



Coalition for
Digital Environmental Sustainability



**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



Advancing Digital Environmental Sustainability for SDG Implementation: Aligning the Global Digital Compact with the HLPF

Thursday, 16 July 2026 /// 13:15 - 14:30 ET /// UN Headquarters (CR-4)

/// BACKGROUND

Digital technologies present a fundamental paradox for sustainable development: they are simultaneously **powerful accelerators of progress across all SDGs** and **growing consumers of environmental resources**. As the world increasingly relies on digital solutions to address global challenges, we must ensure these technologies serve rather than undermine the 2030 Agenda.

The 2026 HLPF provides a critical platform to address this duality. This official side event focuses on the **environmental sustainability dimension**, exploring three interconnected aspects of digital development:

First, it examines **digital opportunities and risks for this year's focus SDGs** (6, 7, 9, 11, 16). Technologies such as AI and Digital Public Infrastructure can drive significant progress, yet they also increase energy demand, material and water consumption, and generate e-waste - impacts requiring urgent mitigation.

Second, it explores **practical ways to better align digital governance with sustainable development processes**, including operationalizing the Global Digital Compact's Paragraph 73 mandate for HLPF to review digital implementation, ensuring innovations like AI, DPI, and smart systems support SDG progress while addressing their environmental footprint across water management, energy systems, infrastructure development, and smart cities.

Third, it opens discussion on **strengthening the digital perspective in the Beyond 2030 architecture** - a critical juncture that will be critically informed by the next Global Sustainable Development Report and the SDG Summit in 2027.

The event is co-organized by the **International Science Council (ISC)** and the **Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability (CODES)**, a global partnership initiative co-led by ISC, Future Earth, UNEP, UNDP, ITU, Kenyan Tech Envoy and the German Environment Agency.

/// EVENT OBJECTIVES

- Highlight **digital opportunities and risks** for 2026 HLPF focus SDGs
- Pinpoint status and options to bring **digital into HLPF** processes
- Open the discussion on how to strengthen **digital into the Beyond 2030** architecture



/// AGENDA

Moderator: **Dr. Marcel Dorsch**, CODES and German Environment Agency (UBA)

Time	Item	Speaker
5 min	Welcome	▪ Moderator
10 min	High-Level Opening	▪ Cassie Flynn , Director, Planet Hub, UNDP
45 min	Panel: Advancing Digital Environmental Sustainability for SDG Implementation <i>Panel discussion on the three objectives, including i. how AI, digital public infrastructure and other digital innovations can accelerate SDG implementation while addressing their environmental impacts, ii. operationalizing the institutional link between the Global Digital Compact and the HLPF, and iii. perspectives on digital in the Beyond2030 architecture.</i>	▪ Dr. Marcel Dorsch, Senior Expert Digital Sustainability, CODES & UBA ▪ Túlio Andrade, Head for Climate Negotiation at Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<i>tbc</i>) ▪ Prof. Dr. Phoebe Koundouri, Co-Chair UN Sustainable Development Report Expert Team ▪ Riefqah Jappie, Senior Liaison Officer, NY Office, ITU ▪ Francesco Stabilito, UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies ▪ Riad Meddeb, Head of Decarbonization and Sustainable Energy, UNDP ▪ Prof. Kaveh Madani, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) and research professor at the City University of New York (CUNY)
10 min	Interactive dialogue, option for Q&A with audience <i>Opportunity to react to what has been said, final round e.g. about next steps and individual best-case perspectives for strengthening digital in the Beyond2030 architecture</i>	▪ All
5 min	Closing and way forward	▪ Moderator



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SPEAKERS

Cassie Flynn, Director, Planet Hub, UNDP

Global Director of Climate Change at the United Nations Development Programme, leading one of the world's largest portfolios on climate, energy, nature, and pollution prevention across 150+ countries. Previously served as Strategic Advisor on climate change to UNDP's Administrator and Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister of Fiji as COP23 President. Internationally recognized expert on climate treaty negotiations and a frequent contributor to CNN, BBC, Wall Street Journal, and other major media. Holds a master's degree from Yale University and undergraduate degrees from Bowdoin College.

Túlio Andrade, COP30 Chief Strategy and Alignment Officer

Career diplomat since 2009 with postings in London and Tokyo. Currently serves as COP30 Chief Strategy and Alignment Officer, having previously led climate negotiations at Brazil's Foreign Ministry (2023–2025), including at COP28, COP29, and the G20 Task-Force on Climate Change (TF-CLIMA). Key architect in advancing Brazil's climate action agenda and the Belém Mission to 1.5°C.

Prof. Phoebe Koundouri, Co-Chair, UN Global Sustainable Development Report

Professor at the Athens University of Economics and Business and the University of Cambridge. Globally renowned for pioneering sustainable systems at the intersection of nature, society, and the economy. Appointed by the UN Secretary-General to co-chair the GSDR 2027. Ranks among the top 2% of scientists worldwide, with 30+ years of academic leadership. Founder and Director of AE4RIA Research Centers, Chair of SDSN Global Climate Hub, and President of the World Council of Environmental and Resource Economists Associations.

Riefqah Jappie, Senior Liaison Officer, ITU Liaison Office to the United Nations, New York

Senior Liaison Officer at the International Telecommunication Union's New York office, focusing on closing the digital divide and implementing the Global Digital Compact. Previously served as the International Trade Centre's Representative to the United Nations. Multilingual professional with a background in economics, international business, and trade policy.



Francesco Stabilito, UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET)

Project Manager at the UN Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies (ODET), advancing inclusive, rights-based digital cooperation. Passionate about leveraging digital technologies to drive development and foster inclusion. Based in New York, he works on empowering vulnerable communities and ensuring workers are central to the digital transition.

Dr. Marcel Dorsch, Senior Expert, CODES and German Environment Agency (UBA)

Senior Expert on Digital Change and Sustainability Transformation at the German Environment Agency (UBA) and focal point for the Coalition for Digital Environmental Sustainability (CODES). Works at the science-policy interface on global digital and sustainability governance, strategic priorities for a sustainable digital age, and polycentric approaches to sustainability governance. Holds a PhD and has published on global climate governance and sustainable digital transformation.

Mr. Riad Meddeb, Head of Decarbonization and Sustainable Energy (UNDP),

As the head of Decarbonization and Sustainable Energy he provides expertise and guidance on policy and decision-making processes related to energy access and a just energy transition across 170 countries. Over the years, Mr. Meddeb has served in UNDP as Senior Principal Advisor on SIDS and Interim Director the UNDP Global Centre for Technology, Innovation, and Sustainable Development in Singapore. Previously, he co-led the development of the Climate Investment Platform - a joint initiative with the IRENA, SE4ALL, and the Green Climate Fund. Mr. Meddeb holds degrees in Economics and Finance from the University of Paris I: Panthéon-Sorbonne. Prior to joining UNDP, he was an Economist at the UNCTAD, ILO, and in the private sector and lectured at the University of Paris V

Prof. Kaveh Madani, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) and research professor at the City University of New York (CUNY)

Professor Kaveh Madani is a distinguished environmental scientist, educator, and leader renowned for his interdisciplinary approach to addressing complex environmental and human security challenges. He is an expert in complex human-natural systems modeling. His work integrates mathematical, economic, and systems analysis models to derive actionable policy insights. He is the author of



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the [Global Water Bankruptcy Report](#) and the [2026 Stockholm Water Prize laureate](#)
the world's most prestigious award for outstanding achievements in water

