

Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event

***Mapping Capacity and Knowledge Gaps to Accelerate the Implementation of Global Environmental Commitments***

21 September, 8:15-10:00 AM, Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the UN

**Organized by:** Northeastern University, Global Environmental Governance Project, Present and Future Institute, United Nations Science Policy Business Forum (UN-SPBF), Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) to UNEP, CDP

# Background on the event

Global environmental challenges demand urgent action, but to truly accelerate progress, we must rethink how environmental multilateralism operates. This side event, organized by a diverse set of partners, aimed to bridge the gap between dialogue and action by fostering innovative, cross-sectoral collaborations. Through the engagement of policymakers, academics, youth, intergovernmental organizations, and the private sector, we explored concrete solutions for advancing global environmental commitments. At its heart, this event emphasized the need to co-create pathways that enable meaningful, on-the-ground outcomes, leveraging both intergenerational dialogue and digital innovations. By identifying capacity and knowledge gaps, we sought to chart a course for real-world, equitable progress on environmental goals.

# Key Issues discussed

* **Burden Distribution:** The discussion emphasized the unequal burden that environmental commitments place on different regions, particularly highlighting the need for equitable solutions that address the most affected areas.
* **Accelerating Implementation:** We examined strategies to streamline the implementation of global commitments, ensuring not only speed but fairness in environmental actions.
* **Capacity Building:** A focal point was the necessity of strengthening research capacity and increasing financial resources, particularly in regions that face significant environmental challenges but lack the infrastructure to respond.
* **Global Plastics Treaty:** Participants discussed essential steps needed for the success of the Global Plastics Treaty ahead of INC-5, outlining the treaty's potential as a game-changer in combatting plastic pollution.
* **Restoring Faith in Multilateralism:** There was a candid discussion about the growing skepticism toward multilateral institutions like the UN, and we explored ways to reinvigorate trust in these systems through transparency and tangible results.

# Key recommendations for action

* **Inclusive Leadership:** Ensuring equitable participation and decision-making opportunities for leaders at all levels, particularly including youth and underrepresented voices, is critical for the success of environmental governance.
* **Capacity Building and Financial Support:** Strengthening global capacity for environmental action requires robust financial support, especially for under- resourced regions, enabling them to meet their environmental obligations effectively.
* **Science-Driven Policy:** It is imperative that policy decisions be grounded in the latest scientific research, ensuring that the path forward is informed by sound evidence and guided by the expertise of the scientific community.
* **Progressive Strengthening of Treaties:** The Global Plastics Treaty was recognized as a potential model for evolving international agreements—starting with achievable goals and progressively building toward stronger frameworks over time.
* **Radical Incrementalism:** Ambition is crucial, and having a bold vision for our future is necessary. However, this vision can only be realized through incremental steps that consistently advance us in a clear and purposeful direction. Each small step builds toward transformative outcomes, ensuring progress is both steady and sustainable.