

Bonn Highlights: Wednesday, 7 June 2023

While agreement on the Subsidiary Bodies' agendas remains as elusive as ever, informal consultations continued on a range of issues. In some cases, such as discussions related to research, delegates engaged in concrete text-based negotiations.

Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change: In informal consultations, Co-Facilitator Maria Samuelson (Denmark) sought views on draft text, which received general support. Many parties called for more specific language on regional activities and on making outputs available in the five UN languages. Several parties said the paragraphs on budgetary matters should be consolidated and refined. Parties indicated they will submit concrete proposals to inform the next iteration of draft text.

Research and systematic observation: In informal consultations, Co-Facilitators Elizabeth Bush (Canada) and Ladislaus Chang'a (Tanzania) invited parties' views on draft text. Suggestions related to, among others:

- adding language on an in-session technical workshop by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on emission metrics contained in the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6);
- expressing appreciation for the work done by AR6 authors; and
- balancing the text between pointing to research gaps and underscoring the progress on scientific understanding achieved since AR5.

Guidance on cooperative approaches referred to in Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement: In informal consultations, Co-Facilitators Peer Stiansen (Norway) and Maria Al-Jishi (Saudi Arabia) sought feedback on the international registry, including its interoperability with national registries, functionality and procedures, and guidance on internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs).

Recalling that parties can either develop their own national registries or rely on the international registry, several parties underscored the need to link national registries to the international one to allow for a global tracking system of ITMOs. Some noted this was already agreed upon at CMA 3. A few parties, however, opposed the linkage, stating that management of national registries should be a national prerogative.

Several parties raised concerns about the ability of the international registry to perform all the functions that will enable parties to report cooperative approaches properly and accurately,

with a few parties highlighting the need for a simple yet functional and reliable international registry. Others suggested the conduct of capacity building and more guidance on ITMOs to better understand the information being tracked by the registry.

Rules, modalities, and procedures for the mechanism established by Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement: Informal consultations were co-facilitated by Kate Hancock (Australia) and Sonam Tashi (Bhutan).

On the issue of authorization, several parties emphasized it should be given by host parties as early as possible to give the right market signals for investors and prevent market uncertainties. One developing country reiterated authorization should be left at the host party's discretion, while a developed country stated it should be allowed any time after issuance, but before validation.

Several parties underscored the importance of connecting the Article 6.4 registry and the Article 6.2 international registry to ensure information on Article 6.4 emissions reductions is centralized. They noted this would allow for the automated pulling and viewing of information and help parties streamline their reporting. Others struggled to understand how to operationalize the Article 6.4 registry.

Subsidiary Body for Implementation

Arrangements for intergovernmental meetings: In a contact group chaired by SBI Chair Nabeel Munir, parties emphasized the need to address issues such as visa delivery, hotel prices, waiting times to enter the venue, meeting room capacity, and modalities for active virtual participation.

On streamlining agendas, suggestions related to thematic clustering, the use of headlines, and the phasing out or temporary "pausing" of items. The EU suggested inviting the Secretariat to provide information on the organizational implications of mandated events and intersessional work.

On observer engagement, comments related to the lack of balance between the number of observers from developed and developing countries, underscoring the need to support further inclusion of the latter, as well as to reflect on different actors' rationales for engaging in the process. Mexico suggested changing the speaking order for plenary statements, with observers speaking after groups, followed by individual countries.

Administrative, financial and institutional matters: Co-Chairs Kishan Kumarsingh (Trinidad and Tobago) and Georg Børsting (Norway) informed the contact group of the objective for the SBs to forward a draft decision on the matter for consideration and adoption by COP 28 to ensure contributions are not delayed for the coming year.

Parties asked the Secretariat to prepare a 0% real growth budget scenario, in addition to its 0% nominal growth, 16% real growth, and “full cost” budget scenarios.

Several parties asked why some activities were proposed to be funded through supplementary funds rather than core funds and vice versa. One party said the development of tools for reporting under the Paris Agreement’s Enhanced Transparency Framework is key and should not be funded through supplemental sources. Several parties noted core funds should not be used for engagement with non-party stakeholders or implementation of recommendations from bodies other than the parties. Some parties stressed the need for balance, with one noting mitigation-related activities have been assigned one-third more funding than adaptation.

Parties raised the need to reduce arrears and were informed 23 countries have not paid for more than ten years. A developed country suggested adopting a decision on how future budgets would be developed.

Agenda Items Considered Jointly by the SBSTA and SBI Matters relating to the Santiago Network under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated

with Climate Change Impacts: The informal consultation, co-facilitated by Lucas di Pietro (Argentina) and Cornelia Jäger (Austria), saw most parties expressing a mix of appreciation and concern on the two potential hosts of the Santiago Network’s secretariat. Concerns from most parties related to: having only two candidates to choose from; the independence of the secretariat from its host; a lack of clarity on financing and budgetary matters; and the objective to make a clear recommendation on a host at SB 58 to ensure the timely operationalization of the Network. Several countries expressed their desire to continue engaging with the potential hosts to clarify remaining questions.

Matters relating to the Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement: Contact group Co-Chairs Alison Campbell (UK) and Joseph Teo (Singapore) invited parties’ views on expected outputs from the first Global Stocktake (GST).

In addition to a decision to be adopted by CMA 5, some parties supported a political declaration and a technical annex. Algeria, for the ARAB GROUP, said the GST needs to conclude before deciding on an annex.

Many parties underscored the need to adopt an outline for the CMA decision at SB 58. Suggestions as to the elements of the outline included:

- assessment of progress towards the Paris Agreement’s objectives;
- assessment of progress made in different thematic areas;
- how to address identified gaps;
- opportunities for enhanced support;
- follow-up steps with regard to nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans, and long-term strategies; and
- GST follow-up.

Switzerland, for the ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY GROUP (EIG), proposed including a transformational roadmap for the long-term goals. Colombia, for the ALLIANCE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (AILAC) proposed identifying international cooperation mechanisms required to enhance ambition. South Africa, for BRAZIL, SOUTH AFRICA, INDIA, and CHINA (BASIC), and Saudi Arabia, for the LIKE-MINDED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LMDCs), said the outline should provide a balanced assessment of the information

collected, including on the pre-2020 ambition gap and financial issues. CANADA opposed including a pre-2020 ambition assessment and emphasized balancing sobering messages with hopeful ones. CHINA said sectors should not be selected from a mitigation-centered perspective and emphasized information on thematic areas should be structured to ensure comparability.

Work programme on just transition pathways: In informal consultations, co-facilitated by Selam Kidane-Abebe (Zambia) and Marianne Karlsen (Norway), parties continued sharing their views on how to flesh out the work programme. Points related to, among others, developing countries’ right to development and understanding challenges related to decarbonization. Several countries cautioned against a “mitigation-centric approach.”

A developing country underscored that the issue of just transition is broader than response measures and called for the work programme to focus on the multilateral system’s role in supporting just transition pathways. One developed country called for an overview of existing work on just transition under the UNFCCC to avoid duplication.

The Co-Facilitators will draft text ahead of the next session of informal consultations.

Mandated Events and Other Sessions

IPCC in-session technical workshop on findings on emission metrics contained in its Sixth Assessment Report:

SBSTA Chair Harry Vreuls opened what he called a “space for dialogue between the scientific community and parties,” in which IPCC authors presented findings from AR6 and fielded questions about common emission metrics. The Secretariat presented an overview of the history of metrics in UNFCCC processes, highlighting the use under the Convention of the global warming potential metric with a 100-year time horizon (GWP-100) based on AR5 values. IPCC authors stressed that AR6 GWP-100 values “more robustly” account for carbon cycle responses and that reporting on both long- and short-lived gases allows more transparency in temperature projections and net-zero calculations. They emphasized the “right” metric depends on policy objectives, principles, and how metrics are applied. Parties sought clarification on, among others, the effect of methane reductions on warming.

In the Corridors

“This sure is not making our work any easier,” quipped an exhausted delegate as news of yet another proposed addition to the Subsidiary Bodies’ agendas reverberated across the venue. The proposal by the Like-Minded Developing Countries to talk about “urgently scaling up financial support in this critical decade” was reported to have blown up like a bomb in consultations among Heads of Delegation.

With the continuing lack of agreement on the agenda, some said many questions remain up in the air. A particular concern is whether the outcome of the discussions on contentious items—but all items, really—will be captured at the end of the meeting and therefore be used as a basis for discussions at COP 28. “Let’s hope all this work won’t go down the drain,” said a delegate engaged in the negotiations on the just transition work programme.

“We’ll just have to see where things go. Things can change in a single day,” mused a cautiously optimistic delegate. “Four years ago no one would have anticipated we’d have virtual participation opportunities,” another added, recalling a positive development from the major pivot the global community made during the pandemic.