

COP 23, Bonn, Germany & Implementation of the Paris Agreement
Sustainable Development Goal 13 for Climate Action

Dr Ted Christie, 01 November 2017



Disclosure Statement

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The next [UN Climate Change Conference](#) will convene in Bonn, Germany, from 6-17 November 2017. Presided over by the Government of Fiji, it will *focus on implementation of the Paris Agreement* on climate change, which entered into force on 4 November 2016.

This will include the development of **guidelines** on how the Paris Agreement's provisions can be implemented across a wide range of issues.

Article 2.1 of the Paris Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of "*sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty*".

There is continuing support for the Paris Agreement "*as a key pillar for the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*".

But, the log-in-the-road at present, is the need to define the *objective guidelines* that will provide the basis for evaluating *SDG 13 of the UN 2030 Agenda!*

Transitioning to a low carbon economy under the Paris Agreement – and ultimately to a decarbonisation of the global economy - are classic sustainable development problems to resolve.

One issue that led to the [United States](#) withdrawing from the Paris Agreement was that "[The deal was] *less about the climate and more about other countries gaining an advantage over the United States... The Paris Agreement, as it stands, would make it "very hard" for the US "to compete with the rest of the world "... leaving it would save 2.7 million jobs, primarily in manufacturing.*

This statement resonates with the following **guiding principles for sustainable development** as it raises *economic (GDP), social (employment)* as well as *environmental (Paris temperature goals)* considerations:

- ☑ *“Decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long and short-term economic, environmental, social, cultural and equity considerations”.*
- ☑ *“The need to develop a strong, growing and diversified economy which can enhance the capacity for environmental protection”; and*
- ☑ *“The need to maintain and enhance international competitiveness in an environmentally sound manner”.*

But, what must not be overlooked is the role of *equity* as a key consideration for achieving *sustainable development* for climate change.

*Equity ensures a sustainable solution
is not a solution weighted
in favour of only one consideration e.g. economics?
Equity requires the multiple and competing considerations
for sustainable development,
ecological, economic, social and cultural,
to be counter-balanced fairly; and
to secure as much available value as possible for all Parties.*

The aim of the UN Framework - *“Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”* - adopted in September 2015, is to wipe out poverty, fight inequality and to tackle climate change over the next 15 years.

One of its 17 interrelated, *Sustainable Development Goals* [“SDGs”] is *SDG 13, “Climate Action”*.

Achieving this *Goal* will be guided by its *five Targets*.

Whether *SDG 13 and its five Targets* will effectively guide **decision-making processes on sustainable development** - within the scientific evidentiary boundaries set by the *Targets* - appears problematic at this stage.

This problem arises because
the SDG 13 framework under the *UN 2030 Agenda*
is quite different from the
**accepted environmental and planning methodology for
multi-objective decision-making,**
when the environment is in issue.