

Bonn Highlights: Monday 3 June 2024

The joint opening plenary of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) had to be suspended twice, but overall the launch of the Bonn Climate Change Conference was fairly smooth. Parties adopted the provisional agendas and launched negotiations, including on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). Some mandated events took place before the negotiations even started. One was especially relevant, as it focused on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG) to be defined prior to 2025.

Opening Statements

Executive Secretary Simon Stiell opened the meeting by urging delegates to think of the work ahead as a feat of engineering: now that the design phase is complete, delegates “must put the machinery to work fully and fairly,” with every part working together coherently.

Finance is the “great enabler of climate action,” he underlined, urging progress towards the NCQG. He stressed that new nationally determined contributions (NDCs) must close the implementation gap and be aligned with the 1.5°C goal. With regard to the first biennial transparency reports (BTRs), due in 2024, he stressed that “perfection must not be the enemy of the good” and pointed to collaboration across the UN system and with other partners to support parties in preparing their reports. Finally, he noted parties’ financial contributions have not increased to match the Secretariat’s growing mandates.

During Stiell’s opening address, two civil society activists walked on stage for a silent protest, holding a Palestinian flag and a sign denouncing “business as usual under genocide.” SBSTA Chair Harry Vreuls suspended the session and requested they be escorted from the premises by UN Security.

Delegates observed a moment of silence in tribute to Daniel Machado da Fonseca, a long-time Brazilian negotiator who passed away in 2024.

Uganda, for G-77/CHINA, welcomed pledges to the new loss and damage fund, and argued that all COP 28 outcomes must be implemented to meet the urgent need for action. He outlined a number of priorities, including: adopting an ambitious NCQG; operationalizing the outcomes of the Global Stocktake (GST) and decisions on loss and damage; and scaling up support for mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage.

The EUROPEAN UNION stressed that the NCQG is a unique opportunity to scale up adaptation funding. He emphasized that

the goal should be fit for purpose and that public resources will not suffice to meet needs. He invited parties to make their updated NDCs economy-wide, with absolute reduction targets, energy transition goals, and respecting the 1.5°C goal.

Switzerland, for the ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY GROUP, underlined the need for long-term pathways to be built into NDCs, and proposed convening a high-level meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly, for parties to compare notes and ensure sufficiently ambitious NDCs.

Canada, for the UMBRELLA GROUP, urged countries to put forward NDCs that are aligned with achieving 1.5°C in order to send out a clear signal to spur investments. She emphasized the importance of mobilizing public and private finance to enable climate action and called for progress on adaptation indicators, the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, and the Gender Action Plan.

Samoa, for the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS), highlighted that the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea recently issued an advisory opinion that states have a major obligation to monitor emissions to prevent marine pollution. She emphasized the need to phase out fossil fuels and eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. She called for transformative and 1.5°C aligned NDCs, and urged financial and technical support for small island states to prepare their BTRs.

Kenya, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for an ambitious NCQG, implementing the outcome of the first GST, and swiftly operationalizing the loss and damage fund. He also lamented the decision to host the secretariat of the Santiago Network in a developed country despite the recommendation to host it in Nairobi, Kenya.

Bolivia, for LIKE-MINDED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LMDCs), highlighted the importance of multilateralism but lamented that “goalposts are being shifted,” mandates selectively viewed, and the responsibility to act devolved to developing countries. He urged that parties enhance their level of ambition, with developed countries reaching net zero by 2030 and net negative shortly thereafter.

Brazil, for BRAZIL, SOUTH AFRICA, INDIA, and CHINA (BASIC), urged parties to exercise mutual solidarity to achieve the long-term goals of the Convention and Paris Agreement. He called for clarity on the definition of climate finance in order to ensure transparency and accountability, and urged developed countries to close the implementation gap and not transfer the burden of action to developing countries.

Saudi Arabia, for the ARAB GROUP, called for a new and ambitious model of finance based on developing country needs and developed country responsibilities. He underlined that the

GST must be viewed holistically with consideration for countries' different circumstances and approaches, and stressed that the mitigation work programme should be a space to exchange experiences and best practices.

Malawi, for the LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs), underscored the importance of financial support for NDC implementation. He urged progress on the GGA and called for fully operationalizing the new loss and damage fund by COP 29. He also called for resolving issues related to the timely provision of visas, which affected several LDC negotiators.

Venezuela, for the BOLIVARIAN ALLIANCE FOR THE PEOPLES OF OUR AMERICA (ALBA), underscored that developed countries must take the lead in implementing the outcome of the GST. She said the GST outcome cannot be used as a basis for conditioning developing countries' access to finance, technology, or capacity-building support.

Argentina, for GRUPO SUR, highlighted that the NCQG will define ambition for years to come and urged for more rapid progress in the negotiations. She called for a clear definition of climate finance, accounting for common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC). She urged timely support for BTR preparation.

Honduras, for the INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (AILAC), highlighted the need to: ensure alignment of NDCs with the calls contained in the GST outcome, follow up on the implementation of the GST, and discuss means of implementation to respond to the GST's calls. She also called for the mitigation work programme to live up to its mandate and for support and action on loss and damage.

Honduras, for the COALITION FOR RAINFOREST NATIONS, emphasized the importance of sustainable forest management and reforestation and, urging for the upholding of environmental integrity, cautioned that net-zero activities must be in line with the Paris Agreement.

The CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FROM THE CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM expressed concern about adverse hydrometeorological events in the region that limit national capacities to achieve national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and NDCs. She called on developed countries to provide means of implementation and urged all countries, especially large emitters, to review their NDC commitments to ensure they cover all sectors and GHGs.

The INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC) outlined ongoing work in its 7th assessment cycle, including a special report on climate change and cities, and a methodology report on short-lived climate forcers. He encouraged the nomination of female scientists and early career scientists as chapter authors.

The WORLD CLIMATE RESEARCH PROGRAMME (WCRP) outlined ongoing work on regional climate downscaling and providing societally-relevant climate information for regions.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) highlighted the Early Warnings for All initiative and outlined plans to integrate these efforts into the UNFCCC agenda.

The GLOBAL CLIMATE OBSERVING SYSTEM underlined that the organization has been keeping pace with evolving monitoring needs and expressed readiness to respond to further requests to assess the state of the climate and to close observation gaps.

The INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) pointed to the 2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships, which contains pathways for the shipping sector to reach net-zero GHG emissions by or around 2050. He outlined work on transposing this strategy to mandatory requirements for ships under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

The INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANIZATION (ICAO) outlined two major milestones: adoption in 2022 of a long-term aspirational goal of achieving net zero by 2050; and adoption in 2023 of a Global Framework for Sustainable Aviation Fuels, Lower Carbon Aviation Fuels, and other Aviation Cleaner Energies. She highlighted the goal to reduce international aviation's CO₂ emissions by 5% through the use of these fuels.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY NGOs called for ambitious NDCs aligned with the 1.5°C goal and mobilizing finance to create an ambitious and achievable NCQG, and highlighted the essential role of the private sector in achieving the goals of the Convention.

CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK criticized the "incremental, untenable, business-as-usual approach" of the process and called for an exponential increase in low-cost public finance for adaptation.

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO DEMAND CLIMATE JUSTICE highlighted that the struggles for human rights and for climate justice are inextricably linked.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ORGANIZATIONS called for criteria for just transition to include Indigenous Peoples' rights and environmental safeguards.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES highlighted the importance of collaboration with actors across sectors and governmental levels, and expressed concern about the Secretariat's limited budget.

RESEARCH AND INDEPENDENT NGOs argued that climate-vulnerable communities must be given decision-making power in accessing funds and emphasized the need for equitable transition.

TRADE UNION NGOs stressed that the just transition work programme and parties' NDCs must address labor rights.

WOMEN AND GENDER advocated that the NCQG must scale up public financial support to developing countries in a manner that is adequate, predictable, human rights-centered, and gender-transformative.

YOUTH NGOs called on parties to acknowledge the differentiated needs of children, improve accessibility and transparency in the process, and address fair burden-sharing in the NCQG.

Procedural Matters

Adoption of the Agendas: At the outset, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION objected to the adoption of the agendas on the basis that four of its negotiators had not been provided with visas by the host country. After a short suspension, the delegation withdrew its objection, reserving the right to block the adoption of outcomes should the visa matter not be resolved. Later in the day, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION reported the outstanding visas had been granted.

SBI Chair Nabeel Munir and SBSTA Chair Vreuls pointed to constructive pre-session consultations with groups and parties on the agendas. Parties agreed to adopt the provisional agendas (FCCC/SBI/2024/4 and FCCC/SBSTA/2024/4) without the

items proposed for inclusion by Bolivia, on developed countries' immediate and urgent action to achieve net-zero emissions at the latest by 2030 and net-negative emissions thereafter, and on means of implementation for alternative policy approaches to results-based payments. The SB Chairs will hold consultations on these two matters and report back at the closing plenary.

Bolivia, for LMDCs, called out the failure of Global North countries to fulfill their obligations, highlighting that developed countries' net-zero emissions targets fall short of what is required to address the climate crisis and lamented the onset of "carbon colonialism." He invited the Troika of COP Presidencies to work on developing a roadmap to facilitate non-market approaches to mitigation and adaptation.

Kenya, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for two separate agenda items on the report of the Adaptation Committee and the review of the progress, effectiveness, and performance of the Committee, respectively, rather than subsuming them under one item. SBSTA Chair Vreuls confirmed that there will be separate items for these matters at future sessions.

Organization of Work: Contact groups will convene on:

- the just transition work programme;
- matters relating to the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures;
- the framework for non-market approaches referred to in Paris Agreement Article 6.8;
- arrangements for intergovernmental meetings; and
- administrative, financial and institutional matters.

Informal consultations will convene on all other agenda items included in the adopted agendas.

On reporting from and review of Annex I parties, Brazil, for BASIC, supported by EGYPT and BOLIVIA, expressed concern at the compilation and synthesis of Annex I parties' biennial reports, noting projected increases in Annex I parties' greenhouse gas emissions from 2020-2030. He requested dedicated time and space to consider this agenda item, including the synthesis report. The SBI Chair confirmed that each item under this agenda item will be considered separately.

Election of Officers: Pending the outcome of consultations, the current SBI and SBSTA Vice-Chairs and Rapporteurs will remain in office.

Mandated Events: The SB Chairs noted an unprecedented 30 mandated events will take place during the meeting, including the multilateral assessment and facilitative sharing of views.

Negotiations and Mandated Events

Global Goal on Adaptation: In informal consultations co-facilitated by Pedro Pedrosa Cuesta (Cuba) and Tina Kobilšek (Slovenia), parties shared views on the modalities of the work programme on GGA indicators.

The G-77/CHINA emphasized the urgency and importance of finalizing the roadmap for the work programme, but cautioned against increasing developing countries' reporting burden.

AOSIS, supported by LDCs, AILAC, and BRAZIL, proposed that the SB Chairs convene and oversee an expert working group, balanced in terms of geographical representation and expertise, to work on mapping and developing indicators. AILAC suggested the Adaptation Committee assist with the initial mapping of existing indicators. CANADA, the US, JAPAN, CHINA, and NORWAY said the Adaptation Committee should take the lead on mapping the indicators, while experts can provide input and identify gaps.

Parties discussed holding workshops for the development of the indicators, with differing views as to the number of workshops to be held. CANADA and JAPAN requested that the Secretariat provide budgetary estimates for the conduct of such workshops. AILAC, supported by CHAD, CANADA, the UK, and the US, called for including Indigenous Peoples in indicator development.

Parties mandated the Co-Facilitators to prepare a draft decision text.

Tenth Technical Expert Dialogue under the Ad Hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified Goal on

Climate Finance: Panel discussions focused on the goal's level of ambition, qualitative elements, structure, and transparency arrangements. Participants shared a host of reflections, challenging one another's positions on, among others:

- using structure to address matters of importance to different parties, such as sources of finance;
- developed countries' contribution to the core of the goal;
- adjusting the quantum of the goal according to the evolving needs of developing countries;
- correlations between levels of development and enabling environments;
- safeguards meant to address the risk of corruption becoming a disproportionate barrier to access;
- the role of the Enhanced Transparency Framework, Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows, and the GST process with regard to transparency on the goal; and
- suitable timing for a meaningful review of NCQG implementation, considering data lags.

Cooperation with other International Organizations:

During its opening plenary, the SBSTA noted the report (FCCC/SBSTA/2024/Inf.1).

In the Corridors

The banks of the Rhine were worryingly high as delegates came ashore at the World Conference Center on Monday—and waters got rough in the plenary hall too.

Twice, the Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies were forced to suspend the opening of the meeting. Firstly as two civil society delegates took to the stage during the Executive Secretary's opening remarks. UN security quickly surrounded them, as they silently held up a Palestinian flag and message of protest. Some delegates appreciated Chair Vreuls' "firm but fair" approach to removing the protesters. Others reserved their judgment, waiting to see whether the protesters would be allowed back into the venue to follow the remainder of the meeting.

Then, as the meeting agendas were presented for adoption, Russia firmly objected to moving forward as long as four of its negotiators' visas were held up by the German authorities. The subsequent waves were sufficient to get things moving, both for the Russian delegation and the process. "I wonder if this means that Germany will also reconsider the other visas they denied," shared one observer, referring to the fact that several negotiators from least developed countries—including one head of delegation—have been prevented from attending due to visa issues.

"All in all, this was not too bad," summed up a seasoned delegate. "Considering where geopolitics and climate impacts have brought the world, we need more trust and compassion between parties," countered another. "We need to do what is necessary, not the bare minimum."



Climate Negotiations Glossary

IISD 
Earth Negotiations Bulletin



Read at the glossary
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