, an expanding body of knowledge underlines the potential to use synergies to address multiple sustainability challenges at the same time. Much of the work argues that leveraging synergies—and managing trade-offs—among multiple SDGs can generate benefits that are greater than if issues were managed separately in siloes. In addition, by working across a range of related issues together, it is also possible to transform societies quickly and efficiently. In fact, to help deliver multiple benefits efficiently, IGES has worked on the UN global synergy report, and is now contributing to a version of a similar report on Asia-Pacific with our partners.

Furthermore, studies on multiple pathways to a sustainable future call for a “just transition” to expand participation and build diverse coalitions for environmentally and socially sustainable outcomes, ensuring that no one is left behind in the process. The outcome of these studies and the knowledge gained must be shared among stakeholders so that we can accelerate actions on global targets and effectively address the triple planetary crisis. The same outcomes and knowledge are also likely to feature at the UN SDG Summit, scheduled for 2027, when the international community will open discussions on the global agenda beyond 2030.

The 17th International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (ISAP) will therefore focus on these two key words: synergies and just transition. Together with experts, researchers, government officials, the business sector and NGOs from across the world, IGES will discuss how to strengthen synergies and how to promote just transition to a sustainable society, sharing practical ideas and experience through the lens of the Asia-Pacific region.



More details and presentation materials and video

<https://isap.iges.or.jp/2025/en/index.html>