



Lively exchange over common time-frames for NDCs

Bonn, 10 May 2018 (Prerna Bomzan) - Parties at informal consultations under the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) agreed to draft conclusions of a procedural nature on common time frames for nationally determined contributions (NDCs) referred to in Article 4.10 of the Paris Agreement (PA) on 7 May. The draft conclusions are expected to be adopted at the closing plenary of the SBI to be held on 10 May, the final day of the climate talks in Bonn, Germany, which began on April 30.

(Article 4.10 of the PA says "the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Agreement [CMA] shall consider common time frames for nationally determined contributions at its first session".)

(Most of the Parties to the PA have communicated an NDC which is of a ten-year time frame, with only the United States and the Marshall Islands having a five-year time frame. The NDCs are expected to be implemented from 2021.)

Informal consultations on this matter began on 1 May and concluded on 7 May. At the first meeting of the informal consultations, **South Africa** said that paragraphs 23-24 of decision 1/CP.21 (the Paris decision) clearly addresses the different time-frames of NDCs up to 2030 and that common time-frames will be applicable post-2030.

(Paragraph 23 of decision 1/CP.21 which adopted the PA "requests those Parties whose intended NDC ...contains a time frame up to 2025 to communicate by 2020 a new NDC contribution and to do so every five years thereafter pursuant to Article 4.9 of the PA".)

(Paragraph 24 "also requests those Parties whose intended NDC...contains a time frame up to 2030 to communicate or update by 2020 these

contributions and to do so every five years thereafter pursuant to Article 4.9....")

(Article 4.9 of the PA says "each Party shall communicate a nationally determined contribution every five years in accordance with decision 1/CP.21 and any relevant decisions of the CMA and be informed by the outcomes of the global stocktake referred to in Article 14".)

China for the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** said that it is pragmatic to focus on the only key issue of time-frame, whether five or ten years, with the time of applicability being the first day of 2030 and last day of 2035. The focus should remain on the issue of either a five or ten year target by weighing the advantages and disadvantages and avoid introduction of other issues such as scope of NDCs which are being dealt with by the Ad-hoc Working Group on the PA (AWG). It further recalled the history of the evolution of the issue of time frame from way back in 2013 in Warsaw which required Parties to forward their intended NDCs (known then as INDCs) before the PA. The debate then, explained China was whether "to put numbers before the text (referring to the PA) or text before the numbers" approach and how the first approach was agreed to prior to the Paris Conference. It clarified that was the reason for this inconsistency of 2025 or 2030 and that the issue has been resolved by paragraphs 23-24 of the Paris decision.

Columbia for the **Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)** said that the Paris architecture is based on cycles, and so it was important to have agreement on common time frames for NDCs. It also spoke of elements like tracking progress of the NDCs, increasing ambition following the global stocktake designed for every five years. It added that it was

not useful to have a 30-year time frame which is a long time for implementation and that “each NDC should be a step towards the long-term goal.”

Zimbabwe for the **African Group** said that it supported “single common time frames”, applicable to post-2030 NDCs which will allow Parties to synchronise and that the NDCs should be communicated every 5 years.

Ethiopia for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** said that the common time frames is “related to the global stocktake” and that it supported a “five+five year cycle”, referring to the flexibility of submitting one or two sets of 5-year NDCs, to be operationalised by 2030.

New Zealand said that the common time frame is useful and that it supported either a “five+five year” or “five+ten” cycle.

Brazil speaking for **Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay** said that the common time frames should be applied to future NDCs keeping paragraphs 23-24 of the Paris decision in mind. The “link between global stocktake and NDCs” needs to be maintained. It said the five-year cycle would be between the endpoints of the two NDCs as mentioned by Chin, agreeing that tracking progress should be separate. It further asked how the five+five year cycle would be different from the old idea of “mid-term review” which was dismissed in Paris.

Norway said it would be “tough” to have common time frames since “economies are different”. Its suggested that there could be “different timeframes” since “economic instruments” take long way to work. It further said that raising ambition in the reducing of emissions may take long, and therefore there needs to be a longer time frame, and all in all, there are “good economic reasons.”

Bangladesh said it supported a five-year cycle with a single common time frame applicable from 2030 onwards. It said that “both Articles 4.9 and 4.10 should be read in the same manner”.

Switzerland for the **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)** said that common time-frames are important to “raise ambition”.

Japan said that it supported a “single time frame applicable to all Parties and that ten years would be “more effective”.

Canada said that it supported China on the post-2030 applicability and that “we don’t need to

negotiate the rationale but just the timeframe of five or ten years”.

Co-facilitators **Marianne Karlsen (Norway)** and **George Wamukoya (Kenya)** proposed to present the draft conclusions for consideration of Parties for further consideration at the next meeting of the informal consultation based on what was agreed in the PA, the time of applicability as well as the advantages and disadvantages of options for common time- frames.

At its second meeting on 4 May, the Co-facilitators presented the draft conclusions for consideration by Parties.

South Africa suggested consideration of its submitted proposal to be incorporated into the draft conclusions. (The South Africa proposal reads as “The SBI agreed that common time frames shall be applicable from 2031 onwards, to be communicated in 2025” and that the “The SBI took note of options reflecting various views of Parties relating to:

- a. The duration for a single common time frame or period of implementation of a NDC, either five or ten years;
- b. Whether one or two NDCs would be communicated at a time;
- c. Combinations of the above (five, five+five, 10, etc.).”

While there was general agreement by Parties to the South African proposal on the way forward, nonetheless, a lot of comments followed on improving the text as well as in the sequencing of the proposed paragraphs. Discussions also followed on whether the South African proposal be captured in an informal note or as a conference room paper (CRP), with agreement for it to be a CRP. Parties also agreed that further submissions could be received.

During the ongoing discussions, the Co-facilitators then consulted the SBI Chair and received an additional one-hour session to adopt the draft conclusions. On 7 May, Parties met to consider and adopt the draft conclusions. A CRP was also submitted by Colombia.

The draft conclusions which was adopted as a procedural decision reads as follows:

- “1. The SBI continued its consideration of common time frames for NDCs referred to in Article 4.10 of the PA.
2. The SBI took note of the request for it to report back

thereon to the CMA at its first session.

3. The SBI welcomed the submissions from Parties received.... [A footnote to the submissions of Parties is also indicated in the conclusions.]

4. The SBI took note of the rich and constructive exchange among Parties on relevant issues related to this agenda item, including but not limited to the time of applicability of, usefulness of and options for common time frames, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of those options.

5. The SBI agreed to continue its consideration of this

matter at xx session with a view to making a recommendation thereon for consideration and adoption by the CMA."

(XX refers to the additional meeting to be held in Bangkok in September.)

Edited by Meena Raman