



# WHAT IS GOAL 13 - CLIMATE ACTION?

## CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE DEFINING CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME

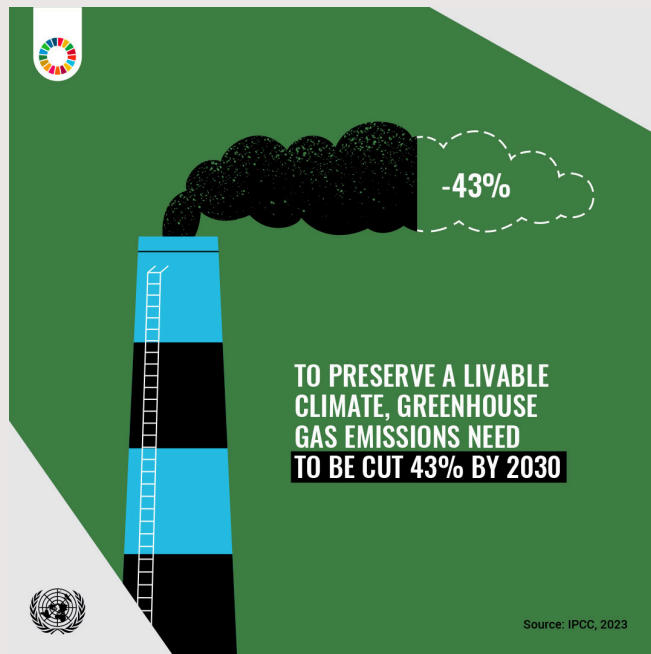
Every person in every country on every continent is impacted in some shape or form by climate change. Goal 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, building resilience and transitioning towards a low-carbon future.

Climate change is caused by human activities - primarily the burning of fossil fuels like oil, coal and gas - and threatens life on Earth as we know it. With rising greenhouse gas emissions, the impacts of climate change are intensifying and accelerating, including more frequent extreme weather events like droughts, floods and storms, and rising sea levels.

If left unchecked, climate change will undo a lot of the development progress made over the past years. It can also intensify conflicts over resources and force people to move.

Currently, our planet is already about 1.2°C warmer than it was in the late 1800s, and emissions continue to rise. To keep global warming to no more than 1.5°C – as called for in the Paris Agreement – greenhouse gas emissions must be cut by almost half by 2030 compared to 2019.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) recently confirmed that 2024 was the hottest year on record.



## SOLUTIONS EXIST

Much is happening around the world – investments in renewable energy like wind and solar have soared. But more needs to be done.

The world must transform its energy, industry, transport, food, agriculture and forestry systems to ensure that we can preserve a livable planet. Many climate change solutions can deliver economic benefits while improving our lives and protecting the environment.

We also have global frameworks and agreements to guide progress, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. Three broad categories of action are: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate impacts and financing required adjustments.





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Switching energy systems from fossil fuels to renewables like solar or wind will reduce the emissions driving climate change. But we must act now.

## FINANCING CLIMATE ACTION

Climate action requires significant financial investments by governments and businesses. But climate inaction is vastly more expensive. One critical step is for developed countries to support developing countries so they can adapt and move towards greener economies.

At COP29 in November 2024, governments agreed to set a New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance of at least \$300 billion per year by 2035, tripling the previously agreed target. In addition, they agreed to secure efforts of all public and private entities to scale up finance to developing countries to \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035.

## ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

While every country needs to work towards net-zero emissions, each country and community also must adapt to climate change.

Adaptation is the foremost priority in countries with lower emissions and acute vulnerability to climate fallout, as is the case for many small island developing States and least developed countries. Building storm-resistant housing, planting drought-tolerant crops, installing reliable water supplies and

investing in social safety nets are among many adaptation essentials.

With half the world's population now living in the climate "danger zone," where people are 15 times more likely to die from climate impacts, the Secretary-General has called for doubling finance for adaptation.

Adapting to climate consequences protects people, homes, businesses, livelihoods, infrastructure and natural ecosystems. It covers current impacts and those likely in the future. Adaptation will be required everywhere, but must be prioritized now for the most vulnerable people with the fewest resources to cope with climate hazards. The rate of return can be high. Early warning systems for disasters, for instance, save lives and property, and can deliver benefits up to 10 times the initial cost.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

While the primary responsibility lies with governments and businesses, there are many things that each of us can do as individuals.

To find out what you can do, go to:  
[www.un.org/actnow](http://www.un.org/actnow)

To read more about the UN's efforts on climate change: [un.org/climatechange](http://un.org/climatechange)

