Report Released at COP26 Presents Ideas on Trade, Developing Country Finance and Climate Mitigation

Professors from the University of California share findings to help define future cooperation on the nexus of climate and trade policies

By Emerson Dameron | UC San Diego News

Renee Bowen
On Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2021, representatives from the Government of Jamaica and the Center for Commerce and Diplomacy at the UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy (GPS) will host a presentation and discussion around the revelations in the new report, "The Role of Trade in Addressing Climate Change: Recommendations for Policies and Practices," which will be formally released at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26). The report summarizes the findings of the Climate and Trade Task Force organized by the center, designed to address the most pressing issues at the intersection of climate and trade policies.

“Climate action will not be possible without trade cooperation,” said Caroline Freund, dean of the School of Global Policy and Strategy. “If we import energy-intensive goods from countries that don’t address the environment, we will continue to feel the consequences around the world. I hope that the data and analysis in this report will be useful and can feed into better policies to support a cleaner environment.”

COP26 is currently underway in Glasgow, Scotland. Representatives from more than 200 countries have gathered to explore strategic solutions to the interlocking crises presented by climate change, with faculty and scholars from UC San Diego adding their insights to the discussion. COP26 follows in the wake of an urgent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) earlier in 2021, which projected increases in future global mean temperature, rising sea levels, and frequency of heat waves.

“Climate change will create unique challenges and shocks to the system for developing economies, such as Jamaica’s,” said Renee Bowen, Professor of Economics and Director of the Center for Commerce and Diplomacy. “Protecting and compensating these economies from their climate-related economic losses is a necessity that goes beyond a moral imperative. Through supply chain linkages, climate adaptation in developing countries is also an economic imperative for advanced economies.”

Bowen’s opening remarks will lead into a presentation of the report’s findings, followed by a panel discussion featuring Bowen, Jennifer Burney (Marshall Saunders Chancellor’s Endowed Chair in Global Climate Policy and Research at GPS), UnaMay Gordon (Principal Director, Climate Change, Government of Jamaica), Dan Kammen (Advisor for Energy Solutions, USAID and Professor of
Energy and Katherine Law Distinguished Chair in Sustainability, UC Berkeley), Margaret Leinen (Director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography), and David Victor (Center for Global Transformation Endowed Chair in Innovation and Public Policy at GPS). The presentation will also feature special messages from the Most Honourable Andrew Michael Holness, Dean Caroline Freund, Congressman Scott Peters, along with remarks from the Honorable Pearnel Charles, Jr. (Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environmental and Climate Change for the Government of Jamaica).

“Responsible, well-informed cooperation on trade policies today is crucial for success on climate mitigation and adaptation in the future,” said Bowen. “The lens through which advanced economies view developing economies must make the leap from foreign aid to foreign trade. With this report, we’re sharing our best research and ideas on how global cooperation on climate and trade policies can benefit us all as we address the issues that define our generation.”

The Climate and Trade Task Force that created the report is an independent and non-partisan group co-chaired by the Most Honourable Andrew Michael Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica and Co-Chair of the United Nations Climate Change Financing Initiative (with President of France Emmanuel Macron), and Dean Caroline Freund. It is composed of experts on climate and trade from academia, business, and government. The presentation begins at 1 p.m. local time.

More information can be found on its website.