

## Breakthrough but a mountain to climb on adaptation

Kuala Lumpur, 27 June (Eqram Mustaqeem) – The climate talks in Bonn that ended on 13 June, 2024 bore witness to a grueling 10 days of adaptation negotiations encompassing the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), the Nairobi Work Programme (NWP) and the review of the Adaptation Committee (AC) and its report.

The GGA negotiations in particular were notably contentious, as developed and developing countries were staunchly divided on the inclusion of matters on the means of implementation (MOI), the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), references to the Paris Agreement (PA) and the Convention in the draft texts and on the key issue of how the modalities on the development of indicators as part of the two year UAE - Belem Work Programme (UBWP) would look like.

Below are some highlights of what transpired at the Bonn talks.

### GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION

Parties had come to the 60<sup>th</sup> sessions of the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies (SB60) knowing that time was not on their side, and that modalities on

the indicators for the GGA targets needed to be agreed to in Bonn, if they are to have any chance of fulfilling the UBWP mandate by having a final set of indicators by COP30 in Belem, Brazil. Thus, whilst negotiations progressed slow at the start due to disagreements, the time crunch birthed a spirit of compromise between Parties, that culminated in the successful launch of work on the development of the GGA indicators. **Pedro Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba)** and **Tina Kobilšek (Slovenia)** were the Co-facilitators of the informal consultations on the GGA.

(The GGA entails the development of indicators under the two-year UAE-Belem work programme for measuring progress achieved towards the thematic and dimensional targets adopted by [decision 2/CMA.5](#) under the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience at CMA 5. The GGA thematic targets cover water, food and agriculture, health, ecosystems and biodiversity, infrastructure and human settlements, poverty eradication and livelihoods and protection of cultural heritage. A final set of indicators for measuring progress achieved towards the targets must be decided between Parties upon the conclusion of the work programme at COP30 in Belem.)

A point of major contention at the start of negotiations was over how the indicators for the targets for the GGA would be developed. Developing countries wanted a structured “expert” led process while developed countries wanted the existing Adaptation Committee (AC) to play a greater role without creating any new body of experts.

Following much wrangling of late-night negotiations and even a last minute make-it-or-break-it huddle which saw huge concessions by developing countries on their minimum ask for an ad hoc expert group relegated for consideration in “footnote 4”, Parties reached consensus on the modalities of the work programme on how work would progress in the development of the indicators in the [final conclusions](#) adopted at the closing plenary of the SBs. Below are some highlights of the modalities agreed to.

According to para 9, “The SBSTA (Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice) and the SBI (Subsidiary Body for Implementation) invited Parties and non-Party stakeholders,...to submit via the submission portal by 31 July 2024 information on existing indicators for measuring progress towards the targets referred to in paragraphs 9–10 of decision 2/CMA.5 in use at the local, national, regional and global level, including, if available, information on associated methodologies and data readiness for such indicators, as well as identified gaps and areas for which the development of new indicators may be needed.”

Para 10 sets out that “The SBSTA and the SBI requested their Chairs to prepare, with the support of the secretariat, in collaboration with relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies, and with contributions from relevant constituted bodies, a compilation and mapping of existing indicators relevant to measuring progress towards the targets..., including information on areas potentially not covered by existing indicators, in advance of the workshop referred to in para 22...taking into account the submissions referred to in paragraph 9...and the sources of information under the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience referred to in paragraph 15 of decision 2/CMA.5.”

According to para 12, “The SBSTA and the SBI also

agreed that the mapping referred to in para 10 above may consider: (a) The relevance of the indicators to measuring progress towards one or more of the targets ...;

(b) The specific relevance of the indicators to adaptation, including enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change;

(c) Whether quantitative and/or qualitative information applies to the indicators;

(d) Data availability for the indicators;

(e) The ability of the indicators to reflect regional, national and local circumstances;

(f) The applicability of the indicators across different contexts;

(g) The ease of interpretation of the indicators;

(h) The clarity of methodologies associated with the indicators;

(i) The ability of the indicators to be aggregated across levels and disaggregated by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, such as vulnerability, gender, age, disability, race, socioeconomic status, and status as Indigenous Peoples, as appropriate and depending on national circumstances;

(j) The indicators’ basis on the best available science;

(k) The indicators’ basis on traditional knowledge, Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge and local knowledge systems;

(l) That the indicators should not be used as a basis for comparison between Parties.”

On the role of the AC, via para 13, “The SBSTA and the SBI invited the Adaptation Committee to prepare a contribution to the compilation and mapping referred to in paragraph 10 above by identifying information on indicators reported by Parties in their national reports and communications in the context of the work...”

On the role of the technical experts, via para 14, “The SBSTA and the SBI requested their Chairs to convene technical experts to assist in the technical work under the UAE–Belém work programme, including reviewing and refining the compilation and mapping of existing indicators ...and, as needed, developing new indicators for measuring progress achieved towards the targets...”

In para 15, “The SBSTA and the SBI agreed that the technical experts referred to ...should have

relevant qualifications and expertise related to the targets...and that experts shall serve in an independent capacity.”

As per para 21, “The SBSTA and the SBI agreed to take stock of the work under the work programme, including the assessment of areas not covered by existing indicators and, as needed, the development of new indicators, at SB 61, 62 and 63 (November 2025) with a view to informing the decision on the UAE–Belém work programme at CMA 7 (2025).

According to para 22, “The SBSTA and the SBI requested their Chairs to organize, with the support of the secretariat, a hybrid workshop for Parties and the technical experts..., following the completion of the mapping referred to in paragraph 10 above and prior to CMA 6 (November 2024), with the aim of: (a) Facilitating expert review and refinement of the mapping referred to in paragraph 10 above; (b) Enabling a dialogue between Parties and the technical experts...on the mapping and providing an opportunity for the technical experts to clarify the methodologies and assumptions used in refining the mapping; (c) Providing Parties with the opportunity to reflect on the outcome of the mapping and on progress in the work on indicators in preparation for CMA 7.”

Para 28 (which was previously para 27) was agreed to following a last minute huddle by developing countries and was a compromise. (See further details below). It reads “The SBSTA and the SBI agreed to consider additional work by the technical experts..., and associated modalities (footnote 4), at SB 61 with a view to making a recommendation on this matter for consideration at CMA 6”. Footnote 4 reads: “Including the consideration of the Adaptation Committee and/or an ad hoc expert group and/or expert groups, without prejudging the outcome of negotiations at CMA6.

Further para 32 reads, “The SBSTA and the SBI took note of the views expressed by Parties at these sessions..., and in relation to other considerations (footnote 5), which may be considered at SB 61, as appropriate, recognizing that these views do not capture those of all Parties and do not represent consensus”. Footnote 5 reads: “See the informal note prepared by the co-facilitators for this agenda

item, including the chapter titled “Other Considerations”, available at <https://unfccc.int/documents/639575>”.

Now that Parties have reached consensus on the modalities of the work programme, work towards the development of the indicators can finally begin. However, at the next SB 61 and the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Parties to the PA (CMA 6) in Baku, Azerbaijan, later this year in November, contention over developing countries’ demand for an ad hoc expert group will be revisited and remains to be seen whether developed countries would finally agree to it.

## CONSENSUS ACHIEVED THROUGH COMPROMISE

The [3<sup>rd</sup> iteration of the draft decision text](#) issued by the Co-facilitators was released at 8.25pm on 12 June, (just one day before the closing of the SB60 session), with informal consultations beginning at 11.00pm the same night and with the request to Parties to show maximum flexibility on the bracketed text (denoting not agreed) mainly on the nature of the expert group.

To much surprise, the initial strong resistance of developed countries on the inclusion of MOI in the text was somewhat less, when only **Japan** and **Australia** voiced opposition to its inclusion in paragraph 3. The **United States (US)**, **Canada** and the **European Union (EU)** instead focused their concerns on the modalities of the work programme, especially on para 13, further questioning the legality of whether the SBs have the authority to establish an ad hoc group.

(Para 13 contained two options in brackets, “The SBSTA and the SBI requested their Chairs to [form, at their discretion, an informal ad hoc technical expert group][convene a meeting of technical experts].....”)

**Samoa** for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**, **Colombia** for the **Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)**, **Brazil** for **Group Sur (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay)**, **Sudan** for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** and **Botswana** for the **African Group** all stated their preference for the informal ad hoc technical expert group and with assurances to the developed countries that the intention is not

to create a formal permanent body with the title “ad hoc” itself suggesting the nature of the expert body. As to the legality issue of the SBs’ authority, the legal counsel from the secretariat clarified that the SBs do not establish bodies unless asked by Parties and that there’s a precedent of forming an ad hoc technical expert group at SB 46 before.

The other issue was on the “relevant principles and provisions” of the Convention and the PA in paragraph 29 which the US and Japan wanted removed while the EU wanted it streamlined and captured in a footnote. This was strongly objected by **China** for the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** and **Saudi Arabia** for **Arab Group** who argued that it is already agreed language of decision 2/CMA.5.

With no consensus at sight at midnight, Parties requested for another working slot and in the morning of the final day of negotiations on 13 June, the Co-facilitators streamlined the text based on the interventions made by Parties and shared the streamlined text known as [“Non-Paper version 13/06/2024 10.25AM”](#) for consideration.

There were, however, still two disagreements between the developed and developing country Parties in that specific text. Firstly, in relation to the previous para 29 on principles and provisions of the Convention and the PA was completely dropped with the Co-facilitators proposing bridging language only saying “recalling preambular para 6 of decision 2/CMA.5” without spelling it out; thus being silent on the principles and provisions which was learnt to be the US’ proposal.

The other issue was in relation to para 27 which was originally drafted as, “The SBSTA and the SBI agreed to consider additional work by the technical experts..., and associated modalities, at SB 61.”, to be redrafted in their preferred manner.

**Uganda** for the **G77 and China**, requested that para 27 be rephrased read as follows : “The SBSTA and SBI agreed to consider additional work by the technical experts....and the associated modalities including the consideration of establishing an ad hoc expert group on the UAE – Belem Work Programme as appropriate at SB 61”. It also requested that an additional preambular paragraph be added on “Recalling relevant

provisions and principles of the Convention and the PA”.

Shortly after, the **US** proposed its version of para 27 which read as follows: “The SBSTA and the SBI agreed to consider at SB61 a recommendation to the CMA regarding future expert input for consideration and adoption at its sixth sessions”. Its justification for this is to allow Parties to reflect on the work that has been conducted and then be able to provide recommendations as the SBI and SBSTA to the CMA to set further work for 2025.

The premise on which the G77 and China made its suggestion to para 27 is to open the possibility of establishing an an hod expert group at SB61 in Baku, whilst the proposal made by the US on the same para was intended to prevent such a possibility.

The **US** also expressed that the suggested preambular paragraph on recalling provisions of the Convention and the PA should be worded as “The SBSTA and SBI recalls the sixth preambular paragraph of 2/CMA.5” as suggested by the Co-facilitators instead of the one suggested by the G77 and China and that it was willing to trade-off accepting this specific wording in the preamble on the condition that its suggestion on para 27 regarding future expert input be accepted. The **United Kingdom (UK)** and **Australia** echoed the US’s suggestions.

**China** for the **LMDC** stated that the group did not want to see any compromise on the language of the Convention and the PA in the text and hence, called for the full text of as mooted by the G77 and China, as it is important to highlight the different responsibilities between developed and developing especially at this point of time where there is a large adaptation gap due to the lack of support given to developing countries by the developed country Parties. The group also supported the wording in para 27 suggested by the G77 and China.

Strong views on having the text reflect in its preamble, the recalling of principles of the Convention and the PA were similarly shared by **Saudi Arabia** on behalf of the **Arab Group** and **Kenya**.

The **UK, Columbia** for **AILAC** and **Brazil** for **Group Sur** called for a huddle to deal with the suggestions



made by the US. According to a negotiator who was in the huddle, the Arab Group and the LMDC were the strongest opponents of suggestions to water down any reference to the PA and the Convention, which convinced the G77 and China that they should not compromise on it.

**Colombia**, reporting back on the huddle, read the compromise text agreed upon between the G77 and China and the developed countries, on the preamble, that it be read as follows: “The SBSTA and SBI recalled preambular paragraph 6 of decision 2/CMA.5, which recalls relevant provisions and principles of the Convention and the PA.”

On para 27, the wording suggested was as follows: “The SBSTA and the SBI agreed to consider additional work by the technical experts..., and associated modalities, at SB61, with a view to making a recommendation of this matter to the CMA for consideration by CMA 6.” (Further), a footnote shall be added to “modalities” in the previous sentence which reads: “including the consideration of the adaptation committee and / or ad hoc expert group and / or expert groups, without prejudging the outcomes at CMA 6.”

The proposal read out by **Colombia** signified a consensus and marked the end of GGA negotiations at SB60 with the modalities agreed upon enabling work on the development of indicators to start.

(The final and agreed upon version of para 27 of the Non-Paper is incorporated as para 28 in the GGA final conclusion text).

Whilst Parties still have a mountain to climb in terms of getting those indicators finalised, it was a breakthrough moment for the GGA, that would have not been reached but for the compromise of both developing and developed country Parties.

## NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPS)

In the informal consultations, Parties reflected on the LDC Expert Group’s report on progress towards the formulation and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and gave suggestions, highlighted challenges of gaps and needs to better improve the NAPs process as a whole.

From the get-go, developing countries were strong and united in voicing their concerns on the lack of support and MOI for the development of their NAPs, with all sub-groups of the **G77 and China** making explicit mention of the need for more support and MOI for the NAPs which later then reflected in the [draft text](#) of the Co-facilitators that was released on 10 June. The Co-facilitators of the informal consultations on NAPs were **Antwi Boasiako Amoah (Ghana)** and **Jens Fugl (Denmark)**.

On the second final day of NAPs negotiations on 11 June, **Fiji** on behalf of **G77 and China** welcomed the draft text by the Co-facilitators stating that it reflected most of the elements proposed by developing countries and wanted it to be forwarded to SB61 in Baku for it be used as the basis of negotiations, with the remainder of the Bonn session used to focus on the draft conclusion text.

The same view was echoed in separate interventions made by **Ghana** for the **African Group**), **Dominican Republic** for **AOSIS**, **Kuwait** for the **Arab Group**, **Brazil** for **Group Sur**, **China** for the **LMDC**, **Gambia** for **LDCs**, **Panama** for **AILAC**, **Grenada**, **South Africa**, **India**, and **Egypt**, it meant that in essence the entirety of the developing world was supportive of the text and wanted it to be brought to SB61 as the basis for negotiations.

The developed countries in direct contrast, voiced their displeasure over the draft text and did not want to use it as a basis of negotiations at SB61. The **US** claimed that the text was “incredibly unbalanced” and exceeded the mandate of the assessment of the NAP process, whilst stating its preference for the previous iteration of text to form the basis of engagement. The same view of not wanting to engage with the text was repeated by **Japan**, **EU** and **Australia**.

However, due to the strong push of all the developing countries in wanting the draft text for engagement and be made as the basis of negotiations at SB61, the **US** requested for the current text to be streamlined and that it should reflect a convergence text that only includes elements that Parties have converged upon. This proposal was not agreed to by **Fiji** for the **G77 and**

**China**, who insisted on having this version of text as the basis of discussions instead of drafting new a streamlined version.

On 12 June and the final day of the NAP informal consultations, the **US** was still insistent on not having the draft text as the basis of negotiations at SB61 and in its suggestion, as part of the draft conclusion text, wanted the text to be considered as an informal note instead of a draft text. This suggestion was supported by **New Zealand, Japan, Australia, EU, Norway** and **Canada**.

**Fiji** for **G77 and China** reiterated its position on having the draft text from 10 June as the version to be forwarded to SB61 to form the basis for negotiations and indicated that any compromise that it makes is a compromise of more than 100 countries. It called out the fact that the developed countries were objecting to the draft text because of the inclusion of MOI in it and sought for them to show more compromise and flexibility. In the spirit of compromise, the **G77** conceded and stated its acceptance for the draft text to be considered as an informal note in the draft conclusion text.

After the **G77 and China** accepted the compromise, the **US** tried to extract more concessions suggesting that the conclusion text be copied to a new document with the now informal note being included only as a footnote in the new draft conclusions document, stating that this is

only an administrative edit that does not affect the substance of what was agreed upon.

**Fiji** for the **G77 and China**, **China** for the **LMDC**, **Saudi Arabia** for the **Arab Group**, **Ghana** for the **African Group**, **Brazil** for **Group Sur**, **Dominican Republic** for **AOSIS** and **Gambia** for **LDCs**, all expressed their extreme disappointment on this continuous extraction of concessions and the uncompromising spirit of the developed countries. Many also pointed out the fact that it is always the developing countries that would have to be more compromising to the extent of even compromising too much to developed countries.

At the end, the **G77 and China** accepted the suggestions made by the **US** which was reflected in the final language in paragraph 4 of the [draft conclusions text](#) which reads: "The SBI took note of the informal note prepared by the co-facilitators for this agenda item at this session. It decided to continue further consideration of this agenda item at SBI 61 (November 2024), taking into consideration, in particular, this informal note, with the aim of recommending a draft decision for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its twenty-ninth session (November 2024)."

Once again, the negotiations on NAPs at Baku will prove an uphill task and a mountain to climb.