

Welcoming a New Step Forward in Implementing Synergies in Asia and the Pacific

Statement by the President of IGES

July 2026

In July 2026, at the Committee on Environment and Development, Ninth Session (CED9) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), held in Bangkok, the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2026 and the Regional Programme of Action on Advancing Synergies for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2026-2030 were adopted. The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) warmly welcomes this important outcome.

Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution can no longer be addressed as separate challenges. They are deeply interconnected and inseparable from progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), regional resilience, human health, and the realisation of sustainable economies and societies. The Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Programme of Action provide an important pathway for Asia and the Pacific to respond to these interconnected challenges in an integrated and practical manner.

As President of IGES, I visited Bangkok and participated in the Seventh Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies, held from 29 to 30 June 2026. The Conference was co-convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), which supports the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, which supports international cooperation under the UN climate change regime, including the Paris Agreement, in collaboration with ESCAP. It was an important global effort to strengthen linkages between climate action and the SDGs and to translate integrated and synergistic planning into coordinated implementation.

On the occasion of this Conference, the Asia-Pacific Synergies Report: Advancing Synergistic Solutions to the Triple Planetary Crisis and the SDGs was officially launched as an important regional contribution from Asia and the Pacific. The report was developed by ESCAP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), with support from the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ), and with IGES serving as the secretariat for overall coordination. The report is available on the IGES website.

The report was prepared under the leadership of four experts from the Asia-Pacific region selected to serve in the Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergies. I had the privilege of serving as one of these co-leads. The report presents synergistic solutions that connect concrete practices, policies, finance, data and governance in Asia and the Pacific, while addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution in an integrated manner to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

Following an introductory framing, the report examines the four entry points for advancing synergies identified in the report: health-centred climate action, nature-positive nexus approaches, circular economy approaches, and cities as delivery platforms for synergies. It then addresses the enabling conditions required to scale up action, including aligned finance, robust data and analytical tools, and effective governance arrangements and regional cooperation. Drawing on 36 featured case studies and more than 140 case studies (included in a supporting annex), the report demonstrates the diverse practices already being advanced by cities, island communities, rural areas, businesses, communities and governments across the region. These examples powerfully show that synergies are not an abstract concept, but concrete solutions already taking shape on the ground.

The development of the report and its connection to CED9 brought together the expertise and networks of ESCAP, UNEP and ADB, as well as the knowledge and coordination capacity of IGES. In particular, ESCAP played a central role in steering the overall report process, collecting and organising case studies, connecting the report to intergovernmental processes toward CED9, supporting the development of the Regional Programme of Action, and creating opportunities to give visibility to the report during the Seventh Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies and CED9.

UNEP provided important international expertise on the triple planetary crisis and has been an important partner in advancing discussions on synergies that integrate climate, nature and pollution, including through the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and related processes. ADB participated as one of the institutions developing the report, contributing perspectives related to regional development, finance and implementation.

MOEJ has continuously supported international efforts to promote synergies between climate action and the SDGs over many years. The present outcome is an important milestone, but it is also the starting point for accelerating implementation across Asia and the Pacific. To translate the Regional Programme of Action into concrete policies, finance, capacity-building and practical action, the continued leadership and support of Japan, including MOEJ, will become even more important.

I also had the opportunity to introduce the significance and key messages of the report before ministers and government representatives at the roundtable under Agenda item 3, Accelerating progress towards sustainable development through synergistic policies and solutions, on the first day of CED9. It is highly significant for IGES that the report was not only launched at the Seventh Global Conference, but was also connected immediately thereafter to ministerial-level policy discussions and outcome documents at CED9.

As part of the CED9 plenary programme, IGES also renewed its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ESCAP. This was an important opportunity for IGES and ESCAP to reaffirm, at the institutional level, their commitment to further strengthening cooperation on sustainable development, climate action, environmental policy and synergistic approaches in Asia and the Pacific. Through the renewed MOU, IGES and ESCAP confirmed their intention to translate the knowledge presented in the report into regional cooperation, policy dialogue, capacity-building and implementation support.

A key message of the report is that many excellent practices already exist across Asia and the Pacific. The challenge now is to connect these practices, facilitate mutual learning, mobilise finance, visualise multiple benefits through data and indicators, and scale them up through policies and investment decisions.

IGES will continue to share the knowledge and messages from the report through opportunities including the ISAP2026 plenary session, The Asia-Pacific Synergies Report and Regional Action Programme: Translating Regional Insights into Global and Local Implementation. Through such opportunities, IGES will work with policymakers, local governments, researchers, businesses and civil society in Japan, Asia and the Pacific, and beyond to translate regional insights into policy formation, finance mobilisation, capacity-building and practical action. We intend to use the report not as an endpoint, but as a common platform for implementation, partnership, finance mobilisation and policymaking.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all those who contributed to the preparation of the report and to the outcomes achieved through this process. Within IGES, Eric Zusman played a central role in the writing and editorial process. Shinji Onoda made significant contributions through sustained coordination with ESCAP and other partner organisations as well as coordination both within IGES and with external partners. Junichi Fujino initiated the overall project and led its overall coordination. During the Bangkok mission, these three IGES colleagues accompanied me and supported a series of activities related to the report launch, its introduction at CED9, and the renewal of the MOU with ESCAP. Many other IGES colleagues also supported the report and related outcomes through writing, review, case study compilation, event operations, communications and partner coordination.

I would also like to reiterate my deep appreciation for the leadership and collaboration of ESCAP, UNEP, ADB, MOEJ and many other partners. The adoption of the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Programme of Action reflects the accumulated efforts and collaboration of many institutions and individuals over many years. IGES is proud to have contributed to this process.

At the same time, the adoption of these outcomes is not the end of the process. Rather, it marks the beginning of a new phase of implementation. Building also on the renewed MOU with ESCAP, IGES will continue to work with ESCAP, UNEP, ADB, MOEJ and a wide range of partners across Asia and the Pacific to advance synergistic solutions that connect climate, nature, pollution, circular economy, cities, finance, data and governance.

IGES strongly hopes that Asia and the Pacific will demonstrate practical synergies for a sustainable and resilient future to the world. IGES will continue to contribute as a bridge between knowledge generation and implementation, helping connect regional practices to national, regional and global transformation.

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Reference Links

- [CED9 official page](https://www.unescap.org/events/2026/CED9)
<https://www.unescap.org/events/2026/CED9>
- [ESCAP news: Asia-Pacific ministers adopt new roadmap to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution together](https://www.unescap.org/news/asia-pacific-ministers-adopt-new-roadmap-tackle-climate-change-biodiversity-loss-and-pollution-together)
<https://www.unescap.org/news/asia-pacific-ministers-adopt-new-roadmap-tackle-climate-change-biodiversity-loss-and-pollution>
- [Seventh Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies \(UN official page\)](https://www.un.org/en/climate-sdgs-conference-2026)
<https://www.un.org/en/climate-sdgs-conference-2026>
- [Seventh Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies \(UNFCCC official page\)](https://unfccc.int/event/seventh-global-conference-on-climate-and-sdg-synergies)
<https://unfccc.int/event/seventh-global-conference-on-climate-and-sdg-synergies>
- Seventh Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies (IISD web site)
<https://enb.iisd.org/global-climate-sdg-synergies-conference-7>
- [Asia-Pacific Synergies Report](https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/asia-pacific-synergies-report/en)
<https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/asia-pacific-synergies-report/en>
- [Supplementary Appendix: Compendium of Case Studies on Synergies in Asia and the Pacific](https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/asia-pacific-synergies-report-appendix/en)
<https://www.iges.or.jp/en/pub/asia-pacific-synergies-report-appendix/en>
- [ISAP2026: The 18th International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific](https://isap.iges.or.jp/2026/en/index.html)
<https://isap.iges.or.jp/2026/en/index.html>
- [ISAP2026 Programme](https://isap.iges.or.jp/2026/en/programme.html)
<https://isap.iges.or.jp/2026/en/programme.html>