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Compromises shape path forward on global stocktake at Belem climate talks

Penang, 2 Dec. (Meena Raman) – Compromises among Parties led the way forward on a decision on matters related to the global stocktake [GST], at the conclusion of the climate talks in Belem, Brazil. The decision was adopted on Nov 22, under the 7th session of the Conference of Parties to the Paris Agreement [CMA7].

The decision on the first GST was adopted in 2023 in Dubai and discussions on related matters have seen sharp divide among Parties under three agenda items viz.: (i) the UAE dialogue on implementing the GST outcomes, referred to in paragraph 97 of the decision; (ii) the annual GST dialogue and its report, referred to in paragraph 187 of the decision and (iii) the refinement of GST process in preparation for the second GST in 2028, referred to in paragraph 192 of the decision. The divergences and compromises reached are highlighted below.

UAE DIALOGUE ON PARA 97

Discussions on the UAE dialogue, particularly its scope, have been highly contentious since 2024 onwards. The key issue has been on the question of whether the focus of the dialogue should be on the implementation of finance related elements of the GST decision, or on all elements of the GST outcome.

Paragraph 97 appears under the ‘Finance’ heading of the ‘Means of implementation and support’ section of the GST decision and reads as follows: *“Decides to establish the United Arab Emirates dialogue on implementing the global stocktake outcomes.”*

Developed countries wanted the dialogue to be on all outcomes of the GST, while many developing country groupings wanted the focus to be on finance, given the placement of the paragraph in the decision under the ‘Finance’ heading.

Also, deep divergences persisted amongst Parties in the discussions in relation to the follow-up from the dialogue itself, stemming from the different understandings of the Paris Agreement architecture itself, the purpose of the GST and the purpose of the UAE dialogue itself.

Developed countries and some developing country groups such as the **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)**, **Umbrella Group (UG)**, the **Independent Alliance of Latin American and the Caribbean Nations (AILAC)**, and the **Alliance of Small Island States [AOSIS]** made repeated calls for producing annual reports from the dialogue, including the consideration of the “collective” assessment of Parties progress

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based on their national efforts and for adoption of CMA decisions thereon accordingly.

Many other developing countries such as the **Like-minded developing countries [LMDC]**, the **African Group** and the **Arab Group** pointed out that such a report would amount to a mini-GST occurring annually, which is contrary to the architecture of the Paris Agreement, according to which the collective assessment of progress has to be done every five years, as provided for under Article 14 of the Agreement. They stressed that the GST outcomes inform the preparations of Parties' nationally determined contributions [NDCs] and national adaptation plans [NAPs], which are "nationally determined", and that the next collective assessment process is the GST itself, conducted every five years, and which is not an annual process for the collective assessment of efforts.

Given these divergences since the start of the Belem talks, there was a breakthrough in the final day with the decision adopted following compromises reached. The main highlights of the decision are as follows:

Parties in para 1 of the decision agreed that "the UAE dialogue on implementing the global stocktake outcomes will take place in the spirit of international cooperation, be facilitative and nonprescriptive, and respect the nationally determined manner and different national circumstances, pathways and approaches".

In para 2, it was decided that the dialogue "will facilitate the sharing of experience and of information on opportunities, challenges, barriers and needs, including with a focus on the provision of finance, capacity-building, and technology development and transfer, as well as strengthened international cooperation as key enablers, in implementing the global stocktake outcomes."

Para 4 of the decision requests "the Chairs of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to appoint, in consultation with Parties, two cofacilitators for the UAE dialogue, one from a developed country Party and one from a developing country Party, taking into account the goal of gender balance."

In para 5, it was also decided that "the UAE

dialogue will be held annually in conjunction with the first regular session of the subsidiary bodies in 2026 and 2027, after which it will conclude." [This would mean June 2026 and 2027].

The decision in para 7 further requests "the cofacilitators of the UAE dialogue to prepare, in a timely manner, with the support of the secretariat, a factual and non-prescriptive summary report on each dialogue based on the inputs provided and discussions held at the dialogues."

It was also decided that reports from the dialogue "will serve as inputs to the second global stocktake," [which will take place in 2028].

Through para 8, it was also agreed that "a high-level ministerial round table" on the dialogue will be convened at CMA 9 in Nov 2027.

ANNUAL GST DIALOGUE

The mandate for the annual dialogue stems from para 187 of the GST decision, which is under the 'Guidance and way forward' section and requests the Subsidiary Body Chairs to "organise an annual GST dialogue", "to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and good practices on how the outcomes of the GST are informing the preparation of Parties' next NDCs in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Paris Agreement", and also requests the secretariat to prepare a report for consideration at its subsequent session".

At CMA 7 in Belem, Parties were invited to consider the summary reports for 2024 and 2025 of the annual dialogues and to take any action deemed appropriate. The main issue was over the purpose and continuation of the dialogue itself, when many Parties have already submitted their NDCs.

In Belem, through para 12 of the decision, it was noted "with appreciation the information, views and perspectives shared by Parties and non-Party stakeholders at the 2024 and 2025 global stocktake dialogues, including on how the outcome of the first global stocktake is informing the preparation of Parties' next round of NDCs", and para 13 "encourages Parties to utilize and draw on the lessons learned and good practices from the summary reports on the annual global stocktake dialogues, as appropriate, in their national contexts and processes."

The main decision in this regard is in para 14 of the decision, where Parties decided that “the annual global stocktake dialogue will conclude at the sixty-fourth session of the subsidiary bodies (June 2026)”, and also that “it will consider the resumption of the dialogue in the context of its consideration of the outcome of the second global stocktake.”

REFINEMENT OF THE OVERALL GST PROCESS

The second GST [GST 2] will need to conclude in 2028, with the process for inputs commencing in 2026, and the technical assessment phase taking place from 2027 to 2028.

Para 192 of the GST decision from Dubai, decided that “consideration of refining the procedural and logistical elements of the overall global stocktake process on the basis of experience gained from the first global stocktake” shall commence at the 60th session of the Subsidiary Bodies [SB 60 held in June 2024] and conclude at CMA 6 [Nov. 2024]. However, at CMA 6 Parties adopted a procedural decision for continuing consideration of the matter at SB 62 in June 2025.

At the SB 62 discussions in June this year, Parties had diverging views on three key issues in this regard viz.: (i) on providing a prescriptive timeline to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] for completing the seventh Assessment Report [AR7] to align it with GST 2; (ii) the timeline of the technical and political phases of GST 2; and (iii) the role of the high-level committee in the political phase of the GST.

In the decision adopted in Belem, para 19 “Encourages the scientific community to provide

best available scientific inputs to feed into the global stocktake, recognizing the critical importance of the outputs of the IPCC to the global stocktake, as well as the importance of comprehensive and representative scientific inputs from developing countries and relevant reports from regional groups and institutions to the stocktake, and invites those organizations to consider how best to provide inputs for the global stocktake in a timely manner, as available.”

The decision clearly reflects that the IPCC is not the only source of scientific inputs but also scientific inputs from developing countries and other reports.

Para 20 of the decision “encourages the co-facilitators of the technical dialogue to endeavour, as appropriate, to enhance the consideration of efforts related to averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage, addressing the social and economic consequences and impacts of response measures, and international cooperation.”

Through para 21, the decision requests the Chairs of the SBs “to ensure sufficient time for each component of the global stocktake, particularly the consideration of outputs component, while taking into account lessons learned from the first global stocktake, as well as the constraints faced by Parties and other stakeholders with limited capacity, and notes that this time may include intersessional work, as appropriate.”

Many Parties had expressed the need to have a longer time-frame for the political consideration of the outputs from the technical phase, learning from the lessons of the first GST.