

Bangkok Climate Change Conference 4-9 September 2018

The Bangkok Climate Change Conference opens today and continues until 9 September 2018 at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. During the meeting, the forty-eighth sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 48-2) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 48-2) will resume, and the sixth part of the first session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA 1-6) will convene.

Expectations for the Meeting

The meeting's objective is to progress on the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP), the details required to operationalize the 2015 Paris Agreement. With the deadline for completing this work drawing near—the PAWP is scheduled for adoption by the Katowice Climate Change Conference in Poland in December 2018 (COP 24)—parties at the Bonn Climate Change Conference (30 April - 10 May 2018) agreed to an additional negotiating session in Bangkok to ensure the PAWP's "timely completion" in Katowice.

Some of the main issues under negotiation in Bangkok relate to the Paris Agreement's cyclical and iterative nature, whereby parties submit or update their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) at five-year intervals, regularly report on progress under a transparency and accountability framework, and convene a global stocktake every five years to assess collective progress towards the Paris Agreement's goals. Related discussions in the negotiations will focus on:

- Information that could improve the clarity, transparency, and understanding of NDCs (APA);
- Features of the NDCs (APA);
- Accounting for the NDCs (APA);
- The transparency framework for action and support, which includes reporting of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and financial support provided to and mobilized for developing countries (APA);
- Matters relating to the global stocktake (APA);
- Common timeframes for NDCs (SBI); and
- Modalities and procedures for the NDC registry (SBI).

Other important PAWP themes that will be discussed in Bangkok include:

- The committee to facilitate implementation and promote compliance under the Paris Agreement (APA);
- Accounting of financial resources provided and mobilized through public interventions (SBSTA);

- Recognizing developing countries' adaptation efforts (SBI and SBSTA);
- Adaptation communication (APA);
- The forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures (SBI and SBSTA); and
- Voluntary cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which includes market and non-market based approaches (SBSTA).

In a joint reflections note published on 16 August, the presiding officers of the APA, SBSTA, and SBI emphasize the need for parties in Bangkok to reach an agreed basis for negotiations on all PAWP items, reflecting clear and streamlined options, and with sufficient detail for the outcome of the session to be swiftly turned into draft decision text. Characterizing the Bangkok session as "the last opportunity" to advance negotiations before COP 24, they warn that a satisfactory outcome in Katowice will be "in jeopardy" if this objective is not achieved.

Origins of the UNFCCC Process

The international political response to climate change began with the 1992 adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which sets out the basic legal framework and principles for international climate change cooperation with the aim of stabilizing atmospheric concentrations of GHGs to avoid "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." The Convention, which entered into force on 21 March 1994, has 197 parties.

In order to boost the effectiveness of the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in December 1997. It commits industrialized countries, and countries in transition to a market economy, to achieve quantified emissions reduction targets for a basket of six GHGs. The Kyoto Protocol entered into force on 16 February 2005 and has 192 parties. Its first commitment period took place from 2008 to 2012. The 2012 Doha Amendment established the second commitment period from 2013 to 2020. It will enter into force after reaching 144 ratifications. As of 29 August 2018, 115 parties had ratified the Doha Amendment.

In December 2015, parties adopted the Paris Agreement. Under the terms of the Agreement, all countries will submit NDCs, and aggregate progress on mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation will be reviewed every five years through a global stocktake. The Paris Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016 and, as of 3 September 2018, 180 parties had ratified the Agreement.

Key Turning Points

Durban Mandate: The negotiating mandate for the Paris Agreement was adopted at the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, in 2011. Parties agreed to launch the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) with a mandate “to develop a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties” no later than 2015, to enter into force in 2020. In addition, the ADP was mandated to explore actions to close the pre-2020 ambition gap in relation to the 2°C target.

Lima: The UN Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru, in 2014 adopted the “Lima Call for Climate Action,” which furthered progress on the negotiations towards the Paris Agreement. It elaborated the elements of a draft negotiating text and the process for submitting and synthesizing intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs), while also addressing pre-2020 ambition.

Paris: The 2015 UN Climate Change Conference convened in Paris, France, and culminated in the adoption of the Paris Agreement on 12 December. The Agreement includes the goal of limiting the global average temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. It also aims to increase parties’ ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and make financial flows consistent with a pathway towards low GHG emissions and climate resilient development. The Agreement will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances.

Under the Paris Agreement, each party shall communicate, at five-year intervals, successively more ambitious NDCs. By 2020, parties whose NDCs contain a time frame up to 2025 are requested to communicate a new NDC and parties with an NDC time frame up to 2030 are requested to communicate or update these contributions.

Key features of the Paris Agreement include a transparency framework, and a process known as the global stocktake. Starting in 2023, parties will convene this process at five-year intervals to review collective progress on mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation. The Agreement also includes provisions on adaptation, finance, technology, loss and damage, and compliance.

When adopting the Paris Agreement, parties launched the PAWP to develop the Agreement’s operational details, including through the APA, SBI, and SBSTA. They agreed to convene in 2018 a facilitative dialogue to take stock of collective progress towards the Paris Agreement’s long-term goals. This process is now known as the Talanoa Dialogue.

In Paris, parties also agreed the need to mobilize stronger and more ambitious climate action by all parties and non-party stakeholders to achieve the Paris Agreement’s goals. Building on the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, several non-party stakeholders made unilateral mitigation pledges in Paris, with more than 10,000 registered actions. Attention to actions by non-party stakeholders continued through the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, launched in 2016.

Marrakech: The UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakech took place from 7-18 November 2016, and included the first Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1). Parties adopted several decisions related to the PAWP, including: that the work should conclude by 2018; the terms of reference for the Paris Committee on Capacity-building; and initiating a process to identify the information to be provided in accordance with Agreement Article 9.5 (*ex ante* biennial finance communications by developed countries). Other decisions adopted included approving the five-

year workplan of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM), enhancing the Technology Mechanism, and continuing and enhancing the Lima work programme on gender.

Fiji/Bonn: The Fiji/Bonn Climate Change Conference convened from 6-17 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany, under the COP Presidency of Fiji. The COP launched the Talanoa Dialogue and established the “Fiji Momentum for Implementation,” a decision that gives prominence to pre-2020 implementation and ambition. The COP also provided guidance on the completion of the PAWP and decided that the Adaptation Fund shall serve the Paris Agreement, subject to decisions to be taken by CMA 1-3. Parties also further developed, or gave guidance to, the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, the Executive Committee of the WIM, the Standing Committee on Finance, and the Adaptation Fund.

SBSTA 48, SBI 48, APA 1-5: Many of the conclusions reached and decisions taken at this session from 30 April - 10 May 2018 capture discussions on the PAWP, and include parties’ agreement to continue consideration of these issues. To assist in this endeavor, parties requested the APA Co-Chairs to prepare, by 1 August, “tools” to help with the development of an “agreed basis for negotiations.” A unique feature of the conference was the Talanoa Dialogue. In a process designed around the questions “Where are we?” “Where do we want to go?” and “How do we get there?” parties and stakeholders shared stories that will inform a synthesis report to be presented at the Katowice Climate Change Conference in December 2018.

Intersessional Highlights

20th GCF Board Meeting: The Green Climate Fund (GCF) Board held its 20th meeting in Songdo, Republic of Korea, from 1-4 July 2018. While the Board took decisions on certain issues, it was not able to add to its portfolio of 76 projects, reach consensus on new policies to support its investment criteria, or add new partners as Accredited Entities.

26th BASIC Ministerial Meeting: BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) countries convened in Durban, South Africa, from 19-20 May 2018. In their joint statement, BASIC ministers commit to work with other parties to ensure a comprehensive and balanced PAWP outcome, and underscore the need for the Bangkok Climate Change Conference to deliver a party-driven negotiating text covering all issues and interlinkages related to Paris Agreement implementation.

9th Petersberg Climate Dialogue: Ministers and other representatives from 35 countries, as well as the Chairs and Co-Chairs of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies, gathered in Berlin, Germany from 18-19 June 2018 to discuss the impacts of delaying ambitious action, ensuring a just transition, the PAWP, climate finance, and the Talanoa Dialogue. The conclusions document highlights, *inter alia*, ministers’ commitment to successfully complete the PAWP in 2018, and to continue constructive exchanges in the Talanoa Dialogue’s political phase.

2nd Ministerial on Climate Action (MoCA): Convened by the EU, Canada, and China from 20-21 June 2018 in Brussels, Belgium, the MoCA brought together ministers and other representatives from 36 governments. The Chairs’ Summary highlights that ministers “confirmed that the Paris Agreement is irreversible and is not to be renegotiated, and stressed the importance of multilateralism,” as well as the importance of building momentum on climate action and support.

Round Table on Substantive Linkages: This round table discussion took place in Bangkok on 3 September 2018 to help improve parties’ understanding of the connections among the various parts of the PAWP deliberated under the APA, SBSTA and SBI.