Oxford Seminar 2023

2023 Oxford Seminar participants

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ecbi

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INTRODUCTION

The 2023 Oxford Seminar took place from 24-26 August at St. Catherine's College, Oxford University. The Oxford Seminar is the flagship annual event of ecbi—the European Capacity Building Initiative—which provides capacity building for climate change negotiators and promotes a level playing field and mutual understanding between governments in international climate negotiations. The Oxford Seminar provides an opportunity for delegates from developing countries to come together to discuss pressing issues in the UN climate negotiations with their European partners. The seminars are conducted under Chatham House rules, which encourage an open and frank exchange since no one except introductory speakers are identified in the meeting reports. Since 2005, ecbi's Oxford Seminars have provided an opportunity for invited delegates from developing and European countries to meet in an informal setting, and ahead of the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Seminar was preceded by the Fellowship Colloquium from 21-23 August at Magdalen College. The Colloquium provided the opportunity for developing country experts to discuss amongst themselves issues of importance, form proposals, and consolidate positions on these issues in advance of the Seminar. During the seminar, the Fellows presented and shared their views, suggestions, and experiences with their European partners.

Topics addressed at the 2023 Oxford Seminar were: Just Transition Work Programme; gender; climate finance sources; Article 2.1.c on aligning finance flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement; a new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG); the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP); and the Global Stocktake (GST) under the Paris Agreement.

The Seminar was attended by representatives of the COP 27 Egyptian and COP 28 Emirati Presidencies, and the Chair of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), while the Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) participated virtually. Several heads of delegations and lead negotiators also attended, along with issue leads from key negotiating groups. Developing country participants, attending either in-person or virtually, included those from Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Gabon, India, Kenya, Malawi, Pakistan, Senegal, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Arab Emirates, and Zimbabwe. European partners included representatives from Belgium, Denmark, the European Commission, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. In all, more than 45 people participated either in-person or virtually, with women making up about half of the participants.

JUST TRANSITION WORK PROGRAMME

At COP 27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, the fourth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 4) decided to establish a just transition work programme (JTWP) to discuss pathways to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. The decision emphasised that "just and equitable transition encompasses pathways that include energy, socioeconomic, workforce, and other dimensions, all of which must be based on nationally defined development priorities and include social protection… to mitigate potential impacts associated with the transition" (Decision 1/CMA.4). It also decided to convene, as part of the JTWP, an annual high-level ministerial roundtable on just transition, starting at CMA 5 in Dubai in 2023. At COP 28, a decision on implementation of the JTWP is expected to be adopted based on recommendations forwarded from SB 58.

Annela Anger-Kraavi, EU negotiator on just transition and response measures, Estonia, presented on this issue. She explained that the decision to establish a JTWP was a surprising and unexpected outcome from Sharm el-Sheikh. Furthermore, she said initial discussions in Bonn at SB 58 in June 2023 were positive, noting the issue was first brought up in the response measures discussions. She asked what the outcomes of the annual ministerial roundtable should be, and suggested that something substantial must be established.

During the discussion, several participants sought clarity about the added value of the JTWP and what the deliverables would be. One developing country expressed surprise at the level of convergence on the issue. He said Sharm el-Sheikh provided the opportunity to look at the big picture, without getting lost in silos, and suggested the decision was a progressive one in that the issue addresses all three pillars of sustainable development. He reiterated that every country has the right to determine its own development pathway, and that a broad framework was necessary to bring everyone on board. He said it is not just an energy transition, but rather an all-of-society transition. He questioned whether the international architecture is up to the job, said it should be modernized to consider sustainable development, and more than a simple exchange of best practices is needed.

Noting his country's vast forest resources and lack of fair compensation, another developing country participant explained that it has extractive minerals as well, such as oil and gas. He reported that when his government tried to auction oil blocks to get money and compensation, there was a barrage of criticism. Even as a poor country, they were denied the right to compensation for their resources, which, he said, "takes us to the heart of just transition". He said Paris Article 2.1.c (aligning financial flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement) may be one of the missing pieces to Anger-Kraavi's presentation, explaining that we need to understand how 2.1.c may have an impact on the just transition conversation.

Agreeing with the previous speaker, one developed country said the just transition conversation spills into the Article 2.1.c discussions, referring to recent subsequent meetings in Bangkok on the two issues. Noting lack of clarity on what can be delivered, she appreciated having a space to discuss the issues further. Another said a whole-of-society approach was necessary, as was determining what the JTWP can contribute as a platform for analysing transition. She said engaging all stakeholders at the national level is challenging enough when it comes to ensuring a just transition, with international level engagement adding even more complexity. ***Asking how it can be operationalised, she referred to the equity debate in this regard.***

Another developing country noted convergence on scope but questioned whether there was convergence on the national vis-à-vis the international dimension of such a transition, reiterating its strong global dimension. He said social dialogue processes are national in nature, but global transitions must be ensured. He also said transition pathways, including for mitigation, must be equitable and fair, as should the delivery of finance to support adaptation and mitigation.

Another developing country participant said that opening a new area of conversation can be useful and that just transition is a concept that can be applicable to all areas of the UNFCCC, although the exact nature of the concept requires more discussion. He emphasized that we are in a moment where we need to transition from an unsustainable model of development to one that is low emissions, sustainable, and climate resilient. He acknowledged there will be costs for some people, including vulnerable groups, that are not responsible for the problem and that the workforce is part of that group. He said, while it is a cross-cutting issue that applies to all aspect of climate change, many countries will lack the capacity to implement this component. He highlighted the historical production of coal in part the southern part of his country, with a whole culture around it that has created a lot of social tension with people concentrated around mines, although, he said, at some point it will not be profitable.

Professor Benito Müller, ecbi Director, said those whose family members have been coal miners for generations must be considered, as it is part of their identity. He said we need to explore a variety of “different just transitions”.

One developing country participant emphasized the need to make dialogues and roundtables relevant, with meaningful dialogue rather than statements that are simply read out. He said discussions should be among more than just climate experts, and with those in processes outside of “our climate bubble”. One developed country representative said we must address just transition with the highest ambition possible, noting, however, there is no single way to address it. She urged using this space to see how these challenges can be addressed.

Another developing country said he thought we had moved past the theoretical discussions that took place in 2018 in Katowice, Poland, at COP 24, and which included a discussion with the International Labour Organization (ILO). He emphasized that we are learning from each other, particularly with respect to the formulation of just transition partnerships. In this respect, he highlighted his country’s entry into a partnership to support decarbonisation efforts.

Urgent action was needed to change consumption and production patterns, said one developing country, otherwise we will continue the status quo where “the rich get richer and the poor get left behind”. He recalled that the conversation on just transition began on the margins of the UNFCCC and was initiated by developed countries. However, he said a cookie cutter approach is not the best way forward, it cannot be a conversation of the elite, and a conversation is urgently needed across the globe.

A developed country participant said the concept is usually used in the context of phasing out coal, but wondered about a just transition with regard to adaptation. Benito Müller responded that adaptation itself is a response measure in that people can lose their job because of certain adaptive activities and due to climate impacts.

Noting that adaptation is often about the built environment, a developing country stressed that training and knowledge are needed to build houses to resist Category 5 hurricanes. With respect to putting electricity underground, he explained that training is just as important as retrofitting, and that climate must be mainstreamed into public sector activities. He used the example of when cell phones where prohibitively expensive, and how now smart phones are cheaper than ever. He said a driving force of that transition was lowering technology costs to increase access to it. He wondered whether the most vulnerable populations will have ownership of their transition, given they do not always manage the assets.

A developed country wondered how this approach can be used to accelerate (rather than slow down) action. He emphasized multiple pathways, rather than just one, learning from each other, and just transition partnerships. He said transition is never easy, and good options are necessary for those who might lose their security or jobs; thus, those economies and workers must be addressed.

One developed country participant said sharing experiences could be an important element, and that just transition is rooted in the Paris Agreement. He added that, although we are having this discussion, it is difficult to make progress on it, highlighting equity and climate justice issues. He asked what the added value and deliverables of a work programme would be from this perspective

One developing country said least developed countries (LDCs) should not have to reduce their emissions, but if they do then a just transition would bring co-benefits to emission reductions. She said social benefits must be taken on board to substantially mitigate, as well as looking at complementarities among the different pillars of sustainable development.

One developing country participant said his country has a transition policy that does not focus exclusively on an energy transition, noting it is based on retooling and rescaling the work force, including the self-employed. He said finger pointing is not helpful, and we shouldn't be looking at "why they are benefiting more than we are". He said JTWP discussions led to further clarity on nuances that might not have been considered before, and that a just transition is intended to also address self-employed and disenfranchised workers due to climate impacts. He further suggested that both aspects require a whole-of-society approach, that the transition cannot be mitigation centric, and that it must be equitable. He added that adaptation requires adjusting to the socioeconomic aspects of climate change as well. Finally, he said this work goes to a very granular level, for example communities in coastal areas have a different vulnerability profile than those living in upland areas in the interior of the country.

A developed country distinguished between cutting emissions and transition. She underscored the need to develop a better society, which requires appropriate policies, actions, and structures. She pointed out that as a society we are not static; we are always in transition. Recalling the previous reference to co-benefits, she said in her country, combustible engines are being replaced by electric vehicles, and that 80% of new car sales are electric vehicles. However, she questioned who has benefited most from this, as many in her country do not drive cars and the most vulnerable do not own cars.

Benito Müller said the concept of justice is important because the overall causes of losses in livelihoods are anthropogenic. He pointed out that "the guy working at the petrol station is not responsible for losing his job". Taking a different view on this point, one developed country said not everything needs to be compensated. However, she agreed on the need for social protection. One developing country said many countries "find the walls closing in" and options reducing. He noted setbacks to development, including COVID-19, extreme debt, and financial stress. He said emission reductions as the end goal in itself does not consider the socioeconomic component.

Concluding this session, Annela Anger-Kraavi said she wished this discussion had taken place before the JTWP was agreed, stressing the importance of sharing experiences and learning what has and has not been successful. She suggested the challenge is shifting the paradigm within a short time frame. She emphasized the need to identify the additional value the JTWP will bring, what is it leading to, and how to make it really useful.

GENDER

Despite some progress in increasing the role of women both on national delegations and in leadership roles in the UNFCCC process, more must be done to increase the number of women in senior positions. This session addressed the state of implementation of mandates to achieve gender balance and women's empowerment, both in the composition of constituted bodies and on national delegations. The session also considered what must be done to address challenges that hinder women's active participation in leadership positions, and briefly considered the issue of harassment.

Leading off the discussion, Stella Funsani, ecbi Gender Officer, Malawi, lamented that the goal of gender balance has still not been achieved, even though COP 18 in 2012 agreed to reach the goal by COP 20 in 2014. She emphasized the need to continue working toward women's empowerment and gender-responsive policies.

Funsani reviewed COP decisions on gender, including:

- Decision 36/CP.7 (2001), on promoting gender balance and improving women's participation in bodies established under the Convention and Kyoto Protocol;
- Decision 23/CP.18 (2012), on improving the participation of women in national delegations and in leadership positions, informing more effective climate policy that addresses the needs of women and men equally, and requesting the Secretariat to report on progress;
- Decision 18/CP.20 (2014), which adopted the two-year Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) to further enhance gender balance as well as to provide knowledge and capacity building on gender-responsive climate policies; and
- decisions at COP 22 (extending the LWPG for three years), COP 23 (adopting a two-year Gender Action Plan (GAP), and COP 25 (adopting a five-year enhanced LWPG and its GAP).

She identified the five priority areas under the GAP that aim to enhance gender balance, namely: capacity building, knowledge management, and communication; gender balance, participation, and women's leadership; coherence; gender-responsive mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation; and monitoring and reporting. She also called attention to an intermediary review of the GAP in 2022, in which gender-responsive budgeting activities were added.

She suggested the three UN Rio Conventions should coordinate and work together on this issue, emphasizing gender-responsive implementation related to finance, capacity building, and technology transfer. She also informed the group that the UNFCCC Secretariat is maintaining records on participation and is mandated to report annually to the COP on the issue, and that while we did see an increase at COPs 26 and 27, tracking needs to be improved. She lamented that progress is slow and not very encouraging, and that every year since COP 18 we have been repeating that progress is slow. She mentioned efforts to enhance women's participation, affirmative action by groups and organizations that are financing women's participation, and the introduction of initiatives by civil society to enhance women's participation in leadership roles.

With respect to constituted bodies, Funsani said that women's participation is highest in the Adaptation Committee and lowest in such bodies as the Technology Committee and the CDM Executive Board, noting fluctuating participation on other boards and committees. She wondered whether it is women themselves who are not choosing to participate, or whether groups are not encouraging or enabling women to take on leadership roles or join committees.

In terms of next steps, she suggested the possibility of introducing quotas or rotating schedules to increase participation, as well as incentives, such as a travel fund, capacity building, and/or leadership training. She asked: who decides on the composition of delegations and nominations to positions in subsidiary bodies; how can this be enhanced to ensure gender balance is achieved by 2030; and how can gender can be integrated into the JTWP?

Noting training programmes will begin again in 2024, Director Benito Müller raised the possibility of ecbi convening a gender workshop. He underscored the need for gender balance among newer negotiators, stating they should start young to increase the chances they can reach the head of delegation level.

One developed country said there is more gender balance among people under 35 entering the process, citing multiple reasons for less balance as women get older, including having children. She said venues should be more family friendly to enable women in childbearing years to stay in the process, including providing rooms for nursing, lamenting that if they drop out and do not return, then a whole generation of potential leaders can be lost. She also cited harassment of women as an issue of concern, noting it can be "rough to be a woman in the UNFCCC process". In addition, she highlighted cultural differences within the process that can impact on gender balance.

A developing country participant said more sensitivity to gender-related issues must be built into delegations, capacity building should help build confidence, and gender and climate change are interlinked. Another said other processes are also difficult for women, and that multilateralism alone cannot solve the problem. She pointed to different cultures throughout the world, where in some cases women are expected to stay in the home and raise children. She observed that sometimes if a woman continues working, in some cases it can even mean the end of their relationship. She suggested universities and schools should improve climate change education in their national curricula. Noting that she is the only woman on her delegation, she said in her country one has to study English and that it takes time to become a good negotiator, as language is often a barrier.

Calling for identifying solutions and potential intervention points, another developing country said, for example, one could embed a code of conduct, responsibility, and consequences for harassment into the host country agreements for COPs. He said the current code of conduct with respect to harassment "has no teeth". Stressing we must be serious about zero tolerance for harassment, he urged establishing a procedure to report, investigate, and impose consequences. With respect to those with disabilities, he mentioned that COPs are sometimes inaccessible for those in wheelchairs.

One developed country speaker emphasized the importance of men's participation in gender discussions, noting sometimes he is the only man present and involved. He lamented that such discussions are viewed as marginal to the process. Noting his delegation used to skew heavily male, he noted efforts to achieve more gender balance on delegations and in policies, emphasising that climate action from a gender perspective really makes a difference. Another recalled that women at COP 26 were often asked how they ended up in a leadership position on delegations. She said some women think they are not good enough or do not get enough support, pointing to a different way of thinking from men.

Noting 50% of her country's delegation are women, a developing country said women make up 54% of negotiators, and one-third of speaking time is taken by women, but that that does not mean they are listened to. She highlighted the positive contribution women make to climate policy and said the framing must shift. For example, she urged against continuing to say "vulnerable communities, including women" and said in her country "persons of determination" is used instead of those "with disabilities". She urged reflecting gender across the action agenda, increasing finance flows, and improving data in this regard.

In her concluding remarks, Stella Funsani emphasized the need to, inter alia, strengthen the code of conduct, look at what is happening on the ground, and see how gender and climate change are linked and how they can be integrated.

CLIMATE FINANCE SOURCES

With the 2022 adoption of a decision to establish a loss and damage fund and funding arrangements, the need for innovative financing has taken on a more prominent role in the climate discussions and negotiations. The COP 27 decision taken in Sharm el-Sheikh recognizes the need for new funding sources, as public budgets will not be sufficient. This session of the Oxford Seminar delved deeper into this issue, arguing that the new fund alone will be insufficient to meet the challenge of addressing loss and damage.

Presenting on this issue and reiterating the need for innovative sources, ecbi Director Benito Müller said climate grants for multilateral funds are "always going to be peanuts". He also noted the likelihood for the loss and damage fund to remain a "placebo fund" or divert from other climate funds. As a consequence, he said there is also a need for other sources. He described a proposal for International Climate Solidarity Levies, based on a solidarity fund that was earmarked to combat HIV/AIDS implemented in France in 2006, with funds raised through a levy imposed on air travel; a €1 surcharge on economy class flights within Europe; a €4 on long-haul economy class; €10 on business class within Europe; and €40 on long-haul business class. Müller said the airline levy has not affected demand for flights, and that countries can voluntarily decide whether to implement or impose such levies.

Müller also recalled a 2008 proposal by the least developed countries (LDCs) for a levy on international air travel. Proposed in Poznan at COP 14 as an International Adaptation Passenger Levy, he explained that the aim was to generate an estimated €10 billion per annum. While the proposal was not taken up, the idea has recnetly been gaining traction as an innovative source for loss and damage funding. The problem, however, is that the UNFCCC lacks the remit to legislate on aviation, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) is "not enamoured with the idea". He said that the proposed International Climate Solidarity Levies take an approach somewhere between a top-down and bottom-up approach, and that the collection of domestic levies must be introduced by countries individually. Müller also mentioned the possibility of maritime transport levies, for a example, a €10 fee per container, which along with air ticket levies could raise €1 billion annually. The levies would be imposed at the national level and would not be voluntary.

Figure 1: International Climate Solidarity Levies

Describing another proposal for a share of proceeds, Müller recalled that the problem with the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was that 66% of the projects were concentrated in Brazil, China, and India, while only 2% of the projects were in all of Africa. He described ongoing efforts to include a share of proceeds for adaptation in the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM). Introducing an ecbi publication, How to Operationlise a Share of Proceeds for Adaptation for the Voluntary Carbon Market, he said it seeks to encourage the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to include a share of proceeds for adaptation as one of the eligibility criteria for its Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) eligible emissions units. The Committee on Aviation and Environmental Protection's Working Group 4 (which deals with CORSIA) is meeting in December 2023 and is expected to consider text on a share of proceeds for adaptation, he adding, noting that if it goes through it would send a strong signal to the VCM standards that cannot be ignored.

Cathrine R. Wenger, Independent Consultant, then presented on a project she is undertaking for the Nordic Council of Ministers on new and innovative sources of finance for the loss and damage fund. Offering reflections ahead of COP 28, where the fund is expected to be operationalized, she said the fact that we are even discussing the issue at this stage is a "tribute to climate diplomacy".

She explained that the Nordic project will assess the potential for:

- taxation and/or levies from international shipping and passenger air travel;
- a solidarity levy for international flights;
- the potential role of the International Maritime Organization (IMO);
- the VCM and Paris Agreement Article 6 (cooperative approaches);
- a share of proceeds for loss and damage;
- insurance instruments; and
- solutions for climate-related debt instruments and other financing solutions such as guarantees.

She recalled the Transitional Committee's mandate to identify and expand on funding sources, and that a side event will be held during COP 28 in the Nordic Pavilion. She also noted the potential for insurance mechanisms, and the opportunity for the UNFCCC to give clear guidance in this regard. She said a new financial mechanism is expected under the IMO by 2025. In addition, Wenger highlighted ongoing work under current carbon markets that is decoupled from the mitigation markets, mentioning nature-credit markets for improving biodiversity and the potential to create a similar market for loss and damage.

Ahead of COP 28, she said solutions can be developed at many levels and in parallel, and explained the need for regulations, guidance, and engaging with the private sector. She asked whether existing structures should be used for channelling finance or if new avenues should be created through the loss and damage fund. While observing that the UNFCCC has not taken a leadership and coordinated role on loss and damage, the UNFCCC's subsidiary bodies could potentially give a clearer mandate to the UNFCCC to take on such a role and enhance funding.

During the ensuing discussion, many participants agreed that, while innovative sources are necessary for loss and damage, a global levy or tax was not going to be agreed and accepted by all. Speaking about the French air ticket levy, one developed country participant said it is working well and is now more sophisticated, generating a few hundred million Euro per annum; however, only part of it is dedicated to the solidarity fund. He said a collection of domestic levies were building on each other, stating that around 20 countries are now implementing something similar. However, he too doubted that an international global levy could be implemented. He underscored the importance of creating international momentum to continue with the development of domestic levies, and the need to respect the autonomy of local tax authorities. He argued that prices for shipping or air travel should not be increased in developing countries.

Saleemul Huq, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), addressing European partners at the Seminar who had helped achieve the positive outcome on loss and damage at COP 27, said he hoped the EU would also help ensure a positive outcome at COP 28. He said July 2023 was the hottest month on record and that attribution science is getting better and better. For example, he observed that events such as recent heatwaves in Europe are without a scientific doubt now attributable to human-induced climate change and would not have occurred without a temperature increase of 1.1°C or 1.2°C. Huq said helping loss and damage victims must be priority, noting a €5 levy could raise €1 billion from passengers in Europe. He looked to Europe to be at the forefront and to take the initiative on this issue.

Speaking about the work of the Transitional Committee, one developed country speaker said the Committee was dedicated to delivering on all aspects of its mandate. However, she noted that political issues would still remain with many details yet to be sorted out for COP 28. She agreed that a global levy is not going to happen, mentioning that the COP lacks the remit to take a decision on a global airline levy. However, noting climate finance is a global effort, she emphasized scaling up funding for loss and damage and that something akin to the French levy is possible. On innovative sources of funding, she said many already exist and governments can pursue them, but national sovereignty must be respected. She said the Adaptation Fund has its own independent sources but has dried up, as certified emission reductions (CERs) previously high value has since dropped.

A developing country, adding that shipping levies "will never fly", suggested levies in the packaging industry could be an option as a subsector of the shipping industry. Clarifying she was not arguing against shipping levies, another developing country participant supported exploring the possibilities but expressed concern with burdening the maritime sector and said an economic assessment was needed. She said a levy on shipping should aim to decarbonize and decrease emissions in the sector. She noted the airline sector was going through an "identity crisis" as it is looking for and obliged to use more clean fuels, which is very costly. She said it has targets and obligations to mix with more renewable fuels, meaning ticket prices are already high. She said 46% of air ticket prices is for fuel, and that the maritime sector is going through a similar transition. Noting that existing taxes are already a burden, another developing country said even an additional five euros would be a lot, and did not see the scope for such levies in the maritime or airline sectors at this time.

One developed country said he was struck by the different sources, noting some are more tailored to connect to the loss and damage fund than others. He suggested possibly taxing financial transactions. He said carbon pricing to encourage decarbonization of carbon intensive operations is desirable and that some of the money could be earmarked for loss and damage. Another conceded that levies, in general, are not very popular. However, noting the chemicals industry has pledged to put several billion Euros to deal with plastic waste, he said it would be great if oil and gas company CEOs would commit to contribute to the loss and damage fund in Dubai, saying this could be viewed as applying the "polluter pays principle".

Saleemul Huq stressed the need to do something by COP 28 so that between COP 28 and COP 29 money is put on the table. He opposed "managing expectations", as one developed country participant had suggested, saying not operationalising the fund would be unacceptable.

One developing country said no one is against the idea of a small tax as long as it applies to everyone. However, he said he did not see an allocation in the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) for loss and damage, adaptation, or developing countries. On the French levy, he asked whether it is just for French citizens or for everyone? He said whatever we do must be applied universally and be channelled to where it is needed. Otherwise, he said "we are going around in circles and people are dying", including in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

Another developing country stressed that the Transitional Committee's work must be owned and implemented by everyone. She said she hopes a world is created where solidarity is part of the principles we are working towards. On funding arrangements to ensure enhancement, she underscored the need for "politically palatable" solutions that could hopefully be presented as a menu of options. That way, each country can see which is most appropriate for its unique situation, for example taxation or a market-based mechanism.

ARTICLE 2.1.C

Article 2 of the Paris Agreement addresses the objective of enhancing UNFCCC implementation and strengthening the global response to climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. One of the ways it seeks to do this is described in Article 2.1.c, on making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low emissions and climate-resilient development. This session addressed whether the current institutional arrangement supports efforts to determine whether finance flows are consistent with the Paris Agreement and, if not, what new institutional arrangements might be necessary to track alignment.

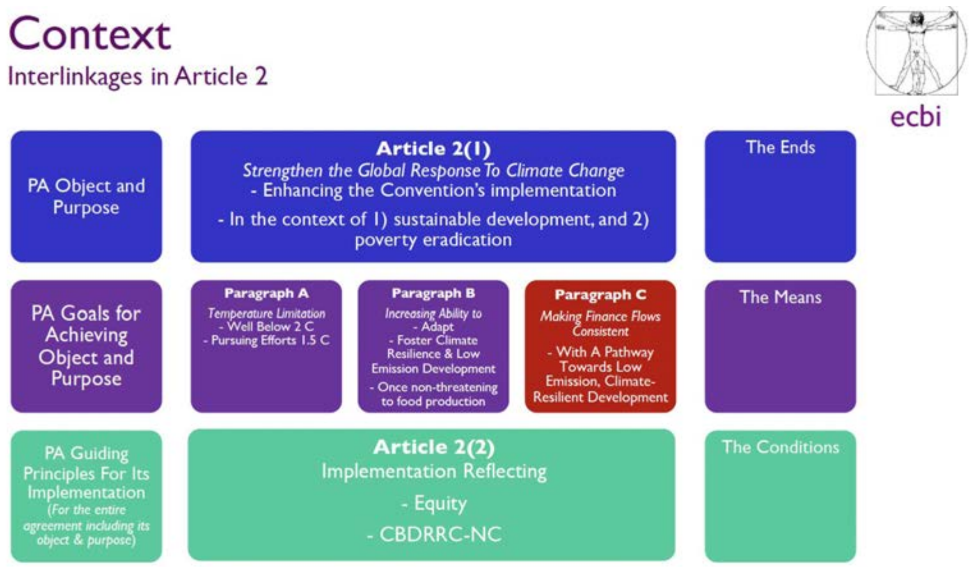
Michai Robertson, Advisor to the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Antigua and Barbuda, presented on behalf of the Fellows began by describing Article 2.1.c's relationship with Article 9 of the Paris Agreement (finance). He explained that unlike Article 2.1.a, which is cross referenced in 4.1 (mitigation), and Article 2.1.b, which is cross referenced in Article 7.1. (adaptation), there is no similar reference for Article 2.1.c in the text of Article 9. Robertson said much depends on the interpretation of 2.1.c, which influences implementation. He urged approaching the issue in good faith, reiterating that its main objective and purpose is strengthening the global response to climate change.

Robertson then asked the group to consider:

- whether there is a mandate for dedicated Article 2.1.c negotiations;
- whether discussing non-climate finance is within the scope and remit of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, noting that Article 2.1.c also involves a range of stakeholders that are not legally bound by and are outside the remit of COP and CMA decisions;
- the relationship with Article 9 (provision of support from developed to developing countries); and
- concerns about the unintended consequences of 2.1.c negotiations, including over policy prescriptiveness, as well as potential conflicts between climate and development goals.

He asked how we can safeguard the principle common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, as well as equity? He also asked how all financial flows can be made consistent with low emissions and climate-resilient development? Robertson then underscored the role of Article 2.1.c in the context of the GST. Noting that it is not the first time Article 2.1.c is being considered, he mentioned the dialogue established in Sharm el-Sheikh and two workshops, following which the COP presidency is expected to provide a report. He informed participants that a workshop in October 2023 in Geneva was focusing on scope. Roberton described Article 2.1.c as part of a broader ecosystem of the full Article 2.

Figure 2: Interlinkages in Article 2 of the Paris Agreement



Regarding views from the Fellows, Robertson underscored the need for potential alternatives to an agenda item at COP 28. He said following the dialogues, the CMA will decide on next steps based on dialogue reports. The CMA could decide to include an agenda item as one of its suggested next steps. If there is an agenda item, he said the scope should be tight and could focus on:

- knowledge and experience sharing of equitable approaches for implementation;
- addressing unintended consequences of implementing 2.1.c;
- reforming the global financial architecture in line with Article 2.1.c; and
- the need for additional support to help developing countries implement the provision, given the additional burden and cost that countries would be taking on to make it part of their work.

He stressed the need for safeguards to ensure tracking and reviewing of implementation is not mandatory, and that implementation does not become a conditionality for receiving finance.

He posed several topics for participants to consider, including:

- rules, guidance, or procedures for effective implementation;
- tracking, review, and/or accountability for effective implementation;
- establishing and/or designating institutional arrangements and/or support arrangements for effective implementation;
- how to make a future agenda item acceptable to all;
- how to reflect equity in the implementation of Article 2.1.c;
- ensuring balanced considerations and work between low emissions and climate resilient development;
- how to safeguard against unintended consequences for the most vulnerable and least responsible; and
- providing reassurance and safeguards regarding the relationship between Article 2.1.c and Article 9.

During the discussion among seminar participants, developed and developing countries differed with respect to whether there is a mandate to undertake negotiations on 2.1.c. Many developing countries argued that such negotiations and a decision could lead to developed countries shying away from their commitments and obligations under Article 9. Developed countries, on the other hand, sought to reassure developing countries by stating that Article 2.1.c was not intended to take away from or diminish their climate finance commitments under Article 9, but was rather to align financial flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Some were of the view that Article 9 was actually an inherent part of 2.1.c.

Leading off the conversation, a developed country said she had wanted 2.1.c on the agenda in Sharm el-Sheikh, but the support was not there. She noted difficulties in understanding why, eight years after adoption of the Paris Agreement, a formal space to discuss the issue was still absent. Noting ongoing difficulties with the issue, she said she was grateful for dialogue, including the recent one in Bangkok in July 2023. She said the provision is much broader than Article 9, but that it is not about tracking and reporting. She agreed on the need for additional support and capacity building for its implementation, noting that negotiators "usually get it right in the end but sometimes we take the scenic route". She also stated that: sharing knowledge and experiences is necessary; action must be taken, since it will not happen on its own; we should try to resolve any reluctance to discuss the issue within the UNFCCC; and a space is needed to discuss Article 2.1.c if the UNFCCC is to remain relevant.

One developing country said he agreed with 90% of the presentation, lamenting lack of a space to discuss each other's views to gain a common understanding of 2.1.c. For some, he said, it is about climate sensitive policies and for others climate responsive policies. He felt everything would need to be aligned and that the Paris Agreement must be viewed in its entirety.

He said the EU's CBAM is a manifestation of one group's view of what 2.1.c is. However, different countries have different interpretations, which is affecting the ability to access funding. He cautioned that some policies to align finance flows can negatively impact on development. He also emphasized the need for discussion, agreement, and guidelines on how we can transition under 2.1.c, noting some believe phasing out fossil fuels is necessary for its implementation. He lamented that, because of this, some countries in Africa are not able to access funding for projects.

The same developing country explained that Article 2.1.c must be looked at in tandem with, and in the context of, Article 9, not separately. He said a space for dialogue and processes that enables this kind of interaction is necessary, prior to a possible agenda on this issue. He himself supported developing an agenda item on the topic, although he conceded this was not a collective view among many developing countries. He also recalled that we have spent years trying to come up with a common definition of climate finance.

Noting the constructive discussion, ecbi Director Benito Müller said perhaps an agenda item would not be so bad if the focus is only on certain aspects. He asked if perhaps at the end of the dialogue process we could have an agenda item? He echoed the previous comment on safeguards, noting any discussion or agenda item would not be about conditionalities and would have to include safeguards. He said the dialogue and other alternatives provide a way to get comfortable with the discussions before an agenda item is added.

Another developing country participant reiterated that climate finance represents a fraction of general finance. He agreed that Article 2.1.a and Article 2.1.b have clear links with Article 4 and Article 7 respectively, underscoring his belief that no similar link exists between Article 2.1.c. and Article 9. He said the phrase, "making financial flow consistent with…" is unclear, and, while he had no "ideological problem" with having it on the agenda, it remained a practical problem for his country. How this discussion would actually support work at the national level, or how his government should proceed on this issue, remained unclear to him. He also pointed out that creating an agenda item in the UN climate process means something is going to be negotiated, which goes beyond a simple exchange of views.

Another developing country expressed concern over trying to elevate one subclause and delinking it from everything else. In this respect he noted similarities to what is happening with the conversation on just transition. He said this would confine the development space and reduce the development pathway for developing countries. He lamented the one-directional nature of the conversation, noting many developing countries are stressed trying to achieve high ambition targets without support. He wondered why we cannot also have an agenda item on just transition, impact on development, trade, and fairness, for example.

One developed country representative said Article 9 does not cover everything for the mobilization of resources under the Paris Agreement. He said any discussion on Article 2.1.c is not going to change any obligation under Article 9 and did not anticipate mandatory country reporting, although he alluded to possibly some discussion on global trends. He said having an agenda item does not determine what comes out of it, which is ultimately up to Parties.

Noting the issue is important and needs to be discussed and progress made, one developing country said it must be done in a practical manner. He asked what we want to achieve, and what role do we want Article 2.1.c to play in implementing the Paris Agreement? He sought clarification on what a financial flow that is consistent with climate resilient development and a low emissions pathway actually looks like. He cautioned that financial flows might not be climate finance flows and might even be contrary to the goals of the Paris Agreement. He said an agenda item will lead us to "a decision in a vacuum" and that it should be part of the decision under the GST. He explained that such an alignment is already happening on the ground and that in his country they are aligning financial flows with sustainability, through blue and green bonds and natural capital, for example.

Another developed country speaker acknowledged the issue will be "coming to a head" at the COP, saying we are trying to understand/capture the essence of the provision rather than elevate or take away from 2.1.c, and wondering what the UNFCCC can do to increase the effectiveness of the Paris Agreement.

Noting the importance of Article 2.1.c politically, one developed country wondered if any organizations could help delegates in their consideration of this issue. She suggested that when reporting, countries should include their experiences, as this is a good way to extract information, and mentioned the EU sustainable finance framework, noting all have agreed to phase out fossil fuels. She asked whether a country that is phasing out but also investing in new coal fired power plants is aligned under 2.1.c? A developed country said the subclause 2.1.c was much broader than Article 9 and asked how we can push global finance capital in a Paris-aligned way?

One developing country highlighted the need to move toward implementation, said we should try to set guidelines, and then discuss the potential for an agenda item. He asked how we can transition without impacting the bigger development picture. He noted that this is a big problem in the context of the GST, as we do not even have agreement on this issue within the GST discussions. He suggested a space was needed to further discuss difference between "consistent versus aligned" with Article 9.

Agreeing that everyone has a different interpretation, a developing country participant noted the opportunity for a proper dialogue on the role of the multilateral development banks and financial institutions, and said equity should be central to the discussion. She agreed more dialogue was required but not just to exchange good practices. In response, another developing country said knowledge sharing leads to implementation, and discussed the need to mainstream climate action in different parts of government.

One developed country participant said this issue should not be viewed as a threat but rather as an opportunity, mentioning that only a small percentage of finance flow is being invested in renewable energy. Another said there will always be investment flows that are not Paris aligned, for example related to health. She explained that to get travel authorization for a COP, the person usually must be negotiating or working on a specific agenda item. For this reason, she emphasized the need to have an agenda item to ensure that we "get the right people in the room".

Other developing country interventions highlighted that:

- the GST provides an opportunity to have a discussion on Article 2.1.c;
- the GST at COP 28 should develop clear recommendations and a roadmap for finance, linking it to Article 2.1.c;
- climate-aligned policies and Article 2.1.c are quite distinct, with the latter being outside the scope and framework of the Convention; and
- a space for further discussion at COP 29 is possible.

NEW COLLECTIVE QUANTIFIED GOAL ON CLIMATE FINANCE

At COP 21 in Paris, Parties decided that, prior to 2025, the CMA would set a new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG) from a floor of USD100 billion per year, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. CMA 1 in 2018 decided to initiate deliberations on setting the goal, and CMA 3 agreed that deliberations on the NCQG should be based on an ad hoc work programme, submissions by Parties and non-Party stakeholders, high-level ministerial dialogues, and stocktakes and guidance from the CMA. Parties established the work programme with the following activities: four technical expert dialogues (TEDs) per year; annual reports; and ministerials. In 2024, the CMA will set the NCQG.

Leading off the Oxford Seminar's discussion on the NCQG, Orlando Rey, Lead Technical Negotiator for the G-77/China, and Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Cuba, presented on views from the Fellows. He asked what a NCQG decision in Dubai would have to contain to facilitate the adoption of an NCQG in 2024. In particular, he wondered whether it would need to involve a change from current working modalities and, if so, what sort of change, and whether it would require some substantive elements.

Rey recalled that during negotiations of Decision 9/CMA.3 at COP 26, the need for a committee or similar body to negotiate the NCQG was discussed as an option, but no agreement was reached. He wondered whether work under the modalities of this decision was allowing us to make progress in time for adoption of the NCQG in 2024. He mentioned that the TEDs are addressing a broad framework, including revisiting decades of debate around climate finance. He said the scope of the discussion at this point is well beyond the definition of a goal. He added that the TEDs' modalities do not lead or lend themselves to an agreed outcome, so at this point all issues under the NCQG remain open. However, based on the TEDs and other sources, he said we already have a significant amount of material to work with for the text of a decision.

Rey said that changes in modalities could be considered at COP 28, as we are still one year ahead of the deadline for adopting an NCQG. Adding that the TEDs do not necessarily have to be discarded, he suggested working modalities in the form of a negotiating body could possibly be added. He asked whether the contact group working on the issue is the most appropriate place to begin this work?

He reiterated that the COP 28 decision must include a clear roadmap on how to reach an agreed outcome on NCQG in 2024. This decision, he said, should provide clarity on the progression of negotiating texts, and on the general structure of the goal and its main elements. He suggested revisiting the idea of a negotiating committee, and that the TEDs could continue to inform the more structured negotiating process. He wondered if the NCQG co-facilitators could be mandated to prepare draft texts, and whether some intersessional work is required.

Concluding his presentation, Rey said it was difficult to divorce content and substance from the process. He said the process problems remain, and cautioned that continuing to discuss political issues under a technical framework risks us not having a negotiating text at the beginning of COP 29. He underscored the need for a more structured and indicative process, and supported establishing a contact group at COP 28 to prepare a decision on NCQG, or perhaps a negotiating committee to work intersessionally.

During the ensuing discussion, one developing country speaker wondered how to work with the existing divergence of views on issues such as expanding the donor base and whether the USD100 billion goal is for developed countries only or for an expanded donor base as well. He said it should not be about more responsibility but rather about delivering on the goals of the Paris Agreement.

A developed country participant expressed surprise at the plethora of TEDs (12), noting she had envisaged something more straightforward. Emphasizing that the issues that need to be tackled are more political than technical, she wondered how the TEDs will deal with them. She argued that two elements pushed the NCQG process forward: developing countries' needs and Article 2.1.c. She agreed that there is a role for public finance to support developing countries, mentioning LDCs in particular; however, she pointed to a broader need when it comes to, for example, energy investment needs and Article 2.1.c, which she said will have to be largely delivered by domestic resources. She said she would not be surprised if, on the last night of COP 29, a complete overhaul of the deliberations takes place, and some numbers appear from nowhere to be the NCQG. She emphasized the need for a layered approach to the goal, including public finance from developed countries. However, since this is a global effort, she said the range of contributors must be broadened.

A developing country participant underscored the importance of a goal for providing a clear signal to Parties for their next Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), noting the need for clarity on resources and how much can be expected. She wondered about the difference between the NCQG and Article 2.1.c, asking whether the latter was broader, to which a developed country replied that 2.1.c is broader and they are not the same. Another developing country likened the process to the GST, in that there is a technical process followed by a report and a political process. However, with the NCQG we are "conflating" the political and the technical, which could be problematic, the participant added.

Responding to some of the comments and questions, one developed country said it is easier to track public finance, but that the more you get into Article 2.1.c, the more difficult it is to track. On the time frame question, she added that all elements do not have to have the same time frame, and that perhaps a time frame for aligning all finance flows with the Paris Agreement would be longer. She said it is easier to track what is not Paris aligned when it comes to investments.

Another developing country speaker said if we really want a NCQG, it must be linked to science and what science is saying on ambition for adaptation and mitigation, noting temperatures records continue to be broken. Another emphasized the role of finance as an enabler of ambition, adding that the NCQG is an avenue for looking forward, and that we should agree on a timeline and scope at COP 28.

Finally, a developing country speaker said Article 2.1.c, as opposed to the NCQG, is about flows and not the quantification of them. He said the GST will have an impact; cautioned against double and triple counting, which will mean less delivery on the ground; and said Article 2.1.c is not about scale, but more about policy changes, in terms of access and identifying the flows themselves. He explained that information is not in short supply but that streamlining it is necessary to move forward.

PRE-2030 MITIGATION AMBITION WORK PROGRAMME

In November 2021 in Glasgow, negotiators established a work programme to "urgently scale-up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade" (Decision 1/CMA.3, paragraph 27) in a manner that complements the GST. In November 2022, Parties agreed that the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP) would begin at the end of 2022 and continue until 2026, with a view to adopting a decision on the continuation of the work programme at that session (Decision 4/CMA.4). Furthermore, they agreed to convene at least two global dialogues every year and to hold investment-focused events. Each dialogue would address a different topic and Parties and non-Party stakeholders alike would, in advance, submit their views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges, and barriers relevant to dialogue topics. The first Global Dialogue as well as an Investment-Focused Event convened on the margins prior to SB 58 in June 2023, and the second was scheduled for October 2023.

Maesela Kekana, Chief Negotiator and Head of Delegation, South Africa, presented on the MWP. He explained that the MWP dialogues in 2023 are focusing on accelerating a just energy transition, including by:

- implementing policies and measures with global overview and country-specific experiences;
- addressing financial, technological, and capacity-building needs, such as through international cooperation, including with non-Party stakeholders, and the provision of support to developing countries; and
- promoting sustainable development and understanding socioeconomic effects.

On next steps, Kekana said the UNFCCC Secretariat will prepare a report of the second dialogue and an annual report comprising a compilation of the individual dialogue and Investment-Focused Event reports for consideration by the CMA and the SBs; the SBs will then consider the annual report and draft a decision for consideration and adoption at CMA 5 in Dubai; and the CMA will assess progress, including key findings, opportunities and barriers, and implementation gaps.

Other possible steps, he said, include:

- inviting the Secretariat to produce a technical paper on lessons learned to inform the next Global Dialogue and Investment-Focused Event;
- decisions that could encourage initiatives presented to close gaps and overcome barriers;
- inviting Parties to revise their NDCs in line with 1.5°C;
- serving as a follow up to and addressing knowledge gaps from the GST;
- following up on sectoral commitments and/or opportunities in various sectors; and
- scaling up renewable energy, phasing out fossil fuels, and phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

On topics for the dialogue to discuss, he said once one is chosen, the MWP will look at what initiatives are linked to the topic, although he remained unclear as to how to take forward COP decisions. He said it could possibly be used as a follow up to the mitigation component of the GST. He noted that the finance element has been absent from the discussions and mentioned a lack of guidance on what the second part of the MWP will do.

During the ensuing discussion, one developed country speaker acknowledged MWP has had a difficult start. Noting in-depth discussions on renewable energy and energy efficiency, he hoped the MWP would have an impact on the ground. Highlighting the role of renewable energy and energy efficiency going forward, another developing country said the process had gained some momentum at the technical and ministerial levels. She urged following up on and further unpacking existing commitments, adding more context in terms of the latest science and IPCC reports, and discussing how to link the technical conversations to the ministerial roundtable. She wondered about trying to capture the finance element in the dialogue highlights, and what sort of outcome is needed from the ministerial roundtable.

Another developed country said he would also expect finance to be an essential part of the discussion, noting that many barriers exist to investment especially in developing countries, and mentioning the mobilization of investment for renewable energy. Another stressed the importance of getting the right people around the table and having a substantive discussion in Dubai. She said the decision should focus on solutions and what actions will be taken, not just on what people have said. Another underscored the need to showcase best practices and support; likened it to a matchmaking processes, matching needs with support; and highlighted the relationship between the GST and the MWP.

One developing country said he was impressed with the NDC synthesis report, which highlighted the gap between where we should be and what we have been able to put together in our NDCs. He said this represented an invitation to identify gaps, challenges, and opportunities to deliver on more action. He also lamented that the Global Dialogues and the Investment-Focused Events were not interacting more with each other. Expressing surprise at the dates of the dialogue and investment events, he said he thought they would have taken advantage of the opportunity to hold some of these events during the COP.

Another developing country responded that said the Dialogue was held intersessionally because a report was needed to inform the COP itself. She added that the COP, however, could be used for matchmaking and enhancing partnerships, and emphasized synergies with the MWP, NDCs, and the GST, noting the latter should provide a greater level of direction, including to the next round of NDCs.

Reiterating the overlap between the GST and MWP, the same developing country participant said the latter is much more focused on opportunities, challenges, and ways to increase ambition in this critical decade. He suggested breakout groups, more dynamic discussions (possibly by inviting experts and keynote speakers), more genuine interaction among ministers, and possibly a commission to increase dynamism.

Noting an increase in fossil fuel exploration, one developing country said African ministers had recently called for ending such activities in developing countries instead of continued exploration and handing out licenses. Another mentioned the need to deal with inequality, adding that the main outcomes of the MWP should be to leave no one behind, rather than just setting goals and targets. Using the transport sector as example, he wondered whether investments, particularly by the World Bank, are really helping to meet goals. He also suggested a more regional focus.

One developed country said the MWP will be part of a broader mitigation outcome. On process, she cited the need for clarity and guidance on the 2024 dialogues, more clarity on how to link the MWP to the ministerial roundtable, and the importance of timing to ensure it actually feeds into the roundtable. Emphasizing that the regional climate weeks scheduled in 2024 provide opportunities in this regard, she urged involving technical experts that are really working on the issues, like transport and energy. She said workstreams must be managed to ensure they do not limit conversations but rather enforce each other.

Other developed country interventions referred to:

- agreement that targets would not be imposed;
- the possibility of a matching platform with the International Renewable Energy Agency;
- the need to potentialize what exists, remove barriers, and avoid duplication of efforts;
- the need for more structured Investment-Focused Events; and
- links to Article 2.1.c.

Closing the discussion, Maesela Kekana noted the potential to scale up renewables, and reiterated that the MWP is about catalyzing and taking concrete action and underscored the need to close the ambition gap.

GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

The Global Stocktake (GST) was established under Paris Agreement Article 14, where Parties agreed to "periodically take stock of the implementation of [the] Agreement to assess the collective progress towards achieving [its] purpose .... and its long-term goals". The Article further states that the assessment will be undertaken in a comprehensive and facilitative manner, considering mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation and support, in light of equity and the best available science. Article 14 indicated that the first GST would be completed in 2023. Future GSTs are to take place every five years thereafter unless Parties decide otherwise.

Julio Cordano, head of the Chilean delegation and Director of Environment, Climate Change and Oceans, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile, presented on the GST. He reminded participants that the GST involves information collection, technical assessment, and consideration of outputs. He reminded participants that Paris Agreement Article 14.3 states that "The outcome of the global stocktake shall inform Parties in updating and enhancing, in a nationally determined manner, their actions and support in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Agreement, as well as in enhancing international cooperation for climate action." He said the GST's main purpose is therefore to assess global progress thus far and inform actions going forward.

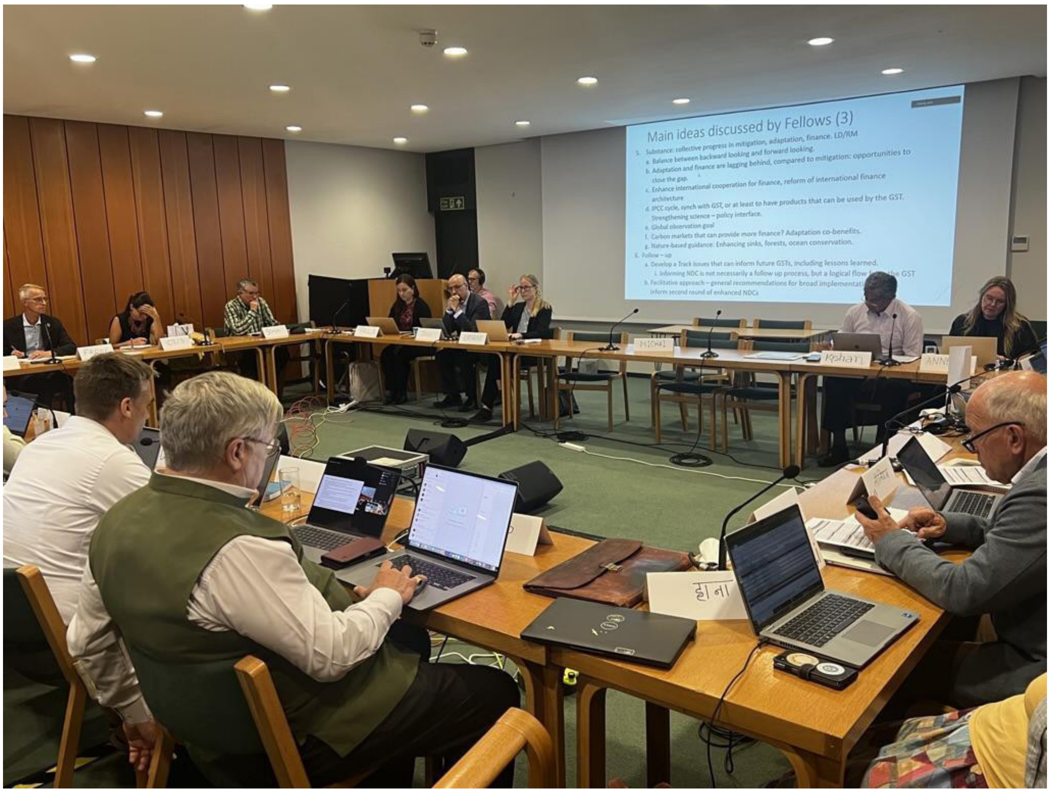
Cordano said we are off track, noted the need to identify barriers, mentioned connections with finance as the enabler of mitigation and adaptation, and wondered how to get to where we need to be collectively. He highlighted the connection between the GST and NDCs and, citing opportunities for action, reiterated that "the more we mitigate, the less we need to adapt".

He then presented a range of ideas for consideration, including:

- the need to focus on emission reductions, while also looking at removals (reforestation, CDR, CCS);
- whether it is time to renew the focus on Article 4.11 on adjusting existing NDCs with a view to enhance ambition;
- that multilateral discussions and the GST must inform NDCs;
- holding workshops to exchange ideas on how to prepare new, more ambitious NDCs; and
- whether Parties should be invited to develop national investment plans.

Regarding topics raised by the Fellows, Cordano emphasized, among others:

- the need to refer to countries' right to define their own development pathways;
- poverty eradication, sustainable development, and implementation of the SDGs;
- the need to not be policy prescriptive and instead to be guided by science, including by the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6);
- the need to take into account common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), equity, and historical responsibilities;
- cross referencing to the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and MWP; and
- the need to ensure a robust and complete outcome from the technical component of GST preparations going into COP 28.



On the outcome from the first GST, he wondered who would write it and whether its format would be a CMA decision or declaration with political messages, including a technical annex, or whether would it be a non-negotiated outcome. He affirmed that it had been agreed not to include sectoral targets. On substance, he emphasized that the outcome should convey collective progress.

Regarding an imbalance in the global South with respect to observation capacity, he mentioned a global observation goal as a possibility. He said some Fellows also wondered whether carbon markets could provide more finance. On follow up issues, Cordano mentioned: whether there should be a follow-up track and actions; a process to impart and share lessons learned so the next GST can be more useful; and the need to begin the process at least two years in advance of 2028 (when the next GST will take place).

During the ensuing discussion, many participants, both from developed and developing countries, expressed concern and anxiety that too much time was being spent on process rather than substance, leaving little time to find a common vision and making it more difficult to reach a successful conclusion at COP 28 in Dubai. Some mentioned that discussions are still too broad and not focused on specifics and, with respect to lessons learned, that the whole GST process started late.

One developing country participant emphasized that what we do now sets a precedent for future GSTs, and we must start moving into specifics and making what we need to do more concrete, while another developing country urged taking advantage of this seminar setting to get into specifics. He said in some ways, this GST is the most important as it can set a precedent, stating that all efforts should be made to get this GST "as right as possible", recalling ecbi Director Benito Müller's words that "Something only has to happen once before it becomes a tradition". One developing country, in response to the query about who will author the GST outcome in Dubai, said "who is holding the pen has not been determined", but it will be owned by all and implemented by all.

Delegates then discussed various components of the GST in more detail, including mitigation, adaptation and other non-mitigation elements and, process and outcomes.

Focusing first on the **mitigation component of the GST**, one developing country said the GST represents an opportunity to collectively define what we set forth in Paris, beginning with emission reduction pathways. Another developing country expressed concern over a negative narrative, noting the GST is not intended to take stock of the broader climate change situation, but rather implementation of the Paris Agreement. He agreed that updated and new NDCs and low carbon strategies should be conveyed to and reflected in the GST. Emphasizing that the need for means of implementation "is not a cliché", he said his country has a 100% renewables goal in its NDC and it is currently at about 24%, but that more resources and capacity are needed to achieve this goal. He added that a more ambitious NDC is not realistic without means of implementation and it would produce "a false sense of victory". He mentioned the potential conflict between the Paris Agreement's bottom-up nature and our sense of scientific urgency. A developed country agreed that without sufficient means of implementation, developing countries cannot be expected to keep increasing their targets. Cordano mentioned increasing ambition in terms of equity but noted "very little room" exists to increase mitigation ambition. He said there should be some understanding of what type of ambition enhancement should occur.

One developed country participant said he was not surprised we are not on course, as the GST was built in the Paris Agreement for this reason. He maintained that a successful GST would reflect the Paris Agreement's strength, reminding participants that it is not because of the Agreement that we are where we are, but rather it is because of implementation and ambition. Agreeing we need to get into specifics, he said we should spell out what we want to see in new round of submissions. He mentioned this could cover sectoral possibilities, policy signals, energy transition, forests, and methane, among others, stressing the GST must be comprehensive and credible. He said equity is an important part of the GST, mentioning with respect to the energy transition in particular.

Another developed country speaker said the GST aims to support the bottom-up nature of the Paris Agreement. With respect to international cooperation, she said it should highlight what resources exist to help countries move forward with implementation of their NDCs. She reiterated that the GST is about collective progress, creating a common vision, and identifying how it can be implemented. On the presentation's contention that mitigation is ahead of adaptation and finance, she noted difficulties in comparing as the metrics are different. Rather, she said the vision of and advancement on mitigation should convey how it will help us move forward and reduce the need for adaptation and loss and damage.

She emphasized that the GST aims to inform the next round of NDCs and emission reduction levels, and that the elements could send signals about the need for systemic transformations. She noted ongoing discussions around renewable energy expansion and doubling energy efficiency, and that there could be a similar target for decarbonization and phasing out fossil fuels. She also mentioned other possible elements, such as increasing electric vehicle use and nature-based solutions. She explained that what happens after COP28 is important, and that the GST could mandate a space, perhaps as part of the MWP, to discuss alignment of NDCs with long-term strategies, as well as fairness and equity. She wondered about the process for following up on each of the recommendations and how we will keep track of them.

Several developing country participants then spoke, emphasizing, among others: the need for more technology to achieve more ambitious goals; the fact that, while aspirations are useful, adaptation and loss and damage are more important in LDCs than mitigation, for which there is no budget; and the amount of work necessary to develop NDCs and the pressures this creates.

Another developing country said the GST should provide the opportunity to assess difficulties that developing countries, and LDCs in particular, have in implementing their NDCs. She wondered how ambition can be increased if we cannot even implement current NDCs. She said most of her country's NDC is being implemented with their own resources, but it is difficult, mentioing that her country is experiencing severe drought and investing to combat it with its own domestic resources. She saidthat her country was originally more ambitious with its intended nationally determined contribution (INDC), but that it then had to revise it based on budgetary constraints.

Underscoring the importance of providing a proper evidence-based analytical account of what has happened up to now, another developing country said many Parties feel there has not been a proper reflection of what worked and what did not. He said we have the resources to fix the problem globally, but the way they are managed and distributed is the problem, although he agreed that we are much better offwith the Paris Agreement than without it. He conceded that Parties are far apart with no time to bridge the gap so we must "manage expectations". He said the GST provided the opportunity to give guidance to the scientific community on what will work. Observing that the IPCC and GST cycles are not aligned, he mentioned the need for mid-term products between the cycles and making an effort to align cycles. He supported more regional and local perspectives on scientific work and giving policymakers "something they can understand". One developing country speaker said there were several ways the information could be presented and communicated, such as through graphics.

A developed country participant emphasized that: the GST is about the Paris Agreement and its provisions and should inform everyone on efforts made under the Agreement; hard targets are not expected for LDCs and new provisions will not be imposed; an negotiators need to be more flexible and not take the "my way or the highway" approach. Another asked how the GST will inform the next round of NDCs, saying it is about providing a signal to governments and to the outside world. She said messages can be conveyed (such as, say, tripling renewables), but that does not mean every country has to take it on and would depend on their national context. Saying the aim is to enhance action on ground, another cited the need to be specific about how international cooperation can go forward. Others said: the IPCC should be encouraged to have relevant inputs ready by the next GST; and a contact group should be established and a decision taken in Dubai, although what to put in it remains unclear.

Addressing **adaptation and other non-mitigation targets**, Julio Cordano asked what such targets would look like? He mentioned including equity considerations when reviewing NDCs, especially in developing countries. He suggested we cannot go much further in terms of mitigation and wondered how the GST can inform NDCs more broadly. He also advocated for a balanced approach to make sure no one is left behind. He supported reforming the financial architecture and connecting this discussion to the one on the GGA. Several developing countries wondered how the discussion on adaptation in the GST would be linked to and fit in with the GGA, and vice versa.

A developed country participant said the Paris Agreement is specific about what the GST will do with respect to adaptation. She mentioned reviewing support provided and overall progress on the GGA. She wondered how better enablers could be facilitated in the UNFCCC process; said comprehensive report structures were needed, as they are often fragmented for many developing countries; and stressed that even those in the GGA process do not necessarily know how to build on what has already been done.

One developing country speaker pointed to complexities and different understanding among Parties of what GGA is. While making some progress, she said insufficient means of implementation will prevent us from moving forward. Another developing country said it is dangerous to say the only way to reduce adaptation is through mitigation. He said adaptation and loss and damage are "already locked in" and no amount of mitigation will render adaptation unnecessary. He said climate change undermines sustainable development and sustainable development is the best way to enhance adaptive capacity. He identified resource constraints as the main problem, noting USD400 billion per annum would be needed. Looking at it from an investment and cost perspective, he said developing countries are already putting lots of money into resilience but are still losing approximately 4% of GDP per year. Thus, countries are investing, but they still need support.

Cordano noted concerns with "reporting fatigue". On the architecture of support for adaptation, he said we already have national communications, adaptation in the transparency framework, and national adaptation plans (NAPs).. He emphasized enhancing developing country capacity for early warning, better observation, collecting better data, projecting where to put investments, and enhancing resilience. He mentioned the possibility of a global goal on observation, and building an inventory of impacts regarding what is happening on the ground. Wondering what happened with the development of (NAPs), one developed country participant said the adaptation profile should be raised. She asked whether the increase in global resilience could be measured, supported ensuring universal coverage of early warning systems, and urged more integration of human rights.

Noting it has been 10 years since the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) was adopted, one developed country said we have come a long way with loss and damage and there is much to build on, pointing to the development of knowledge products and five expert groups under the WIM. However, he said there is still a long way to go. He mentioned a project in the Philippines that began in the 1990s with international support, noting things were already happening before substantial discussions on loss and damage even got underway. He hoped to see the Santiago Network, which was agreed in 2019 with the aim of catalysing technical assistance on loss and damage, fully operationalized at COP28. He cited ongoing struggles with the GGA, noting it is more of a country context-specific issue. He underscored difficulties with comparing targets on mitigation and adaptation, as a quantifiable goal cannot be set for the latter, mentioning that it is moving in the social sciences rather than physical sciences space. He said he viewed the glass as "half full and not half empty". He urged COP 28, when it sends political signals, to focus on hope and the fact that solutions are out there.

In response, one developing country said the GGA is a quantified element that has references to enhancing resilience and reducing impacts on the ground based on what the IPCC says. He said it could be viewed as an "an impact goal of enhancing resilience". Another developing country participant said they are working toward achieving the GGA, although she said it is hard for LDCs to change the way things are done, including with respect to the adaptation cycle.

Mentioning that the "transformational" aspect of adaptation must be highlighted, a developing country speaker reiterated the need for increased support for adaptation and loss and damage, pointing to an entire section on means of implementation. He said we must be clear on what we need with respect to the GST and avoid adding another layer of follow-up mechanisms.

Another developing country said adaptation has been addressed in a silo and not linked to loss and damage, implying this must change. He said there is a lot of information about adaptation communication, although it is not as "glamorous" as ambition in NDCs. He said much is going toward adaptation although it might not be reflected as such, noting you "can't keep building the same roads". On loss and damage, he said "averting" and "minimizing" is also about adaptation.

One developed country recalled that discussions on the GGA began with the aim of achieving some parity to mitigation in 2012. She wondered how the GGA could help move us forward, saying we could easily get lost in the GGA debate. She noted a discrepancy on what we do on adaptation in practice and how we measure progress toward something that is a shared concern and challenge. Regarding the link between adaptation and mitigation, she also mentioned the need to discuss maladaptation. She said we are talking about indicators and parameters we are setting, rather than targets. She said her country does not have adaptation targets but disagreed that because it is a social science, we cannot take a quantitative approach or that it cannot be measured. She said means of implementation is part of those parameters. She said she does not understand "transformative" adaptation and how it differs from adaptation, and wondered if the term is even helpful.

Benito Müller explained that when targets and goals first came up for adaptation, it did not make sense to have a goal. However, he now felt that having the GGA makes snse. On the contention that the GGA is only meaningful or relative to mitigation measures or to the lack of ambition, he said that adaptation is used as a backstop measure to reduce impacts.

Cordano stressed the importance of looking at the finance component of the GST in the context of the NCQG and Article 2.1.c, noting "there will always be a cross-pollination process". He also mentioned that technology and capacity building sometimes get overlooked. He said perhaps the GST can trigger some outside processes as described by the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), such as reform of the financial architecture. In this context, he drew attention to the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron, and the Bridgetown Initiative, in particular. He wondered how to align carbon markets and a share of proceeds with the Paris Agreement. He said perhaps it is a blessing in disguise that the NCQG does not have to be agreed until 2024. Noting more balance is needed between emissions and removals, he said we have not discussed removals enough, mentioning that it is a weak spot, and that perhaps a discussion on finance for removals in forests would be pertinent.

One developing country participant said that in her country, the private sector is being asked to support our efforts, but it is not always clear how. She emphasized the need for collaboration, particularly with respect to technology. One developed country reiterated that the GST is about assessing collective process, and that some countries should be doing more than others. She said the UN process does not fare well when looking collectively at progress. She said it is not a question of an implementation gap, but rather a lack of technology and capacity building.

On the **process and outcome** of the GST, one developing country said that a CMA decision in Dubai should be the focus; pointed to the October workshop and the pre-COP as opportunities for further discussions; asked what kind of messages we want to come out of Dubai on the GST; and mentioned ongoing consultations among ministers and discussions on equity. A developed country reassured participants that that there will be no new reporting structure or obligations.

A developed country speaker said at the SBs in Bonn, most of the time was spent focusing on structure, even though no agreement was reached. She also said more time was spent on mitigation than on adaptation and finance. She agreed with others that we need to be talking about and engaged on the substance instead of getting bogged down on process and arguing over "which paper to work off of". She said the SB Chairs have the prerogative to do what they want to advance the process, noting there was discussion on the role of the SB Chairs in preparing a paper for the COP.

A developing country said that if the SB Chairs develop a draft, he feared that much time will be eaten up by Parties complaining that the content of their submissions is not in the paper. He said we should have text by the end of the October workshop or we will run out of time at the COP. One developed country confirmed that the presiding officer can put forward any paper at any time, but that the paper would lack status unless Parties agree to it. Noting Parties might find value in the paper or discard it, she suggested that the SB Chairs could at least take a chance in drafting a paper. Stressing the importance of including in the paper only what has been included in submissions, she said the worst that can happen is that Parties decide to not use it.

One developing country speaker said the information is there but most of it is too general; the information must be analysed and presented in the form of a draft decision; and there is one draft structure that has been proposed, but it has not been totally agreed. Another developing country said the role of the Presidency is paramount in the process to get the best outcome on the GST. She pointed out that all the components—adaptation, mitigation, and finance—are integral and the GST does not exist or happen in a vacuum.

One developed country participant asked how we arrange the follow up on progress of the GST, noting it might be through one or more committees. She reaffirmed that the Paris Agreement says future NDCs shall be informed by the GST.

Concluding the discussion, a developing country suggested that subsequent NDCs would be the natural follow up given that that the GST is in itself a follow up. She said presidencies and COPs over multiple years can help draw attention to the GST and share the responsibility for follow up.

CLOSING SESSION AND SEMINAR FEEDBACK

In the closing session, both Fellows and their European partners took the opportunity to praise the benefits the Seminar provides, with one commending ecbi and its Director Benito Müller for "having the convening power that no one else has and that is something that is really worth preserving". Some of the comments and feedback from seminar attendees follow.

- "There is a difference between positions and the people in our process and we need to make sure that we safeguard our friendships because that is also important. We listen better to people we know. That is just a fact. And I think this [Oxford Seminar] is really an opportunity not only to understand and technically be prepared, but also a place to get to know each other better."
- "I had a phone call with the Ambassador of Brazil to the UK to report to and explain to him what was going on and who was here. He was so impressed that he wants to invite you [Benito] to come to the Brazilian Embassy in London to give a speech."
- "I am new to this process and I have been learning a lot this past month. This is the first time I am meeting in such an open debate, with no speeches. I am really trying to understand the issues that we are debating and the different positions. So, it was a really, really fruitful, productive, educational experience for me."
- We [Benito and I] were ...[together]... in Delhi and he told me to come for this meeting and I was wondering what this one-week course is and why is he getting all the negotiators together? That mystery has been demystified today .... it is a great initiative to make the negotiators understand each other."
- "You [ecbi] provided a safe space for us, including in the last two days with our European partners. I saw respect among the colleagues even when we had different positions. I think it put us in a good space to see where the differences lie and how we can then bridge them as we move forward."
- "I hope that when there is a need to find common ground, we remember the spirit that carried us in this meeting and try to infuse it amongst our colleagues to move us forward."
- "If the negotiations had the same spirit, approach, and level of discussions [as here in Oxford], I think we would be much, much further along."
- "The mood is always so friendly. The conversations are substantive. We have done things here that we could not do this year in the formal negotiations or anywhere else."

- “I am speaking with my LDC Chair hat on. Benito has been supporting the LDC group for a long time, and many LDC delegates became senior negotiators with his support and through his fellowship programme. Now they are all superb negotiators.”
- “I want to highlight your [Benito’s] commitment to work with Parties to move things ahead, and your sensibilities to vulnerable groups … You are trying to propose rational solutions that can make things progress. And I think this is important. You inspire us.”
- “I think these places [like the Oxford Seminar] allow us to move away from the statements where you change a comma and a word from the last statement you made and then go forward and deliver it, to really kind of thinking out loud on how we can do things differently. I appreciate that. I hope we continue the spirit.”
- “I also appreciate the work that the Fellows, who I know have been here since Monday, put into the pre-discussions and preparing the presentations for us.”
- “I think for me, the main reason I like this meeting is that I am not trying to convince anyone of my own position. It is more to really listen and find out what other people are thinking and I think I learned a lot. … I also always like a meeting where you have your own name on your name tag and not your country … we are here as individuals.”

ecbi Director Benito Müller thanked everyone for their kind words and closed the 2023 Oxford Seminar on Friday evening, 25 August.