

Dubai Climate Change Conference: Friday, 8 December 2023

With the negotiations entering the second week, and therefore the political phase of the talks, all eyes were on the Presidency to hear more about the way forward. The President of the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) laid out his proposed approach, while negotiations on finance, mitigation, response measures, and transparency convened throughout the day.

Plenary

COP 28 President Al Jaber recalled the achievement of operationalizing the loss and damage fund on the first meeting day and encouraged delegates to work together collectively towards more progress.

Parties then heard reports by Harry Vreuls, Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), and Nabeel Munir, Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). They drew attention to the reports on their 58th (FCCC/SBSTA/2023/4 and Add.1, FCCC/SBI/2023/10 and FCCC/SBI/2023/10/Add.1) and 59th sessions (FCCC/SBSTA/2023/L.9 and FCCC/SBI/2023/L.30). Vreuls and Munir then highlighted that the SBs forwarded draft decisions to the COP, CMA, and CMP, both from SB 59 and SB 58 in June 2023 (FCCC/SBSTA/2023/4 and Add.1, and FCCC/SBI/2023/10 and Add.1). The COP, CMA, and CMP agreed to forward the draft decisions for consideration in their closing plenaries.

Vreuls and Munir noted the SBs could not complete work on: the Global Stocktake (GST), the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), just transition pathways work programme, mitigation ambition and implementation work programme (MWP), response measures, Paris Agreement Article 6, and the provision of financial and technical support for developing country reporting under the Paris Agreement.

President Al Jaber proposed that pairs of ministers would lead consultations on selected issues and senior negotiators would lead discussions on outstanding technical work, with reports on successful outcomes for all technical matters to be delivered on Saturday, 9 December by 3:00 pm. He indicated ministerial consultations will convene on:

- adaptation, co-facilitated by Jenny McAllister, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy (Australia), and Maisa Rojas, Minister of the Environment (Chile);
- mitigation, co-facilitated by Espen Barth Eide, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Norway), and Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment (Singapore);
- finance, co-facilitated by Yasmine Fouad, Minister of the Environment (Egypt), and Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Canada); and
- the GST, co-facilitated by Dan Jørgensen, Minister for Development and Global Climate Policy (Denmark), and Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry, and Fisheries (South Africa).

President Al Jaber said GST Co-Facilitators Alison Campbell (UK) and Joseph Teo (Singapore) would be asked to prepare a third version of the “textual building blocks,” which would be distributed later that day. He identified the leads for additional consultations as follows:

- mitigation ambition and implementation work programme, co-facilitated by Kay Harrison (New Zealand) and Carlos Fuller (Belize);
- just transition pathways work programme, co-facilitated by Marianne Karlsen (Norway) and Simon Cardy (South Africa);
- GGA, co-facilitated by SB Chairs Munir and Vreuls;
- guidance on Article 6.2 (cooperative approaches), co-facilitated by Maria AlJishi (Saudi Arabia) and Peer Stiansen (Norway);
- rules, modalities, and procedures for Article 6.4 (mechanism), co-facilitated by Kate Hancock (Australia) and Sonam Tashi (Bhutan);
- non-market approaches (NMAs, Article 6.8), co-facilitated by Kristin Qui (Trinidad and Tobago) and Jacqui Ruesga (New Zealand);
- response measures, co-facilitated by Andrei Marcu (Honduras) and Georg Børsting (Norway); and
- provision of financial and technical support for Paris Agreement Article 13, co-facilitated by Sandra Motshwanedi (South Africa) and Julia Gardiner (Australia).

Al Jaber said that, following an informal stocktaking plenary on Saturday, 9 December in the evening, a single group, to be called the “Majlis” (which means “council” in Arabic), would begin meeting on Sunday, 10 December.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell stressed the risk of passing tipping points and urged parties to keep the 1.5°C goal alive. He urged for a strong agreement on the GGA and for the decision on the just transition pathways work programme to signal that a just transition is possible.

Cuba, for G-77/CHINA, expressed concern about the overlaps between ministerial consultations and technical consultations, and said consultations on the GGA and GST should not meet at the same time.

Samoa, for the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS), stressed that specific concerns of small island developing states (SIDS) shall not be undermined, and called for enhanced support for SIDS. She highlighted the relevance of the GST decision and stressed the importance of aligning nationally determined contributions (NDCs) with the 1.5°C goal.

The EU called for achieving a just energy transition and energy security through reduced consumption and production of fossil fuels, ensuring their “orderly” phase-out. She called for a strong and clear GGA framework; closure of finance and implementation gaps; and mobilization of resources through application of the polluter pays principle and aligning the global financial system with the Paris Agreement.

Australia, for the UMBRELLA GROUP, said the GST must remain true to its mandate and assess collective progress for making financial flows consistent with keeping 1.5°C within reach. She called for a strong decision on the MWP to send a message to investors and said an initial dialogue on just transition is important to foster understanding.

Switzerland, for the ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY GROUP (EIG), said clear guidance is needed for the next round of NDCs, the GGA framework must provide clear recommendations that are easy to track, and everyone should leave Dubai with a clear understanding of what they must do in 2024.

Zambia, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed adaptation and launching a measurable and time bound GGA framework, calling this outcome as important as the GST. He also called for agreeing on the scope and modalities of the just transition pathways work programme, and emphasized putting climate action in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Bolivia, for the LIKE-MINDED GROUP OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LMDCs), requested correcting the process compared to the first week for progress to be made, particularly the lack of party-driven negotiations and the overlapping schedule of meetings. He called out developed countries’ “carbon colonialism,” and urged developed countries to deliver on their promises.

Senegal, for the LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs), expressed disappointment with progress on the MWP, welcomed the decision regarding the Santiago Network, and called for a roadmap to double adaptation funding, at a minimum.

Saudi Arabia, for the ARAB GROUP, stressed the need to comply with common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and equity, observed that the Paris Agreement focuses on limiting emissions, not the sources of those emissions, and noted that

adaptation has regional implications and should be addressed based on the Sharm el-Sheikh outcomes.

Guatemala, for THE INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (AILAC), opposed any language in the GST that serves as a tacit endorsement of the fossil fuel industry. She proposed a technology implementation programme, highlighting capacity building and technology use as key to accelerating transition, and called for using mechanisms such as debt-for-nature swaps.

WOMEN AND GENDER emphasized that human rights are non-negotiable, and called for centering human rights, rights of Indigenous peoples and gender equality across all outcomes of the negotiations. She reminded parties that the conference’s success will be measured based on a GST outcome that commits parties to: a full phase-out of fossil fuels; scaling up of public, gender-responsive finance; and increase of generationally- and gender-disaggregated outcomes and analysis.

CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK called for phasing-out of all fossil fuels, addressing the needs of developing countries, and aligning NDCs with 1.5°C. She expressed concern over the lack of an outcome on the GGA and called for an ambitious decision on the just transition pathways work programme.

DEMAND CLIMATE JUSTICE called for operationalization of the principles of equity and CBDR in the GST outcomes and for developed countries to start delivering on climate commitments. She urged a “people- and party-driven, not big polluter- or Presidency-driven process.”

FARMERS called for support from civil society organizations and UN platforms to help better understand farmers’ contributions to climate action and sustainable development, citing lack of policy support and stressing the foundational role of food supply for civilization.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES (LGMAs) emphasized the need to support multilevel climate action.

TRADE UNION NGOs (TUNGOS) called for a strong framework for just transition with references to labor rights and social dialogue.

President Sultan Al Jaber closed the session calling for a continued spirit of optimism, positivity, flexibility, and inclusivity.

Mitigation

Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work

Programme: In Presidency consultations, Co-Facilitator Carlos Fuller (Belize) invited views on sections in the draft text reflecting on the work programme over the past year and proposing improvements to the work programme. He suggested that work on the outcomes and investment-related events would benefit from informal consultations. One party, supported by others, noted that informal informals would only be effective if all parties participate.

On reflections, two groups of developing countries, supported by two other countries, called for deleting references to accelerating the just energy transition, and the related findings of

the annual report, saying this is “cherry picking” from the report’s findings.

Several countries opposed, stressing the need to send a strong signal and calling these references fundamental to fulfilling the mandate for the work programme. One country called for procedural conclusions only, and for removing references to a just transition and the GST. Many developed and developing countries urged complementarity with the just transition pathways work programme and GST. Several urged the need to reflect the science, including the need to rapidly reduce emissions this decade.

Many countries called for a new iteration that would reflect all views.

Guidance on Paris Agreement Article 6.2 (cooperative approaches): In informal consultations, Co-Facilitators Maria AlJishi (Saudi Arabia) and Peer Stiansen (Norway) invited parties’ comments on the draft text forwarded by the SBSTA to the CMA for consideration. One developing country group lamented the lack of equal progress across Article 6 negotiations, particularly in relation to Article 6.8, and proposed bracketing the entire draft text. Another developing country supported this proposal, and suggested including the bracketed text as one option in the decision text and adding, as a second option, a moratorium on carbon markets within the Paris Agreement.

Other parties provided their views on the forwarded text and identified areas that should be resolved at CMA 5. Views remained divergent about the need for elaborating the scope and definition of Article 6.2 cooperative approaches, with some noting this would be prescriptive and restrictive and that the term “cooperative approaches” suggests the possibility of a broad range of approaches. Others underlined the need to define, regardless of how broadly, what would constitute a cooperative approach, to ensure only appropriate approaches are included. Several parties stressed that the main outstanding element needed to operationalize Article 6.2 is the agreed electronic format, while others stated the group’s mandate also includes authorization and sequencing, among other elements.

Informal informal and bilateral consultations will continue.

Framework for Non-market Approaches (NMAs) referred to in Paris Agreement Article 6.8: During the informal consultations, Co-Facilitators Kristin Qui (Samoa) and Jacqui Ruesga (New Zealand) introduced draft decision text forwarded by the SBSTA to the CMA, and invited parties to focus on the paragraphs relating to the UNFCCC web-based platform.

On progress in developing the platform, some parties supported “welcoming the progress made in” operationalizing the platform, others noted that the deadline for completing the platform was missed, while some called for neutral language that recognizes the progress made but encourages the Secretariat to complete the platform. Views remained divergent regarding specifying “31 January 2024,” “in 2024” or “as soon as possible” as a new deadline for completing the platform.

On the purpose of the platform, some parties supported limiting this to recording NMAs, rather than including publication or approval of NMAs, while others preferred the current bracketed language that includes all three purposes.

On the process for submitting and recording NMAs, some parties underlined that the current text, containing 11 paragraphs, is too complex and requires significant simplification. Parties provided various options for merging or deleting paragraphs and simplifying the text.

One developing country group, supported by some others, lamented the lack of equal progress across all Article 6 negotiation streams, and proposed bracketing the entire draft decision text on Article 6.8 and replacing it with text calling on developed countries to provide equitable funding arrangements to developing countries.

The Co-Facilitators will produce revised draft text.

Transparency

Provision of Financial and Technical Support for Developing Country Reporting under Paris Agreement

Article 13: In informal consultations co-facilitated by Sandra Motshwanedi (South Africa) and Julia Gardiner (Australia), parties shared views on draft decision text. Parties emphasized the need for further discussion on the list of activities under the proposed “2024-2028 Dubai transparency capacity workplan.”

A few parties suggested deleting references to funding requests under the capacity-building initiative for transparency (CBIT), but because of diverging views, one party proposed to put the paragraphs in brackets and resume discussion at a later stage.

One developed country opposed a suggestion to substantially increase in GEF support in the middle of the replenishment cycle and noted that paragraphs providing guidance to the GEF should be finalized under the GEF agenda item. Several parties requested the Secretariat to organize a dialogue to discuss parties’ experiences in preparing their BTR reports, allowing them to reflect on lessons learned. Informal consultations will continue.

Finance

Second Biennial High-level Ministerial Dialogue on the Climate Finance Regarding Information to be Provided by Parties in Accordance with Article 9.5: Steven Guilbeault, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change (Canada), and Yasmine Fouad, Minister of the Environment (Egypt), co-moderated.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell underscored that trust is essential but needs to be rebuilt between developed and developing countries.

Mathilde Mesnard, Deputy Director, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, highlighted challenges in predicting climate finance provision, particularly for private finance mobilization.

Nafkote Dabi, Climate Change Policy Lead, Oxfam, reported that rich countries fail to mobilize sufficient resources. She cited Pakistan as an example, where loan-based climate finance after severe flooding left the country deeper in debt.

Many developing countries called for a common definition of climate finance, underscoring that the varied information provided undermines transparency, predictability, and implementation. Several developed countries highlighted finance provided and efforts to increase predictability, with a few encouraging a wider

group of countries to communicate under Article 9.5. Other points related to, among others:

- the gap between *ex-ante* intentions and *ex-post* provision;
- the need for grant-based finance and increase in adaptation finance;
- the role of the private sector;
- the need for multilateral development bank (MDB) reform; and
- the need to reduce fossil fuel subsidies.

Observers called for more granular and consistent reporting, gender-responsiveness in bilateral finance, more finance for agriculture, and aligning all financial flows with a just transition.

Mahmoud Mohieldin, COP 27 High-level Champion, characterized current financial flows as insufficient, inefficient, and unfair and called for enhancing the MDBs' role and incentivizing the private sector.

Compilation and Synthesis of, and Summary Report on the In-session Workshop on, Biennial Communications of Information Related to Paris Agreement Article 9.5:

Discussions opened in informal consultations under the CMA. Co-Facilitators Elena Pereira (Honduras) and Kelly Sharp (Canada) invited views on revised draft text, noting only minor changes were made aimed at accurately capturing proposals. Parties reiterated their comments related to, among others: accurately reflecting Article 9.5 language; waiting to revise the reporting guidelines at CMA 7; and objecting to changes to the enhanced transparency framework.

Parties debated at length how to move forward. One developing country group opposed further streamlining or work in informal informals, underscoring openness to observers, and urged projecting the text on screen for paragraph-by-paragraph negotiations. Several groups and parties suggested the discussion makes the divergences out to be more than they are and urged streamlining to focus on the few key options. All urged the Co-Facilitators to seek more time for technical-level discussions, rather than political engagement.

The Co-Facilitators said they will consult with the Presidency.

New collective quantified goal on climate finance: In informal consultations, Co-Facilitators Amena Yauvoli (Fiji) and Gabriela Blatter (Switzerland) invited views on revised draft text. Delegates agreed on the need to ensure an inclusive space for textual negotiations over the course of 2024, but debated how to go about it. They especially highlighted the need to ensure inclusivity, avoid micromanaging the Co-Chairs of the *ad hoc* work programme, and clarify the linkages between textual negotiations, technical expert dialogues, and political engagement.

Several groups called for ensuring at least three meetings to advance work on text. Some suggested discussions at SB 60. Several groups called for the Co-Chairs to develop the workplan for 2024 by February 2024. Many also emphasized the Co-Chairs should be given the flexibility to decide on the timing for tabling text and in what form, noting this worked well in the Transitional Committee on the loss and damage fund, but underscoring the mandate here is not to develop a draft decision.

Parties unanimously urged the Co-Facilitators to ensure more time for technical-level negotiations. One party called the state of the section on substantive progress “terrifying.” One group underscored the technical nature of the discussions, with the

goal to be based on developing countries' needs and priorities, cautioning against repeating the mistake of the politically defined USD 100 billion goal.

The Co-Facilitators will revise the text and consult on the way forward.

Response Measures

Report of the Forum on the Impact of the Implementation of Response Measures under the Convention, Kyoto Protocol, and Paris Agreement: The contact group co-chaired by Andrei Marcu (Honduras) and Georg Børsting (Norway) went through the draft text forwarded by the SBs to identify areas of disagreement and convergence. The Co-Chairs proposed starting with paragraphs related to the Katowice Committee on Impacts (KCI) and its workplan, as a less contentious part of the decision, and then move to the first annex on modalities, work programme, and functions and the second annex on activities of the forum on the impact of implementation of response measures and its KCI.

On the KCI and its workplan, several developing parties made minor suggestions to amend the workplan, while others pleaded not to reopen previously agreed text and move to the first annex. On the forum's functions, several developed countries proposed to keep the text from earlier decisions. Further discussion focused on the list of functions, with disagreements related to referencing the GST, specific wording on capacity building, mentioning “adaptability,” and unilateral trade measures.

In the Corridors

Returning from their “rest” day, delegates eagerly listened to how the COP Presidency proposed to facilitate talks during the final week. He provided his roadmap, with multiple Co-Facilitators for ministerial and technical consultations, all of which he said should conclude by 3:00 pm on Saturday, 9 December. Anything that remained unresolved would be passed to a proposed large, single group meeting called a “Majlis,” a sitting room where people with a common interest gather.

Some thought this could facilitate the last package, where synergies (or trade-offs) could be found across the GST, GGA, finance, and perhaps the just transition pathways work programme. Others cautioned that large gatherings rarely yield results. Some recalled the “Sejmik” in Katowice met once with ministers, then broke into smaller, more issue-specific discussions. Similarly the Comité de Paris was a daily check-in from the smaller “indabas” that worked on specific aspects of the Paris Agreement. Still others were concerned about the implications for transparent and inclusive decision making processes. The extended applause in plenary following a delegate's plea to not have any closed rooms left many wondering how the next five days would unfold.

“For now, things are very scattered,” shared a seasoned observer, who hoped groups would be consistent in their messaging when talking to different facilitators. If not on substance, finance negotiators were united in their desire to keep working at the technical level rather than pass things over to ministers. However, many were relieved to see experienced ministers in charge of the sticky issues, hoping they would find the right balance between continued technical-level discussions and political input to broker compromise where needed.