FROM RECOVERY TO TRANSFORMATION: GREENER, CIRCULAR AND JOB-RICH ECONOMIES BY 2030

Update to the PAGE Strategy 2021-2030 in the aftermath of COVID-19
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The green economy is the future, it fosters prosperity, creates decent work, addresses root causes of conflict and contributes to the full enjoyment of all human rights - not only civil and political, but also economic, social and cultural.

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
United Nations Secretary-General
1 Introduction

We have an opportunity, and the responsibility, to put our economies on a pathway to sustainability and to achieve the 2030 Agenda as well as climate and biodiversity targets. But the window is closing, and we need urgent, deeper and wider action. With the support of its many partners, the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) has grown substantially over the years and is now well positioned to deliver on this challenge.

PAGE has emerged as a prominent alliance of five UN agencies1, eight funding partners2 and 22 countries3 that work together to transform economies into drivers of sustainability and social justice. It offers tools and services to support nations and regions in developing economic, development and finance policies and practices that foster economic growth, generate income and jobs, reduce poverty and inequality, and strengthen the ecological foundations of their economies.

The overall objective remains the creation of an enabling macroeconomic environment for achieving targets of the 2030 Agenda, and global climate, biodiversity and other sustainability agreements.

After successfully informing the development of over 115 policies covering economic, employment, industry, finance and development planning, pioneering a global green recovery programme for COVID-19, delivering cutting-edge analytics through tools for integrated economic planning, as well as enabling capacity-building of over 30,000 stakeholders from 96 countries through 23 training packages, time has come to change gear and scale up efforts to respond to the urgent needs for addressing economic and environmental challenges that are amplified after COVID-19. PAGE is launching a new phase of activities to inspire, inform and enable global transformational change. The new phase builds on the lessons learned since 2013, on independent evaluations and on the PAGE Strategy 2021-2030, which was launched in early 2020, just before the COVID-19 crisis started to unfold.

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2 Finland, Germany, Republic of Korea, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, European Commission.
3 Mongolia, Peru, Senegal, Ghana, Mauritius, Burkina Faso, China (Jiangsu Province), South Africa, Brazil (Mato Grosso State), Kyrgyzstan, Uruguay, Guyana, Argentina, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Barbados, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Thailand, Cambodia, Rwanda (in order of joining PAGE).
To respond to the triple planetary crisis\(^4\) that requires a fundamental shift in economic planning and policies, PAGE continues to guide the reframing of economic policies around sustainability and circularity, supporting the development of enabling conditions, reforms, incentives and business models, and catalysing investment in green technologies and natural, human, and social capital to find a way forward to achieve the Future We Want.

The PAGE approach to foster transformational change.

The complex global context

The PAGE Strategy 2021-2030 was formulated in a different context in which landmark agreements such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework were established. Underlying this context was widespread confidence in the trajectories of our economies and finance. The world was making good progress on the SDGs, due to, among other reasons, easy liquidity for accessing the necessary finance.

COVID-19 was a lateral hit to societies and economies, knocking all well-laid plans off their tracks, and was followed by severe shocks, including the conflict in Ukraine. It has drastically redefined the global economic landscape and the nature of economic and finance challenges that countries face in fulfilling their sustainability commitments and creating prosperity for all.

\(^4\) The triple planetary crisis refers to the three main interlinked issues that humanity currently faces: climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.
Some of the key challenges that policymakers face today include:

a) **Interest rate** increases administered to contain **inflationary pressures** and tighter financial conditions are creating vulnerabilities in **debt servicing costs** for developing and least-developed countries. The emphasis on investment, fiscal and economic policies has become increasingly important for countries trying to transition their economies in a period of tight money. The environment, in most cases, is the first victim when fiscal space shrinks\(^5\) and there is an ever-greater need for countries to maintain their global sustainability commitments while navigating through these difficult times.

b) **A growing trend of decreasing public wealth** forms the backdrop to growing inequalities and states' capacities to put in place stable and guiding policies. In this context, sustainable budgeting approaches, fiscal policies to address and maintain public wealth, inclusive wealth accounting – and the capacity to implement them – have become increasingly important.

c) Those who are **hardest hit by the triple planetary crisis** in climate, nature loss and pollution have the **fewest resources to protect themselves or invest in halting degradation**. For the green transition to be successful, it must also be fair and just. The world needs an urgent focus on just transition and social justice to ensure that no one is left behind in the global transitions towards more circularity, nature-based solutions, clean energy, better plastics management, and other high-impact areas of progress.

d) **The amount of materials used in production and consumption continues to rise** at the global level, and the rate at which raw materials are being extracted globally is outpacing both population and economic growth, meaning we are using more materials, in a less efficient way. A shift towards a system that creates value through restoration, regeneration, and re-use of raw materials (a circular economy) could effectively address this challenge.

e) **Making economies inclusive and sustainable is not a linear process.** Different challenges emerge along the development path, including the discovery of minerals, fossil fuels and other resources that require readjustment of the development and economic frameworks and the creation of innovative institutional and financial mechanisms.

As recessionary pressures loom, it will be challenging for countries to maintain the momentum of green, inclusive, and SDG-aligned economic transformation without targeted support of the international community and the UN. Political authorities in some countries, particularly those most affected by the crises or with upcoming national elections, de-emphasise the environmental aspects of development and/or human rights and international labour standards.

There are other challenges that are not directly linked to the core economic issues listed above, but nevertheless are impactful, such as the emergence of artificial intelligence and generative technology. These technologies may further skew and reinforce inequalities if not properly harnessed for equitable human development opportunities. There is also the issue of migration, which demands a collective response to make local economies, especially SMEs and smallholder farms, competitive, profitable, green and job-rich. In addition, the rising youth movement is challenging global leadership to address sustainability. Yet, growth remains muted in mature economies with serious risks of recession, and scepticism about international trade and multilateralism is growing at the very moment when global challenges such as pollution, environmental degradation and climate change increasingly demand coordinated and collective action.

This complex global context gives rise to substantial needs in PAGE partner countries and beyond. PAGE alone cannot address them all. However, PAGE can capitalise on the expertise of its constituent UN agencies, the economic expertise of the wider UN and PAGE’s own network of partner countries to support necessary reforms that will have downstream impacts that can address some of these complex issues. The key challenges described above are largely, though not exclusively, economic in nature. Consequently, it is imperative that PAGE retains its focus on economic planning and policy and marshals its efforts to where the technical expertise of the constituent agencies can maximise its impact. This area is at the upstream level, providing green economic options and offering tailor-made responses to countries’ individual decisions about which pathway to take for transformation.
PAGE’s focus, enabling factors and paradigm process principles

PAGE will remain a demand-driven programme with the ambition to inspire and inform a global green and circular economic transformation and enable deeper economic reforms in interested countries. PAGE sees its strength in linking directly to governments’ national planning frameworks and enabling the integration of green and circular economy principles and objectives through evidence-based analysis and policy advice. To further operationalise national strategies, PAGE supports the design of policy and financing measures to advance sectoral and thematic reforms.

With an upstream focus, PAGE operates as a global platform and knowledge hub to inform global debates and agenda setting, develop analytical tools and best practice documents, and to connect countries for peer-to-peer learning and South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). Access to the global infrastructure of online platforms and tools of the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership (GGKP) and the One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership (UN CC:Learn) allows timely exchange of relevant green and circular economy-related knowledge and learning between national, regional and international organizations, the private sector, as well as individuals.

Under the PAGE Strategy 2021-2030, the Partnership will take a multi-pronged approach to accelerate the transformation of economies and finance for achieving the SDGs and the targets of global climate and biodiversity frameworks. At all levels, PAGE will sharpen its focus on:

- **Macroeconomic and upstream policymaking** (national economic, social, environmental, finance and development planning) with the aim of eventually moving the whole of the economy, including its high-impact sectors, towards green, circular, and inclusive transformation.

PAGE supports nations and regions in reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability to:
- Foster long term prosperity & economic growth
- Promote & create green jobs & livelihoods
- Reduce poverty & inequality
- Address gender and women empowerment
- Strengthen ecological foundations of the economy

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6 High-impact sectors for climate, nature, and pollution but also for employment, economic growth, and poverty reduction. These could include agriculture, infrastructure, energy, SMEs, extractives, textiles, and tourism, among others.
**Thematic focus areas**

- Circularity and resource efficiency;
- Sustainable energy;
- Biodiversity, nature-based solutions, and nature-positivity of economies;
- Green Jobs and Decent Work; and
- Social inclusion through expanded job opportunities, improved livelihoods and increased access to services, resources, and capabilities.

**Enabling factors**

- Financial and investment mechanisms: creating financial instruments, incentives and mechanisms that encourage private and public sector investment in green initiatives.
- Greening of private and public finance, including sustainable public procurement, and investment and trade to transform high-impact sectors of the economy.
- Policy and regulatory frameworks: setting policies, regulations and standards that promote sustainable practices, incentivize green investments, and create a level playing field for green businesses.
- Capacity-building: providing education and training to enhance skills and knowledge related to green jobs and green technologies, as well as institutionalised capacity-building in green macroeconomics and finance.
- South-South and Triangular Cooperation, peer-to-peer learning between policymakers, and connecting the champions of green economic transformation from all regions of the world.
- Leveraging PAGE countries as front runners of inclusive green and circular economy for global agenda setting and multilateral forums and processes.

**Paradigm process principles**

- Just transition, social justice, and equality, and Leaving No One Behind;
- Gender, women, and youth empowerment; and
- Economic resilience, including resilience to future shocks.
4 Accelerating the green and circular economic transformation through a deeper and wider PAGE

PAGE services:

PAGE will continue to provide support packages at the country and global levels. The focus areas of action for PAGE remain upstream, where policies that shape the full economy are created and propelled downstream. The service package is tailored to reinforce the application of PAGE’s priority areas in an integrated way at global, regional and country levels. While PAGE services will be clustered into global and country-level support packages, there will be greater integration between the two. The manner and extent to which PAGE’s support will enable a transition that is responsive to the complex global context will differ in each country, given different needs and the demand-driven and tailored nature of PAGE’s support. The technical assistance and capacity-building provided will better position PAGE partner countries to initiate key reforms that will serve their sustainable development needs in the face of today’s challenges.
4.1 Global and regional services package

4.1.1 Creating tools, analytics and best practices

To respond to the emerging needs of the global community, especially decisionmakers, for new policy development tools, analytics and learning about best practices, PAGE will update and, if needed, create, disseminate, and build capacity for new products. The Global Recovery Observatory, global modelling to inform economic recovery from COVID-19, support for the G-20 presidency of Indonesia, best practices for sustainable infrastructure, the Global Academy on Green Economy, the Green Jobs Assessment Modelling (GJAM) and the Green Economy Progress Measurement Framework inspire PAGE’s work in this area for enhanced policymaking and achieving the Paris Agreement goals (NDCs).

4.1.2 High-level regional and global forums to connect champions of green transformation, inspire non-PAGE countries, disseminate tools and knowledge, inform the general public and influence policy debates

Building on its experience of hosting a range of global events, including workshops, academies, panel discussions and major international conferences that brought together global leaders from government, workers’ and employers’ organizations, the private sector and civil society, PAGE will create more opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and inform global public policy discussions. The three PAGE Ministerial Conferences (2014 in Dubai, 2017 in Berlin and 2019 in Cape Town) served as a model that boosted existing partnerships between policymakers, experts and countries and catalysed global public action for the SDGs, climate and green economy. Future activities will include contributing to regional and global events and networks through the organization of side-events to enhance PAGE efforts to feed into global and multilateral policy dialogue processes by building on the wealth of experiences and lessons learned at the country level.

4.1.3 Enriching, enabling, and uniting the UN’s economic expertise for transforming economies and finance

PAGE is now uniquely placed to leverage UN reforms and the network of UN Resident Coordinators (UNRC) for green transformation of economies and finance globally. PAGE will invest in building capacity of UN economists in all 130+ countries on green and circular economic transformation and cater to the needs of UN Resident Coordinators. PAGE will also
support the formulation and updating of UN Common Country Analysis, UN Economic Transformation Analysis, and the development of UN Sustainable Cooperation Frameworks, putting sustainability and circularity at the heart of the UN’s country plans in all interested countries around the world. This support will serve as an Impact Scalar for PAGE to influence economic and financial transformation beyond partner PAGE countries.

4.1.4 Developing regional and global capacity and South-South cooperation

PAGE will continue to deliver all its services through a capacity-building approach and multi-stakeholder engagement, including policymakers, local think tanks, universities, workers’ and employers’ organizations, the private sector, civil society, representatives of vulnerable groups and the wider UN family for green and circular economy analytics and the development of policy options. PAGE will focus on capacity-building approaches and products that achieve cost-efficiencies and economies of scale, leverage strategic global networks, and promote institutionalisation of learning across countries for stronger impact. At the regional level, PAGE will also continue to promote South-South solutions with all partners by scaling up and replicating successful South-South cooperation examples across regions, such as the annual Green LAC Awards.

PAGE has previously supported global forums for bringing global inclusive green economy champions together, such as PAGE Ministerial Conferences, the biennial Global Academy on Green Economy, the Global Green Industry Summer School, and the Global Green Economy Learning Forum. Innovations will continue to be made to PAGE’s offer for developing regional and global capacity and South-South cooperation, which PAGE will support by drawing on ambassadors from PAGE-graduated countries to empower alumni engagement mechanisms to expand, advocate and build wider synergies.
4.2  Country advisory services support

Deeper reframing of economies and addressing the root causes of environmental degradation and social inequalities require synchronising short-term economic priorities with long-term sustainable development goals and global sustainability commitments. PAGE services are tailored to the unique starting points, needs and circumstances of each partner country to help develop its own pathway to a job-rich green and circular economy.

In the past, PAGE has offered 5–7 years of support to its partner countries. PAGE will continue to support countries to the extent that available resources permit. When doing so and based on lessons learned from its decade of experience, PAGE will introduce a more flexible approach to the duration of support, which can be up to five years. There will be regular evaluation of progress, performance, continued relevance of PAGE support to the national planning processes, and commitment of the administration in the partner country. Given the magnitude of resources that are needed to finance the economic transformation, partner countries will be encouraged and supported to pursue supplemental country-level fundraising activities, including through bilateral cooperation programmes of the PAGE funding partners, other UN agencies, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and global funds. PAGE’s support will include coherent coordination to ensure uptake, sustainability and follow-up of the technical assistance provided.
4.2.1 Global response mechanism to address new challenges and country needs by increasing the focus on upstream economic policy reforms

To respond to the needs of PAGE and non-PAGE partner countries for policy and analytical support, PAGE will set up a global response mechanism that will respond to the urgent requests of countries for economic policy advisory support. Bringing together the specialised expertise of five UN agencies, their networks and partners, PAGE response will be targeted, tailor-made and timebound. This mechanism will build on the successes and lessons from the Green Transformation Economic Advisory Mechanism (Green TEAM). The Green TEAM was a piloted mechanism that provided tailor-made economic support to a selection of PAGE countries and to the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office for those countries. The PAGE Secretariat played a facilitating role in bringing together international economic expertise as well as the economic expertise of the five PAGE agencies and reinforcing it with capacity-building programmes led by UNITAR. The global response mechanism will expand on the Green TEAM’s format and will harness the experts from the five agencies and networks to form circles of thematic excellence organized around PAGE focus areas such as green jobs, green finance and investments, and the economics of circularity. It will include the expansion of the role of funding partners to share their knowledge and experience, contribute to peer-to-peer learning to support capacity-building, engage in policy development and provide technical assistance.

4.2.2 Economic and development planning and macroeconomic reform

PAGE will respond to requests by countries for support on the development, adoption and implementation of national economic and development policies and plans, as well as cross-sectoral policies, through assessments and multi-stakeholder consultations. The policy reframing efforts will be led by the government, and PAGE will provide tools and services for integrated social, economic, and environmental analysis and facilitate consensus on the most appropriate policy and investment options.

4.2.3 Thematic reforms around key priority areas such as circular economy, climate solutions and nature protection

PAGE will support upstream policy reform for thematic policies, strategies and plans, assisting with multidisciplinary research and the development of policy scenarios through multi-stakeholder processes. An important aspect of this work is identifying solutions for financing the transition of economies with public and private resources.

4.2.4 Capacity development to support transformation

PAGE will support institutional capacities to strengthen upstream policy processes, cross-sectoral policy coordination, and aligning public and private finance with green transformation through a systemic approach to capacity development.

4.2.5 Public engagement and mobilising support for transition

Citizen demand for policy reform, their support for priority policy options, and their actions on sustainable consumption and production choices can be decisive drivers for policymakers and businesses alike. Under the Strategy 2021-2030, PAGE will systematically assist partner countries in developing and implementing national communications strategies and
inclusive engagement with communities, social partners (representatives of employers and workers) and other key stakeholders. These will help inform the public about the importance and benefits of greening the economy and will facilitate sharing and dissemination of best practices, stories and innovations.

4.2.6 Targeted support for PAGE alumni countries

Following five years of PAGE core engagement, “graduated” countries remain in the PAGE family. Selective support will be made available, case-by-case and time-bound for urgent and important policy processes under the Global Services Package item 4.1.2 (responding to the needs of all countries for policy and analytical support for the green transformation of economies and finance).

4.3 Guiding principles for PAGE country engagement

- **Multi-ministerial engagement**: Activities are initiated in countries where key ministries have jointly expressed interest in collaborating with PAGE.

- **Country ownership**: All processes are driven by key ministries in cooperation with national stakeholders and are supported by PAGE.

- **Programmatic and policy focus**: Specialised technical assistance is provided on strategic policy analysis and macroeconomic, sectoral and thematic policy development.

- **Linkages with national development planning**: PAGE support is connected with the existing structures and processes for long-term sustainability.

- **Multi-stakeholder engagement**: Key stakeholder groups and societal partners are engaged in the planning and delivery of PAGE services.

- **Joint commitment for results**: Governments and PAGE partners work together based on a collective commitment to achieve a green and inclusive economic transformation for all. Regular reviews will assess the level of this commitment and ensure continuation of PAGE support.

4.4 Criteria to join PAGE

The key selection criteria for countries to join PAGE will include:

- Demonstrated high-level commitment of the country to the transformation of the economy and finance.

- A clear demand for policy advice, technical assistance and capacity-building.

- Clarity of linkages between requested support and national planning processes.

- Evidence of inter-ministerial coordination.

- Readiness for multi-stakeholder engagement.
5 Fostering impacts through partnerships

PAGE will continue strengthening collaboration with organizations and initiatives that contribute to achieving PAGE’s principal outcomes. These include UN agencies, regional economic commissions and intergovernmental bodies, global alliances, global and national think tanks, financial institutions, and knowledge, learning and training institutions. Cooperation and collaboration will be reinforced with initiatives working on different dimensions of green and circular economy. These include the SWITCH Programmes, GACERE, UN-REDD, the One Planet Network, BIOFIN, the Green Commodities Programme, the Global Green Growth Institute, the Green Economy Coalition, the Global Green Knowledge Partnership, UNEP Environment and Trade Hub, UNEP Finance Initiative, UN CC:Learn, GAIN, the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative, the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, and Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), among others. At the country level, PAGE collaborates with ministries and stakeholders who are engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. PAGE will work through UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to provide effective and coordinated UN support for national sustainable development policy reform. Closer cooperation will also be ensured with country and regional delegations of PAGE funding partners as well as programmes supported by them.
6 Added value of PAGE

The success of PAGE continues to remain in the additional value it offers partner countries, funding partners and other relevant initiatives. The key elements include:

**Economy-wide reach**
PAGE catalyses economy-wide change by reaching out to the counterpart ministries of the five UN agencies. Similarly, PAGE works with a broad segment of the private sector and civil society through the networks and constituencies of the UN Resident Coordinators’ Offices, multiple UN agencies and governmental partners involved.

**Peer-to-peer learning between partners of PAGE**
PAGE is now a partner of 22 countries and eight funding partners and is well positioned to create effective collaboration between them to exchange knowledge and practices on economic transformation and its underlying enablers, such as circular economy, resource efficiency and resilience, just transition, and green fiscal and investment policies.

**Collectively informing and influencing the global agenda**
Collective advocacy power of PAGE countries, funding partners and five UN agencies can inform the global agenda in favour of a green and just transformation of economies and finance.

**Situating green and just transformation of economies at the core of the UN System**
PAGE’s network extends to the core of the UN, where it convenes policy exchanges with the Network of UN Economists and builds capacity on inclusive green and circular economy with UN partners such as the UN Development Cooperation Office and the UN Sustainable Development Group.

**Incubation of new frontiers ideas for economic transformation**
With collective brainpower, PAGE evolved into a melting pot of innovative ideas for economic transformation and incubated them into independent global initiatives under the steering of PAGE agencies. These include programmes on sustainable infrastructure, circular economy, macroeconomic modelling on jobs and industry, and global programmes such as Global Action 4 SDGs (GO4SDGs), among others.

**Focus on efficiency and reduced transaction costs**
PAGE avoids a large and heavy country project presence. The Partnership also reduces the costs of delivering development assistance for PAGE funding partners as efforts are streamlined and duplication is avoided.

**Financial transparency**
PAGE provides real-time visibility of income, expenditures, and commitments via the gateway of the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office. In addition, annual reporting at the programme level and regular external evaluations identify progress made in achieving the overall goal of PAGE, lessons learned and opportunities for further action.
PAGE governance

PAGE has a light, efficient and accountable governance structure that includes several bodies with complementary functions and membership.

- **The PAGE Steering Committee** provides strategic guidance to the Partnership at the global level. It is composed of senior representatives of governments and institutions providing financial support to PAGE and the five UN agencies.

- **The PAGE Management Board**, at the global level, approves the overall work programme, budget and other strategic decisions. It includes director-level representation from each PAGE partner agency and is chaired by one of the PAGE agencies.

- **The PAGE Global Technical Team** comprises economists and technical experts from the five UN agencies and is responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring the implementation of global and country workplans for the transformation of economies and finance.

- **A National Steering Committee** or an inter-ministerial committee with a wider mandate directs PAGE’s country work. Civil society, the private sector, including workers’ and employers’ organizations, and other stakeholder representatives are usually invited to engage.
Today, the world has the finances, technology and political will to radically reorganize the way we produce, consume, and invest. Furthermore, we have partners with the expertise and willingness to work together on this common cause of making change happen. The results PAGE has catalysed so far demonstrate, once again, the added value and effectiveness of a broad-based partnership and meaningful international coordination that can mobilise actors across different groups and networks to deliver more than the sum of each individual partner’s contribution. The PAGE community has grown to embrace a wider circle of country champions looking to make economies greener, circular, and more inclusive.

PAGE now embodies the ideals and architecture of the UN reforms in assisting countries with their most pressing challenges: creating jobs and income within planetary boundaries and making their economies not only drivers of sustainability and prosperity but also vehicles for delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate and biodiversity targets. We have an historic opportunity for accelerating and scaling up the momentum for transitioning to the economy of the future, as called for at the 2019 PAGE Ministerial Conference in South Africa.

Going forward, between 2024-2030, thanks to its many funding and action partners, PAGE will offer a more robust and enhanced package of technical assistance and capacity-building to assist the growing number of countries and regions that strive to create more jobs, foster inclusive growth and achieve sustainability, while simultaneously assisting these countries with their economic recovery from crises and building resilience to external shocks and global transversal hits to their economies. PAGE will continue to widen this circle to innovate and to increase not only the number but also the enthusiasm and commitment of those who seek a better future in the economy of tomorrow.

Together, we can bring everyone on the same PAGE!
PAGE was launched in 2013 as a response to the call at Rio+20 to support countries addressing one of the greatest challenges of our time: building economies that improve human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.


PAGE supports nations and regions in reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability to foster economic growth, create income and jobs, reduce poverty and inequality, strengthen ecological foundations of their economies, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
PAGE Secretariat
UNEP/Economic and Trade Branch
11-13 Chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine-Geneva
Switzerland
page@un.org