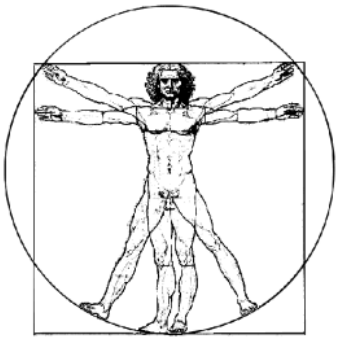

Oxford Seminar 2025

2025 Oxford Seminar participants

27-29 August 2025

Examination Schools, University of Oxford

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INTRODUCTION

The 2025 Oxford Seminar took place from 27-29 August at the Examination Schools, Oxford University. The Oxford Seminar is ecbi's annual flagship event, 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.

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). This year marked a milestone as ecbi celebrates its 20th Anniversary.

The Seminar was preceded by the Fellowship Colloquium from 25-27 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. The Seminar and Colloquium take place under the Chatham House Rule, which allows for frank and open exchanges and the building of trust among developing countries and their European partners.

The following topics were discussed during the Seminar both in plenary session and in breakout groups, which provided the opportunity for more in-depth exchanges.:

- Mitigation Work Programme (MWP);
- Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T, which is aimed at scaling up climate finance to developing country Parties;
- Gender;
- Global Goal on Adaptation;
- Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP);
- the International Country of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the obligations of states regarding climate change;
- the Global Stocktake (GST), including progress on implementing the outcomes of the first GST and lessons learned for the second GST;
- the Climate Solidarity Alliance and Climate Solidarity Levies;
- repurposing the multilateral climate sessions;
- future arrangements for intergovernmental meetings under the UNFCCC;
- the COP30 Action Agenda; and
- an app developed for COP30 that translates documents into more than 80 languages.

Of particular interest and timeliness, the presentation on the ICJ advisory opinion, delivered by Kate Cook, a barrister at Matrix Chambers in London, addressed how the opinion might impact on the climate negotiations. Another session that provoked lively debate explored ways in which the climate negotiations could be repurposed to be more streamlined, effective, and focused on implementation. On the JTWP, one issue that was debated was whether a new mechanism was needed to help developing countries implement the work programme.

Liliam Chagas and Mario Mottin, representing the incoming Brazilian COP Presidency, presented on the COP30 Action Agenda, which is based on six Axes (energy transition, biodiversity, agriculture and food systems, building resilience, social development, and the cross-cutting issue of enablers and accelerators), 30 key objectives, and a granary of solutions. Chagas also introduced a a virtual assistant, which was developed based on official documents released by the UNFCCC, approved IPCC reports, and articles by the Brazilian

technical team. It provides reliable formation on topics related to the negotiations at both COP30 in Belém and previous COPs in more than 50 languages.

The ecbi Director began the 20th anniversary celebration dinner in the Sheldonian Theatre on 28 August with some reminiscences on ecbi@20: Looking back. John Simpson CBE, BBC News World Affairs Editor, delivered remarks, in which he kindly said: "Professor Benito Müller and his co-hort are doing some of the most important work on the planet. It is important that they remember that and keep on bringing real passion to their work and never allow it to just be hum-drum and ordinary, because it is not."

The Head of ecbi's Fellowship and Training Programme, Kishan Kumarsingh, Trinidad and Tobago, welcoming participants to the Seminar, explained how fellows met for two and a half days prior to the Seminar to collect views and perspectives on the issues in order to present to their European partners. He asked participants to be candid during the discussions.

GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION

Xolisa Ngwadla, consultant from South Africa, presented on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), and priority areas discussed during the Fellowship Colloquium. He noted that 490 indicators were presented by the experts, based on a two-year process for developing indicators for the targets. This followed the first report, which had 9000 indicators based on the synthesis by the Secretariat, with the number whittled down to 490 by the SBs. He explained that further guidance was then given to the experts that the mandate outlined in decision 2/CMA.5 was to finalize and adopt a set of indicators to guide work under the GGA, with the experts coming back with no more than 100 indicators, by COP30.

He also mentioned lack of clarity on the split between paragraphs 9 and 10 of decision 2/CMA.5. He clarified that paragraph 9 addresses national circumstances and progress by Parties and stakeholders toward specified targets specified, while paragraph 10 discusses global collective progress in achieving the collective goal. He said some indicators should include means of implementation, including on access, quality, and provision of adaptation finance based on needs and gaps. He explained that while discussions at SB62 were contentious, they managed to find common ground in the conclusions. He acknowledged that it is easy to get stuck in the process of developing and adopting indicators (which must be done at COP30) and said we need to determine to what end we are developing these indicators.

He emphasized the importance of enabling the assessment of progress on Article 7.1 of the Paris Agreement. He asked to what extent the indicators presented support the purpose of the framework, which is to assess progress in achieving the GGA.

Ngwadla asked participants what could make up part of the decision at CMA7, and what do we envisage to be reflected there. He said we are treating indicators for paragraphs 9 and 10 differently. As paragraph 9 focuses on national circumstances and priorities, there would be a suite of indicators that Parties could choose from that align with their national priorities. Paragraph 10, on the other hand, would have indicators from which we could glean the information needed to assess collective progress toward achieving the GGA.

He explained that we must work to advance the development of simplified and consistent methodologies, including tools that will support Parties in, for example, creating an inventory of impacts. He queried how to have a consistent information stream that can help the global community. He highlighted the need to develop

capacity to use the indicators and support reporting. He said adoption of a GGA decision should include language on doubling adaptation finance.

During the ensuing discussion, Professor Müller explained that if we agree 1.5°C is acceptable, that will have different associated risks; however, if we overshoot, the risks will get worse. He said the goal in that case should be to get the risk profile back to what it should have been under 1.5°C. He highlighted, for example, that the percentage of people vulnerable to flooding is something that is easy to aggregate

One developed country said this gets us into the modalities of a future decision that is weeks away and wondered how this links to the structures we already have. For example, she mentioned National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs), and National Communications, noting many tools already provide nationally appropriate information on adaptation. On the reporting requirements of the indicators themselves, she asked how we can do this without adding new reporting burdens through the use of existing instruments.

Regarding the synthesis report, she asked what we are looking for when assessing collective progress, and whether this is the same report the Secretariat is supposed to produce. She suggested possibly linking the report; otherwise, we are adding another report to the "state of adaptation" report and, potentially, another layer of reporting. She reiterated strengthening existing tools, which was one of the purposes of the GGA work to begin with.

She explained that the adaptation baseline could be based on a risk acceptance level and temperature, noting, for example, that a hospital would not want to accept any risk. She said temperature is pivotal but not for determining the baseline on adaptation. She noted that we do not have a lot of the "information" that is required by the indicators, and that there are limits to what the GGA framework can and cannot do.

Müller recalled that Ngwadla is the father of the GGA, which was intended for countries that lack the means to contribute to mitigation but can contribute through adaptation. He said the intention is not for every country to report on every indicator and that countries can choose what they report.

Participants further discussed what could be contained in a decision and what to do with the report. One developing country noted the value of this converstaion to help understand the views expressed during the SBs, when discussing the contribution of agenda items and how to guide the work of experts. On whether to include ODA, he noted the risk of double counting or counting finance that is not really climate finance. He described the concern is including finance that is not really climate finance, noting this is a controversial issue.

A developed country said he did not foresee additional reporting, which would already be reported on by those who receive the finance. He said all his country's climate finance is considered ODA and assumed that most donors have and use fairly standardized guidelines. He asked who should be reporting on the indicators.

A developing country said the issue is not about who should report, because whomever does adaptation implementation in a local area would report. He added that additional reporting is not mandatory and improved learning will lead to better measurement.

Another developing country said reporting is already happening in the BTRs and, reiterating that none of it is mandatory, hoped it will enrich and guide Parties to provide information or to further detail what they are already providing. He said more guidance is needed on what we are providing, and the Secretariat will also have more parameters for the report. He commended efforts to bring down the number of indicators as managing

490 indicators would be difficult. He explained that some of the more global indicators would be easy to aggregate and could be integrated within planning dimensions.

A developed country remarked that indicators are a technical issue, attracting political attention to something with metrics is not easy, the purpose of indicators is to guide adaptation action, and efforts are needed to accelerate progress on adaptation. He stressed the importance of looking at guidance received for means of implementation indicators. He said when developed countries provide climate finance, it is in the form of ODA, and ODA markers when reporting do focus on adaptation action.

Another developing country said it was not that complicated: we agree on targets and adopt indicators and a set of methodologies. He said we should be in better position when we do the synthesis report and be able to determine whether we are making progress. He added that when we report on tracking progress, countries can choose what indicators they wish to use. He added that many are already doing this work, and urged looking at some of the NDCs. He explained that we are trying to simplify the system, further work on simplified methodologies is needed, and while support is required, that is not new. He said resources should be put aside to understand data collection, and local-level capacity must be improved to have clarity when doing the synthesis and to determine whether we are making progress or not. He added that we have all the tools and indicators are required to do better for the next GST, to ensure we are making progress collectively as much on adaptation as on mitigation. A developed country said we want to track progress toward the GGA and, while said we have different indicators and challenges, we will not be able to determine our collective progress if countries are not able to determine their national progress,

Ngwadla again mentioned the differences between paragraphs 9 and 10, with the former being highly dependent on national circumstances and the latter relating to the overall purpose of the framework itself and requiring more information for its indicators. He said:

- some Parties have adopted national legislation on adaptation;
- "a certain burden" comes with indicators;
- guidance is needed for the Secretariat to produce its report;
- the problem is financing the plans;
- acceptance levels determines how policies will respond; and
- percentages, such as % of GDP lost, can be aggregated across countries

A developed country acknowledged further work is required to develop methodologies, and asked whether we need to hand the process over entirely to experts. In addition to negotiating the indicators themselves, he explained that we must negotiate how to use the indicators and how they intersect. He stressed that some will be complicated and politically sensitive. He also hoped that concerns regarding ODA could be addressed before the COP.

Another developed country commented that "negotiating indicators is a dangerous process" and experts must be involved, noting the aim is to accelerate adaptation action. He said: sometimes you want to do good but then miss the opportunity; we must identify gaps and opportunities for adaptation finance; and we must find ways to get the private sector more involved.

ICJ ADVISORY OPINION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

In a special session, Kate Cook, a barrister at Matrix Chambers in London, addressed how the recent International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the obligations of states regarding climate change

might impact on the international climate negotiations and obligations under the Paris Agreement. She noted that the Marshall Islands was involved in the modeling exercise and preparing the opinion, which is 140 pages long. She recommended that everyone look at the comments by the different judges, who presented a unanimous opinion. She explained that critical comments did not mean they opposed the opinion.

Addressing the implications of the opinion, she explained that, technically, advisory opinions are not legally binding. However, she said the ICJ is under the UN charter and its opinions carry weight. She underscored that this is the first advisory opinion on climate change, is authoritative, has direct bearing on the negotiations, and says a lot about COP decisions and the legal impact they can have.

Another implication of the opinion, she underscored, is in litigation, noting the ICJ has addressed many relevant issues, such as funding for an offshore gas project in Mozambique, which an NGO from the UK fought.

She said: the ICJ opinion can help exert pressure on governments and others on actions taken including on fossil fuel investment/production; international law looks more coherent following this opinion then it did before; the opinion rejected arguments that climate treaties "take up all space"; and international law is aligned with the 1.5°C temperature goal.

She discussed: how to reconcile the demands for climate justice with continuing gaps relating to emissions, production, adaptation, and finance; the obligations of states are under international law; and the consequences of breaching those obligations. She said the court drew heavily on reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and submissions made by states that discussed the impacts of climate change in their own countries, and discussed historical differences between emissions from LDCs and SIDS and others. She said every increment of temperature rise matters and will make things worse and the opinion is embedded in the science and in the context of the IPCC reports.

She reiterated that Paris Agreement Article 2.1(c) sets out the temperature goal, which the court says is 1.5°C, the goal for interpreting other obligations, and the scientifically based consensus target under the Paris Agreement. She explained that the focus on the temperature goal informs other goals, related to, for example, the global carbon budget, pathways, and overshoot.

On equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), she said the court adopted a spectrum approach when looking at levels of development. She mentioned some pushback by individual judges, with one referring to the spectrum language as "misleading and confusing" and another lamenting the opinion failed to pay more attention to the vulnerabilities of LDCs.

She described enhanced due diligence, whereby stringent rules and measures are applied with a certain level of vigilance. For example, she underscored the importance of precaution, scientific and technical information, and relevant rules and international standards. She said that due diligence varies depending on states abilities, although enhanced due diligence is the standard.

On NDCs, she reiterated that the procedural obligations are binding, but how strong the obligation of the NDC itself varies. However, she underscored a limit to the discretion, and that a country cannot say that an NDC is "purely at one's own discretion" and it comes back to the temperature goal.

Cook noted that: the court could have said more about adaptation and finance flows; some Parties are not on track and countries are not delivering on their NDCs; and developed countries should continue to take the lead, but all states are under obligation to do something, taking into account CBDR-RC and equity.

She explained that COP decisions can be relevant to the interpretation of treaties, and also inform due diligence standards, which can be found in COP decisions. She discussed whether the opinion would make it more difficult to negotiate and adopt COP decisions, and mentioned customary international law obligations.

In response to a developed country's question about collective goals, Cook asked what a breach would look like in the real world, noting that the fact that there are collective goals does not take away from individual goals.

A developing country noted that treaty negotiations take years and that COP decisions sometimes happen in the middle of the night, and said Parties might be more cautious in their approach to adopting decisions following the opinion. Another commented that we are not changing the legal nature of COP decisions, which are soft law and asked if this does give the decisions a new legal status. Cook said COP decisions can represent international standards and customary international law, the court took note of COP decisions in the advisory opinion, and the opinion goes beyond what the treaty says.

She explained that paragraph 307, on customary law, prevention, and cooperation, might require Parties to go beyond the treaty if harming the climate system. She also mentioned the opinion underscores the connection between climate change and human rights.

She emphsized that paragraph 378 of the opinion reinforces the principle of non-refoulment, an international law principle that prohibits states from returning a person to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened due to persecution or other forms of harm.

She noted that there are consequences of breaching obligation, the court stated that general rules apply, including those on state responsibility, and failure of a state to take appropriate action to protect the climate may constitute internationally wrongful act (IWA) attributable to that state. She said attribution is not an obstacle and can be assigned, but one must show harm has been suffered and a direct causal nexus. While tenuous, she said it is possible to claim damages. On attribution, one developing country asked about removing a natural sink (flaring). Cook said the opinion does not offset what is being done.

Cook explained that the temporal dimension remains an unresolved issue that the court did not address, including when it was known that emissions would lead to climate change, and asked what is done with acts that are not prohibited by international law. She said the court rejected applying the rule to consider specific situation of specially affected states and mentioned that sea level rise is governed by primary rules.

She said two categories of obligations (conduct and results) can give rise to an IWA, and that not preparing an NDC would represent a breach of due diligence and an IWA. A case could also be brought to the court if an NDC is no aligning with 1.5°C.

In the opinion, Judge Georg Nolte said that "If this AO …seen as having identified a way for States…not satisfied with the political process under the PA to achieve their goals through litigation, including through claims for compensation, unintended effects are likely to follow. The collective process is fragile, and stakes are high… If, on the other hand, the AO is understood as reinforcing commitment of States to tackle climate change through legally framed forms of political and administrative co-operation for which litigation plays a complementary role, …could make a lasting contribution to global efforts to address …challenge of climate change".

A developed country asked about countries engaging in litigation, with Cook mentioning interesting ongoing litigation in South Africa. She said the opinion is bringing us closer, and individual cases will have to grapple with more difficult questions.

Other issues addressed included: relationship to other treaty regimes, such as investment; relationship between states and private actions, with the state not being responsible for the actions of a company, but are responsible for regulation, issuing exploration licenses, etc.; the opinion being perceived differently in different places; how the opinion impacts on non-state actors and non-Parties.

BAKU TO BELÉM ROADMAP TO 1.3T

The Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T aims to scale up climate finance for developing countries, supporting both the reduction of emissions and the implementation of NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), through the use of various instruments, including subsidies, concessional finance, fiscal measures, and multilateral initiatives.

Tina Stege, Climate Envoy, Marshall Islands, presented on the Baku to Belém Roadmap, discussing some of the issues and concerns raised by the Fellows. Explaining that it came out of the NCQG decision in Baku, she clarified that the Roadmap is new and, thus, there are still more questions than answers. Describing the Roadmap, she said it involves all actors working together from the public and private sectors to scale climate finance for climate action to USD 1.3 trillion by 2035. In addition, a final report is expected in October and a high-level event will convene on 10 November just prior to the COP.

Regarding the process and what happens to the report, she wondered whether its recommendations will be taken up and what space will be provided for follow up. She said that the Marshall Islands was asked to join the Circle of Finance Ministers, an initiative spearheaded by the Brazilian Government to discuss multiple climate finance mechanisms and support specific negotiations at COP 30. She noted that 30 countries are providing comments on five areas, the process is ongoing and a second draft has been produced. She said each country will bring their own context, and experts will meet prior to COP30 to provide input, She said quite a bit of work has already been undertaken, and submissions draw on this work in the three years in the lead up to the NCQG.

She said the Fellows discussed:

- a greater emphasis on the provision of public finance;
- milestones for early delivery of USD 300 billion to scale up USD 1.3 trillion;
- tripling outflows from the operating entities and other funds;
- replenishment to enhance ambition;
- balance between adaptation and mitigation and addressing loss and damage finance, a gap in the NCQG decision that the report has the opportunity to address; and
- focusing on quality, transparency, and accountability of finance provided, including on improving access.

Participants then split into two breakout groups to provide the opportunity to discuss some of the details in greater detail. Frode Neergaard, former negotiator from Denmark and ecbi Chief Advisor, moderated one of the breakout groups, while Kishan Kumarsingh moderated the other.

The groups discussed expectations for the Roadmap, and whether the Presidency has any plans for this process.

Issues raised during the discussions included that:

- it is up to Parties on how to reflect and/or react to the report, which depends on the appetite of Parties and the Presidency's consultations;
- governments were keen to have a conversation on all the issues, but too many issues are sensitive, and the only way to deal with that and have a successful COP is to talk to everyone;
- the Presidency would hold consultations in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly that may continue during the Precop in October in Brazil;
- it was unclear how to engage on the Roadmap and whether Parties can submit views and have them reflected in the report;
- the Presidency's consultations could also address other issues not mandated for negotiations;
- Parties could put forward their ideas and suggestions on how these reports can be better used in the COP context; and
- the Roadmap is aimed at all actors and scaling up all sources of finance, and must send a clear message to outside actors.

A developed country asked about what would be useful to have as an outcome on the at COP30 and what is the relation to the NDC gap.

A developing country requested that a Roadmap clearly bring out the operationalization of Article 9.1, mentioned the high cost of capital and that the report should address that, and said it should show how to better mobilize public finance. She also asked how to reflect on this once the report is out as the process is unclear, and said experts will also have to give recommendations and that Parties should be given a chance to reflect on the final report. She called for a guarantee with respect to how public sources from developed countries can be unlocked.

Another developing country said they their submission emphasizes that USD 300 billion must be delivered by the public sector to be used as leverage by the private sector. He said blended finance instruments are needed for the USD 300 million to crowd in private finance, which must be on the table to derisk the private sector. He mentioned positive cases in Ghana and Bhutan, which had projects on the ground where investment is going in and raising ambition, highlighting that direct investment must go to countries that need it most, and that we need all hands on deck to scale to USD 1.3T. He also stressed access for developing countries needs to be improved.

Several developing countries reiterated that incentivization of the private sector can only come from public finance. One said that even with carbon credits, the money is not flowing, asked what the "secret sauce" is to ensure that money will flow, and wondered what is needed before the private sector "gets the message".

Another developing country lamented that the process was rushed, and said we must have trust going forward, and all views must be aired and considered. He also stressed that "climate finance must go for climate action" He asked what will happen to the report as there is no space to discuss what to do with it, and lamented that "nice reports often come out without a mandate to go forward".

Other participants mentioned that: the USD 1.3 trillion is important as it sends a signal to all actors and that conversations are also happening under the Article 2.1(c) discussion.

Developing countries emphasized the need to ensure sufficient money for adaptation; wondered how to reflect this and in the report and Roadmap; suggested the Roadmap could possibly have short-term and long-term goals; and reiterated the need for balance and that the doubling of adaptation finance has not been realized.

A developed country emphasized the need for enabling environments, and that part of the outcome is being used to put in place policies that will attract investment.

Reiterating that the USD 1.3 trillion must not only address resources within the UNFCCC but be broader as well, a developing country noted tracks put forward by the COP30 Presidency with a focus on a context beyond the UNFCCC and on getting finance ministers and economists on board.

A developed country recognized the importance of public finance for adaptation, and noted dialogue with private sector and derisking. He asked about the milestones for seeing the balance of mitigation and adaptation. Another reiterated the centrality of public finance and its important role in unlocking private finance, which needs to be "crowded in". He mentioned innovative ways to unlock the finance, including pension funds and matchmaking.

A developed country representative noted difficulties in teasing out a balance between adaptation and mitigation, noting it is not 50-50 and that more funding for mitigation must be leveraged from the private sector. He mentioned: financial regulation and what countries can do internally and to promote dialogue; and the need for innovative ways to bring more finance, such as levies for climate action; and lessons learned from different initiatives, such as those in the G20.

Suggesting the GCF could act as a guarantor so more private money could go to adapation, a developing country said projects need to be investment ready, and the funds are there but are not going in right direction. Others said ambition is not just for mitigation, and mentioned hydropower lost to floods.

A developed country explained that the Roadmap is a rare opportunity and that financial instruments should take into account gender and vulnerable groups.

Another developed country said we cannot tell the private sector to invest, but the private sector will base its decisions on the regulatory systems of specific countries. He reiterated that the private sector is risk averse, which is more of a development issue, and that development finance can help to build enabling environments.

A developing country supported a report with a strong focus on public finance, that rationalizes how much goes to mitigation and how much goes to adaptation. He said since there is no agenda item, there is no requirement to have a decision. Given the release date of the report, he lamented lack of time for deep discussions before the COP. The moderatorss noted convergence on need to catalyze private finance, and the ongoing discussion on what is expected in terms of outcomes.

GST PROCESS FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT

Adão Soares Barbosa, Special Envoy and Ambassador at Large for Climate Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Timor-Leste, presented on the GST, asking how the GST process can be designed to truly serve the Paris Agreement in achieving its objectives in a holistic manner. He emphasized:

- anchoring the GST in clear objectives by considering equity and CBDR-RC, including through, for example, transparent and fair benchmarks;
- anchoring GST outputs to clear, Paris aligned benchmarks and deadlines, using the UAE Consensus numbers as the yardstick in every GST cycle with every GST conclusion restating the gap against these benchmarks; and

- fully integrating the architecture, and designing inputs/analysis/outputs to interlock across adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, and means of implementation;
- upgrading inputs for achieving proper decision making processes, such as core datasets, independent analytics, and dedicated vulnerability windows;
- hard wire finance, technology, and capacity building into the GST loop;
- elevating equity and capacity, such as including an "equitable pathways annex" where Parties can explain how CBDR-RC and capacities shape their NDC updates;
- running the technical assessment like a performance audit that includes gap quantification, attribution of drivers, a feasible fix list, and an equity dashboard;
- turning the consideration of outputs into a package of mandates;
- sector roadmaps with dated milestones that are simple and verifiable, for example including an annex in the GST decision with global waypoints that Parties can echo in NDCs related to transport, buildings, electrification, and land and the ocean;
- a comprehensive GGA framework, with core indicators, country-level ladders, and a data compact;
- finance, including from how much to who pays more for what and by when, implementing Article 9.1, and minimum grant shares for LDCs and SIDS; and
- practical tools and templates to include in the GST annex.

He then discussed how areas of divergence can be bridged. On equity and CBDR-RC, he stressed:

- GST outcomes must focus on joint opportunities for transformation rather than burden-sharing alone;
- an equity lens where outcomes highlight different national circumstances, capacities, and development priorities;
- differentiated pathways, which provide flexibility for LDCs and SIDS in mitigation while emphasizing support from developed countries; and
- support-oriented framing that emphasizes finance, technology transfer, and capacity building as enablers of action for developing countries

On balancing means of implementation with adaptation and mitigation, he underscored the need for a holistic framing that acknowledges that ambition will only be raised if developing countries receive predictable support.

Regarding building trust through transparency and dialogue, he stressed ensuring inclusive and participatory dialogues that give equal weight to developing country voices, and developing balanced narratives that recognize both ambition (all Parties must act) and fairness (not all Parties can act equally).

On recognizing historical responsibility, he mentioned: acknowledging developed countries have contributed the most to cumulative greenhouse gas emissions; integrating historical emissions data into the GST synthesis to ensure fairness; framing historical responsibility not only as a burden but also as a driver of leadership in finance, technology, and capacity building; and encouraging developed countries to scale up ambition in line with their past contributions.

With respect to transitioning away from fossil fuels, he underscored the need to offer technical dialogues on sectoral pathways that respect different starting points and resource endowments.

Soares Barbosa suggested using structured dialogues to surface common ground. Technical dialogues, he explained, can unpack evidence and highlight shared concerns where Parties' interests converge, while political dialogues can then focus on solutions-oriented narratives, supported by technical findings.

He then described potential areas that require political resolution. For example, on how explicit and rapid the fossil fuel transition should be, he supported moving from "transition away" to more specific phase-out/phase-down formulations, definitions of "unabated," and timelines for coal, oil, and gas in line with the 1.5°C pathway.

On equity and differentiation, and how they are reflected in the GST outcome, he mentioned historical responsibility and capacity gaps versus forward looking with universal application, as an example of what needs to be decided.

On climate finance and NCQG, he highlighted: adequacy, predictability, and scale of financial support; questions about who contributes, how much, and under what mechanisms all require political bargains; and disagreement over whether emerging economies should also contribute.

Regarding fossil fuel phaseout and transition pathways, he mentioned phase down versus phase out. With respect to adaptation ambition and support, he explained that political choices are needed to balance global guidance with national circumstances.

On loss and damage, he highlighted contentious issues related to loss and damage as a distinct pillar from adaptation and mitigation, and links to the operationalization and replenishment of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage. He said ministers must decide on scale, predictability, and innovative sources, that are beyond standing arrangements.

On operationalizing the GGA with measurable, reportable outcomes, he highlighted as a political issue the need to agree on a core set of adaptation indicators and targets that are meaningful yet flexible. Regarding response measures and just transition, he highlighted recognition of the economic and social impacts of low-carbon transition on developing countries, and calls for just transition strategies that address equity and fairness.

Participants then again held discussions in breakout groups. During the breakout sessions, a developed country said we "need to take a step back from what we need to achieve for COP30". She asked how we follow up on Decision 1/CMA.5 (Outcome of the first GST) through the UAE Dialogue. Regarding the scope of the conversation, she said Barbosa's presentation was too detailed and included too much. She asked how we follow up on implementation of things we have agreed on and how to ensure credibility of process. She asked: what will the follow up process deliver; will there be political input; do we need a decision; and how long will the process last? She said some Parties want specific recommendations, and we should have more context regarding where we are in the run up to Belém.

Another believed the presentation was a bit out of synch regarding what eupposed to do at the COP, including what comes out of the GST dialogue and how it is addressed. He said implementing the GST decision and enhancing implementation are key. Disconnect between track was identified as an issue.

A developed country asked what is necessary for the discussion to take place, stressing it is not about redoing the GST. She said we need to move forward on scope, NDCs, the energy transition, look at where resources are available, gaps, etc.

Participants also addressed: whether the discussion now should be on key modalities or beyond that; what is going to come out in terms of messages to the public; each country has to look at its own energy transition pathway;

Another developed country mentioned that two stories from COP30 include problems with logistics, accommodation and the road being built through the Amazon, and the US pulling out of negotiations.

A developed country asked how and where we follow up on the GST, and said the longer the outcome is prolonged the less sufficient the outcome will be, noting some are intentionally prolonging and resisting an outcome.

He noted the GST has a list of indicators, including how many countries have included, for example, phase out and renewable targets in their NDCs. He asked how we can better support each other. On the second GST, he said "we should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time", that is focus on following up on the first GST and looking at modalities for the second GST2.

A developing country reiterated that the GST is a collective instrument in how Parties are progressing in implementing the Paris Agreement, and that we should use the GST as a reference for more transparency.

She acknowledged that COP30 might not result in a bold message to the world, but hoped that modalities and scope of the GST can be agreed. For example, she said that perhaps agreement can be reached on modalities and reflected in a report, which would feed into the next GST. She stressed consultations would help underscore the importance of weaving the technical issues discussed within the process with the broader issues and message that that will be conveyed to the outside world.

In response to a question on whether a cover decision could cover some of this, the same developing country a scope of modalities could be presented. Another reminded participants that one year remainds to conclude the UAE Dialogue. A developed country said that it was a "tall order" to expect that procedural decision would bring in other elements.

One highlighted challenges with bundling everything together, as this create unease among some Parties. A developing country said that a decision must advance on making improvements for the next GST, which should be separate from the GST1 follow up. He said his country's NDC explains how we are taking the GST forward, which is different from what is needed for next GST. He lamented that this process already took two years. He said the focus in the future must be to have something that makes sense.

Another country said some were opposed to the overall follow up to the UAE Dialogue, noting the mitigation follow up was the GST dialogue, adaptation follow up is the GGA, and finance follow up is the NCQG. A key challenge, many agreed, is how to convey to the public that the COP is relevant.

She said that, thus far, only 29 new NDCs have been submitted, the numbers do not add up, and the proposed MWP digital platform could address this gap. Regarding the JTWP, she said that some want to address the energy transition but the current draft does not address this.

Participants discussed: how to communicate and make the process relevant to people; the need for more proactive engagement from the Presidency; and the doubling of adaptation finance is supposed to be delivered by 2025.

A developed country expressed concern about the markets, signaled that countries are being asked to go a bit further, and mentioned an active offer of technical assistance and support.

A developing country highlighted that the objective is to translate to broader public what we are doing and how the system is bringing solutions to the world. Political work, she said, is being undertaken in parallel. She cautioned against letting the political issues crowd out the mandated negotiations, acknowleding that the latte is not "sexy". She said the aim at COP30 is to deal with both specifics and the bigger picture, and to ty to have a transcendental component that can convey a broad message to public.

Another developing country stressed the importance of providing clarity (perhaps through a letter) as soon as possible on how and where some of these issues will be dealt with to enable delegations to prepare.

JUST TRANSITION WORK PROGRAMME

Maria Cristina Cifuentes Cifuentes, Colombia, and Dinah Pheladi Thalakgale, South Africa, both of whom are developing country negotiators for the JTWP, discussed envisaged outcomes for the JTWP based on discussion among the Fellows. They said it would be useful for a CMA decision to send some key messages to Parties and other stakeholders, including, for example:

- that the dialogues should take up agreed elements more holistically and reaffirm the balance between national and international dimensions in any outcomes;
- informal summaries of the dialogues (and key messages in a CMA decision) should be more balanced to address the agreed elements more holistically, with the outcomes currently not reflected in the existing draft decision text we have.
- indicate the direction of travel, for example, keeping 1.5°C alive;
- a discussion of 'enabling conditions' for just transition vis-à-vis economic diversification, and a clear link with the GST;
- integrate fairness and equity as part of the key messages;
- means of implementation are key for developing countries, and providing guidance to operating entities of the Financial Mechanism and inviting international financial institutions to support Parties in implementing their just transition plans should be considered; and
- the importance of international cooperation for unlocking opportunities in transitions focused on implementation scenarios and issues related to the content.

They said these topics should be discussed holistically, and mentioned that the fourth dialogue focused on the energy transition.

The presentation from the Fellows also stressed the importance of reflecting the mandate itself which is clear on scope and modalities. They highlighted reducing inequality among and between countries, sustainable development, and eradicating poverty.

They stressed the importance of operationalising the JTWP, which includes:

- strengthening current modalities;
- providing guidance to the constituted bodies of the UNFCCC and sending signals to the international cooperation ecosystem to mainstream just transition in their work;
- considering establishing institutional arrangements to support and coordinate the JTWP's work across the constituted bodies of the UNFCCC; and
- considering developing a guidance framework with clear functions as defined in the agreed elements.

They highlighted the need for clarity and coherence, more coordination, and a space to consider how to integrate the JTWP within the UNFCCC and to send a signal beyond the Convention. They lamented the lack

of clarity within the regime itself for how to consider implementation of the JTWP. Suggestions, they noted, included via a network, platform, or guidance. They said the real purpose behind having an implementation instrument is to ensure more support. Thus, they stressed: defining the scope and type of instrument; linkages with other negotiating tracks; how they can work cohesively and effectively to facilitate the just transition through enhanced means of implementation and multi-sectoral approaches; possibly finding support through other funds; and the importance of having joint analysis with other items.

The Fellows also expressed concern with unilateral trade measures and the cross border impacts of climate measures, saying unilateral measures, notably trade barriers, are a disenabler for just transition and consideration should be given to reduce if not mitigate their impacts, particularly on developing countries. They explained this could be considered in the context of how they will impact different just transition pathways. They noted this is also within the scope of the discussion on response measures, some barriers are beyond the scope, and options for unlocking them should be explored.

They raised the issue of what a COP discussion could look like, possible solutions to explore, how to resolve divergent issues, what a good outcome would look like given the JTWP review at COP31, and what could realistically be achieved between COP30 and COP31 on the JTWP.

A developed country speaker spoke about the issue in the context of response measures, and discussions within the Katowice Committee of Experts on the Impacts of the Implementation of Response Measures (KCI). She noted procedural conclusions in the form of an informal note with no status, technical work on response measures, and the fact that the JTWP was mentioned. She said the KCI has been dealing with cross-border impacts, such as changes in price and economic impacts, and will be discussing the impacts of climate change measures. She noted agreement on a new four-year work plan, and some work already having been done on cross-border impacts of mitigation measures and response measures. She asked what the added value of discussing this issue in the JTWP, saying there was no need to duplicate work. Another developed country said that the JTWP does not overlap with adaptation or mitigation, asking why it is in the Paris Agreement.

A developing country countered that just transition, like technology issues, are important for the implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures. However, he said that his country would not be in a position to continue with just transition without resources as we would then not be able to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. He said the impact of undertaking a just transition and achieving his country's NDC is highly relevant to the discussions, and the sooner we start working together, the better position we will be in to close the implementation gap.

The presenters said that just transition will mean different things for different Parties and that it is the lens through which you achieve your pathway to ensure you are closing the gap. They acknowledged that proposing an instrument risks overlap, and that is why we need to define the scope.

During the JTWP breakout groups, a developing country said we should not only be looking at it from a finance angle or a mitigation angle. Mentioning recent flooding and landslides, he said we should be discussing how to make people's lives better after they lose their land. He said countries must be given flexibility, and that implementing our NAPs and NDCs will be expensive and means of implementation must be embedded in the programme.

A developed country questioned the need for the JTWP as it is already integrated into the domestic approach of his country, which is working on the transition through social dialogue and labour unions, among others. He asked how we can show that the transition is just, noted the structures already in place, like the SCF and

Adaptation Committee, and explained that guidance must be coordinated as it cannot come from everywhere. He questioned whether we should be adding more work programmes when we are trying to reform the system. He said as a donor if our development partners are not prioritizing just transition, we will not finance them.

Another developed country agreed with the previous speaker, and emphasized building on existing structures and financial mechanisms that actually work. He said the EU is the biggest donor to adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

One developed country emphasized the need to keep the JTWP practical, saying if too many things are included, we will not have a decision at COP30. She said her country is working on a new climate target at home, where just transition is integrated, and mentioned the transplanting of an entire fishing community. She wondered how to design and have measures that are country specific; said we must ensure carbon pricing does not increase differences; and opined that equity has been discussed for years, the JTWP will not solve the issue, and the political content must be lowered. She noted difficulties with defining "fairness" and said we must be practical. She added that if the entry point is to solve climate justice and fairness across the world, the JTWP will go nowhere, reiterating that no one size fits all.

Mentioning the carbonization element, she said we have to talk about the energy transition. The "hot potato", she added, is unilateral trade measures, and opined that cross border impacts can be positive and negative, mentioning the promotion of clean technology as a positive impact. She said that the EU does not have a problem discussing climate and trade but that terminology can be problematic.

A developing country said key messages from the dialogue included a strong mitigation focus, and the recent dialogue focusing on energy transition was not balanced enough. He said the debate in Belém will be how to expand and balance the list of what to include in the work programme. On a proposed institutional mechanism, he reiterated that one side supports using existing institutions, while the other says guidance is needed as is a mechanism to help design just transition policies. A coordinating mechanism was raised and the fact that the JTWP will be reviewed in 2026. He hat the issue of an institutional mechanism will be discussed at the COP. He agreed that there should be some guidance framework to land on.

On unilateral measures, he said some language could be finessed, and wondered where we talk about operationalising the language from Dubai on energy transition. He said there is no space to discuss it so we are trying to insert it everywhere, and requested clarity as to where this will be discussed, suggesting possibly consultations.

He said it will be a struggle to keep 1.5 and energy energy transition, and expected pushback in Belén to delete them. He hoped these issues could be discussed in a neutral manner, and called for "thinking outside of the box". He said that non-party stakeholders are looking at the decision, and we do not want to disappoint them.

Another developing country agreed that the JTWP has a become a "Christmas tree" with everyone wanting to put on their ornament and that the equity issue will not be solved. She said the people are scared, and a space is needed to provide the assurance that we are working to reduce emissions and adapt.

She said she is hearing from civil society that they are emphasising the JTWP to bring justice to the system, and there are external expectations to deliver on this.

She said the issue is too important to only be in the form of a work programme, which, diminishes its importance, noting that if we do not get it right, there will be a lot of frustration. She reiterated that the process should have a space for countries to design their just transition programmes.

She highlighted the climate-ocean nexus as an example, saying fisherman will have to make a living in some other way as the Ocean warms. She said we must try to agree on some mechanism that goes beyond the work programme, but not a new body that adds additional costs. She said we must capacitate those who need it and bring hope to those who are scared.

Other comments included that:

- oil and gas workers will be looking to us to ensure we speak to them;
- it would be a mistake to conflate our responses;
- it would be hard to have an outcome that does not talk about just transition;
- there needs to be some place to go when seeking guidance;
- a clear mapping of what already exists is necessary;
- the trade issues is very sensitive and the terminology is unclear; and
- all of our policies are unilateral and we are concerned with those with negative cross-border impact.

Another developing country said that institutionalisation can work and a framework under the UNFCCC would be a step forward. He suggested finding linkages with an agenda item that gives guidance to the Financial Mechanism. He agreed there is an expectation from civil society. He said the MWP is always discussing transition solutions on how countries can address all these issues are needed.

Another highlighted the need to keep the JTWP practical; said the energy transition is an equity issue in terms of its impact on our country; explained that having a JTWP depends on the function of the programme as now there no clear objective, which is everything is being introduced into the programme.

Ultimately, we need a common agreement on the issue, a clear objective, and what we expect from it. Developing countries, it was reiterated, require concrete guidance and enabling conditions, as well as money, to implement the Programme.

MITIGATION WORK PROGRAMME

During the session on the MWP, Brazil's proposal for a digital platform was discussed and participants said more information on what it would do is needed, with one suggesting that such a platform might be better placed under technology.

Other points raised referred to:

- key messages coming out of the dialogues could feed into the decision;
- guidance must be acceptable to all;
- • based on the dialogues, new targets should be avoided;
- • views on continuing and improving on the work programme should be considered;
- • redundancy in the dialogues should be avoided; and
- • clarity on what to do with the NDC Synthesis Report on ambition gaps and clarity from the incoming Presidency on whether there will be a space to discuss it are needed.

A developing country highlighted consultations by the COP Presidency for issues that lack a proper agenda item, to discuss whether they will be brought into the process or not and if so how.

A developed country reiterated a misalignment between what is asked for and delivery, and better balance in needed among Parties. She said that only six developed country Parties are participating and 104 developing countries, and noted stong participation from China. ADDIS

Another said both just transition and the MWP require holistic approaches. The MWP, in particular, requires a clear message on NDCs, as we need to send a signal to the world that we are serious about mitigation. Another developed country lamented we are not delivering the results we hope to deliver, and that business actors see opportunities where they can contribute nationally and globally.

Participants raised issues related to: innovatation to create new solutions to meet demands from across the world; the different needs of each country; addressing mitigation more broadly at COP30, not just the MWP; addressing emissions from agriculture in the mwp; looking at all sources and gases; and the Co-Chairs helping by teashing out key messages.

On the digital platform, one said they were not convinced on the proposal as it distracts from the substance and we need to discuss structural barriers and solutions.

A developing country echoed support for a space to talk about NDCs. On closing the mitigation gap, he hoped the report could tease out practical solutions and best practices based on the dialogues.

A developed country said we need a better understanding of where sensitivities lie, and to tease out high-level recommendations and practices, and that the dialogue in Panama was good, commonalities on drivers and possible solutions to deforestation, tease out reflections especially as this is the first COP to take place in the Amazon. She mentioned forests and nature based solutions (NbS), adaptation in forests to climate change, looking at best practices and sustainable value chains, and considering full life cycle assessments.

Noting the proposed digital platform is an institutional arrangement, she supported continued discussions on the kind of arrangement we want and how it would be established. On what is needed in terms of institutional strengthening, she supported linking available projects and support and investment.

A developing country like the proposal on how to improve dialogues and investment-focused events. On improvements, he suggested including local and Indigenous Peoples, noting that Indigenous knowledge can also be relevant for mitigation, not just adaptation, when thinking about technologies. He said every action matters, small and big, and suggested more NbS and involvement of forests.

A developed country mentioned good participation from Indigenous Peoples in Panama, but that some regions are underrepresented. She requested help from Parties to nominate experts to get broader participation.

Another developed country said that international cooperation is cross-cutting and keeping 1.5 alive, asking what outcome could we have at COP30 in terms of signals and recommendations. She suggested regional grids, for example one country might have a lot of hydro, regional storage mechanisms, and scaling up smaller projects to get investments. A developing country said they were proposing more in-depth discussions about synergies among conventions.

GENDER

Annela Anger-Kraavi, Cambridge University and Estonia, provided an update on gender in the UNFCCC process, noting ecbi's support for gender activities. She discussed participation and leadership in decision

making and that integrating a gender perspective into all climate policies helps with implementation. She mentioned progress made including: a stand-alone gender agenda item on "gender and climate change"; agreement in Baku to extend the Lima Work Programme on Gender; and the decision to develop a new Gender Action Plan in 2025 for adoption at COP30.

She described the launch of the Women's Leadership Network, which is supported by ecbi and Norway. The Network, she explained, helps women who want to take up leadership positions in the climate process through providing support, mentoring, and fostering closer relationships among Network members. She said the Bonn sessions have better gender balance, fewer women hold senior negotiating positions, and creating spaces for networking is important.

She said during the Bonn sessions, a women's leadership dinner takes place on the first Monday, with approximately 40 women in attendance at the last Bonn session. The dinners have no formal agenda and the number of women attending is increasing. The dinner is supported by ecbi and she thanked the governments of Denmark and the Netherlands for their support.

She also described a women leaders' cafes, supported by Norway, and said they are figuring out how to get more women to attend. She noted the UNFCCC Executive Secretary came to their last meeting to meet us and to listen, and to provide women with the opportunity to speak to him. She said he is willing to keep coming. She said that UNFCCC Deputy Executive Noura Hamladji is an honorary member of the Network.

Also mentioned was that some women do not feel safe in the process and the aim of these activities is to discuss how to ensure they feel safe and welcome and how to enhance women's participation and leadership.

CLIMATE SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE AND LEVIES

Benito Müller presented on Climate Solidarity Levies and the Climate Solidarity Alliance (CSA), mentioning his recent blogpost on the CSA. He recalled the proposal for an Air Passenger Adaptation Levy, taken from the French experience with imposing a solidarity tax on air travel beginning in 2006 to raise money to help finance the fight against AIDS. He said this was initially proposed by then French President Chirac and Brazilian President Lula. The amount taxed was differentiated by class and destination distance and was then collected by solidarity fund for development

In 2023, for example, the fund collected €370 million, €210 of which went to UNAIDS. He said the levy had no effect on passenger numbers or on tourism. He cited recent examples related to adaptation, such as Fiji's Climate Relocation of Communities Trust Fund established in 2019, where finance from different sources is pooled. While nationally funded, climate solidarity trust funds would also be open to other funding. He underscored the importance of a national trust fund, which would also make tracking outside contributions easier.

Müller explained that those countries deemed eligible to receive support, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Fiji, and Senegal, are taking some action on this. He said the World Bank has the means to help countries set up such arrangements.

He described the proposal for a solidarity bonus mechanism to encourage developing countries to voluntarily contribute to the FRLD. Developed country partners would then provide pay back and bonus payments directly into the loss and damage window of developing country partners' trust funds for their contributions to the FRLD, offering a direct solidarity benefit that incentivizes participation.

He also highlighted the Barbados Resilience and Regeneration Fund and regional climate solidarity alliances exemplifying South-South collaboration. He said that we could have regional collaborations with in the alliance and mentioned discussing this with the CARICOM Secratriat.

He also said they were keen to have the multilateral funds involved in some manner, but stressed that no multilateral agreement is needed, we do not want to wait, and we want solidarity funding now.

Responding to a question on a financial transaction tax, Müller said that the task force has decided to focus on the air tax levy. Although he acknowledged that a financial transaction tax would be great, he said there would never be agreement on it. He stressed the importance of figuring out how the distribution of the solidarity levies would work. He said that we were naïve to think this could be done under the UNFCCC which does not have the remit. He mentioned that the LDCs proposed this in Poznan at COP14, but it did not go anywhere. He said if implemented globally, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) would just use the money for the sector.

A developing country said that for a country to apply this levy, they would have to change national regulations, in line with international regulations around commercial flights. She said the amount of regulation needed to spend money or move money through multilateral development banks (MDBs) is a lot of work.

He said countries that want to participate and receive solidarity bonus payments would have to have to set up a fund, either through their budgets or levies at home. A developing country She said her country is not keen on new levies, and that showing solidarity internationally does not have to be through a levy. Another asked how this is different the funds that already exist. She wondered if a few countries get together, who would get money and how.She said it depends on political will, but with elections, governments change. She said it is not easy to set up a fund or to spend money well.

Müller said countries need to take action as loss and damage is happening now.

QUO VADIS COP?

On future arrangements for intergovernmental meetings, Professor Müller described how after every treaty COPs like Kyoto, Copenhagen (which was supposed to be a treaty COP), and Paris, attendance numbers at COPs have spike with the normal number doubling. Since Glasgow, he said there have been summits every year. He mentioned three concerns in the 2023 update to ecbi's Quo Vadis COP?

- Equity concerns for the process in that no small countries can take on the hosting of these events, with the most recent hosts being large oil producing countries
- Difficulties in networking and having serendipitous encounters
- Reputational risk for the multilateral climate change negotiations

Müller supported disaggregating or decentralizing mega-COPs, and holding the Negotiations, Summits, and Expos separately. He lamented the strong "FOMO" (fear of missing out) that some feel about missing the big events so everyone wants to go. He said in Dubai, one country had 970 pink badges, while the same country had only 21 badges in Bonn at the SBs. He supported taking the negotiations "away from the circus" and reimagining the COPs and Climate Weeks.

He mentioned that the COP Presidency could convene the Climate Week, where the Expos and even the Summits could take place. He said he was commissioned to write a report after Copenhagen on reforming the

process, the COP could not even take note of the report thanks to Saudi Arabia. However, the Secretariat did use it in Cancún.

He reiterated his recommendation that COP31 be a "Pacific COP", whereby Australia, if it gets the COP, would support Fiji in hosting a negotiating session with around 5000 participants. He reminded participants that if WEOG cannot pick a host (currently Australia and Turkey are bidding to host), then the COP would default to Bonn and the current Presidency would continue.

One developed country noting the number of negotiators has grown, said that most of the increase is because of the Action Agenda. She said having a session with 5000 would be difficult given the extent of the agenda.

She said youth in her country hoped that the number of delegates would be reduced in the future, and that the Action Agenda space could be reduced as well. Müller responded that the Action Agenda could take place during the Climate Weeks.

REPURPOSING THE MULTILATERAL CLIMATE SESSIONS

Paul Watkinson, former EU negotiator, and Stefan Ruchti, former Swiss negotiator, presented on a paper they are in the process of authoring and sought feedback and ideas from participants. Introducing the topic, Watkinson acknowledged that, while the process is not broken, it is massively overloaded. He explained that the amount of time available for specific agenda items has been drastically reduced over the past 20 years, with some issues only allocated one hour of meeting time over a two-week session. He added that the logistics involved in managing meetings and allocating rooms among all the bodies for the meetings is quite complex. He explained that with such an overloaded agenda, the time to do the work well is lacking. The idea of the paper, he explained, is to present suggestions as to how to improve the process and make it work better. He noted how it fits into the wider discussion that Director Müller has put forward and been advocating for in his Quo Vadis COP? publication.

Ruchti, while noting significant achievements, lamented that implementation is stalling, we are not on track to reach our long-term global goals, and not enough progress has been made across key domains. Thus, he said, there is a need to repurpose the climate sessions, move away from negotiations as default modalities, and explore other modalities for work. For example, with respect to the MWP, a decision does not need to be negotiated, negotiations may stand in the way of implementation, and key negotiators are not informed enough about implementation. He explained that while many feel the focus should move toward implementation, some countries continue to block adoption of the agenda. He added that focusing too much on process hinders progress. He explained that often Heads of Delegations focus on negotiations, while implementation-focused issues are delegated to junior members. Thus, the mindset requires changing as negotiations are not suitable for all agenda items.

He asked for specific proposals on reorganizing and simplifying agendas, giving more time to individual agenda items, dedicating more time to implementation issues, and considering other modalities such as country dialogues. He also stressed moving away from establishing negotiation groups for each item and negotiating outputs. He said we should keep discussing the GST report and make better use of spaces alongside the climate sessions, such as climate weeks and pre-sessionals.

The floor was then opened for comments, with some citing tensions with proposals made to separate the Negotiations from the Summits and Expos. Some noted that formal climate sessions are not just the negotiations, but that the action agenda may help with implementation as well. One questioned how we can constructively use the information that comes through the transparency component, as the process does not allow for that right now.

Professor Müller said an outcome report is not needed for the green zone, and we need to free up space that for negotiations which can be used for similar fora in order to bring together government practitioners He said attending COPs is often not productive and reiterated repurposing modus operandi of sessions.

One developed country agreed we need to take a step back. He said with respect to the MWP and JTWP, a space should be created to exchange experiences and develop recommendation and outcomes to help with implementation. However, noting this approach was difficult to reach agreement on, he policy outcomes and signals are needed as well as a coalition of the willing as a way forward. He mentioned that existing international institutions could focus more on technical work and economic commissions could be used more.

One developing country explained we are in a shifting mode from purely negotiations to implementation, and this needs to be accepted as work on the rules of the Paris Agreement has concluded. She said necessary adjustments must be made or we will lose space at the climate sessions. She added that after ten years since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the agenda and profile of delegations must be adapted to focus on how to implement the commitments made.

She outlined COP30's four dimensions: negotiations, the action agenda, the summit, and the global mobilization against climate change. From the formal negotiations, she did not expect big headlines as the things being negotiated "are not sexy". She said we need new mechanisms and new initiatives; otherwise, the climate sessions will lose appeal and the focus will be elsewhere. She wondered how best to realize countries' NDCs and implement them on the ground, and said if we do not make this shift the formal negotiations will be less relevant.

The key question, she stressed, is how to make the shift, noting we have a process through the agenda item on Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings (AIM); however, discussions under AIM usually result in stalemate. She urged trying to provoke these discussions, and said that although it is a party-driven process, we must change the agenda to remain relevant. She added that some Parties do not want change because they believe what we have serves their interests. Thus, she agreed we are in a stalemate, with some hindering consensus so we reach the least common denominator. She cited a dangerous disconnect of climate sessions with the real world, questioning how we explain what we are doing to the outside world.

She suggested putting together a coalition of Parties that want change to table a draft decision with a proposal, but cited the need for a political solution and said we must find a way to make the system work for the times we are living in. She explained that the centerpiece is shifting to an action agenda. She also described a problem with accreditation, with Party delegations not only including negotiators, but also needing to include civil society organizations, parliamentarians, etc. She hoped we can all recognize the need to change and find the political will and courage to change. She wondered about the freedom of maneuver for Chairs and Presidencies and how can we push some of these solutions forward, acknowledging that all Parties must agree on the agendas.

Another developing country explained that as soon as anyone says "streamlining", the antennae go up as people are concerned their agenda item will be lost. As the agenda is mandated, we have some way to change the organization of work. He said the real problem is the agenda and that every time we start planning, we find that we lack the space needed to discuss items, with some issues requiring bigger rooms that must be found if we want to be inclusive and let non-negotiators in. He said maybe like-minded countries could propose a decision; however, he had little hope this would be agreed to when brought before the COP.

A developed country mentioned some of these proposals are in submissions for the AIM agenda item, including clustering and streamlining. She said we are stuck because of the consensus principle but hoped the Presidency could do something to get around that. She also agreed that some groups of countries could bring forward a proposal, lamenting that the overloading of the system is "bringing the process to a halt". She cautioned against a narrative that says we must shift from negotiations to implementation. She said we want a space to discuss the most recent NDC Synthesis Report, but as of now that space does not exist. She explained that negotiations must focus on key issues related to implementing the Paris Agreement, and that the action agenda cannot be separated from negotiations.

Another developed country said the fact we are discussing the issue of repurposing at all is a sign that "we are looking ourselves in the mirror" and need to give ourselves credit for our work, which must be made fit for purpose. She argued that the process is not broken, has delivered a tremendous amount, and has managed to bridge so many interests.

She explained that:

- Parties need to have confidence that their issues will not be left behind or lost;
- we have a consensus-based system, and renegotiating the draft rules of procedure is risky;
- we need to understand budgetary implications, and we cannot continue to set up new bodies and workshops, for example, we need to fit the JTWP into institutions we already have;
- the process must provide guidance and political signals (through the GST), and workshops could be done differently; and
- the negotiating style must change and that "my way or the highway" does not help us move forward.

Another developed country reiterated that while negotiations are at the heart of diplomacy, his country is also engaging in various initiatives including with industry and through an energy transition group with India. He said while we are discussing reform within the process, the AIM discussions are not taking us forward. However, he hoped the consultations with the Presidency prior to the COP will provide us with the opportunity for further discussions, which could lead to changing the agenda process. He said the speed at which we want to make the transition differs, and that we benefit by having companies included in the discussions as they provide us with implementation solutions. On the composition of delegations, he supported experts on implementation taking part in dialogues and that inviting such experts would help us as Heads of Delegations.

A developing country said "we are going to a waterfall and [we are going to] go over it and collapse", mentioning 197 BTRs and 19 agenda items on finance alone. He explained that we do not always need agenda items on GCF and GEF reports, for example. He wondered whether the bureau could be given more authority to look at the agenda, noting address every agenda item does not need to be addressed at every meeting.

A developed country representative commented that the growth in COP size and attendance reflects the fact that climate change has risen in prominence on the global agenda, which is a positive thing. She commented that everyone, including the business sector, wants to attend, and while it is more political and more

frustrating, such growth helps the process make more of an impact in the real world. However, she said we do require a solution for one issue: it is too easy to hijack the process.

She said we are not the ones building the electricity grids and making laws, but we have made the commitments and must be held accountable. Thus, she said BTRs must be central to process, as that is where we show what we are doing. She wondered how we react collectively to what is brought forward.

Another developed country wondered how we can create action on the ground. He cited three dimensions that will help drive action: a policy track (negotiations dimension); a legal track, such as legislation at the national and international levels (ICJ advisory opinion, for example); and the scientific dimension. He reaffirmed the concerned with fixing the negotiation track and must be able to turn decisions into action; thus, we are responsible for taking implementation decisions. He said the Paris Agreement proves that multilateralism works, as do the decisions on loss and damage, although he acknowledged we could we do better and need to be more disciplined, as we are the ones who are responsible to deliver on the decisions we take.

A developing country noted the UNFCCC is well positioned to facilitate and provide guidance, drive ambition, and put pressure on each other. However, he agreed there is an implementation gap. He said many go to the MDBs to get finance to implement decisions but are not engaging in a more focused manner.

He mentioned the Troika: Mission 1.5 as a good space to interface with Parties to help implementation, but lamented that it has been "underwhelming to say the least". He said we lack a platform to look at "disenablers" and a space to interact with the real people who fund.

Another developing country cited the importance of having an implantation plan, and linking national instruments to long-term strategies, although how to approach this remains unclear. She underscored: a plan to deliver verification; avoiding duplication; determining what we want and what we expect from each item; trust building with civil society; and implementation facilitation segments for the GGA, MWP, JTWP, etc.

One participant from a developing country agreed the process is overstretched, with too many agenda items and too many mandated events. He also requested that the Bureau play a more active role in that regard. However, he acknowledged the impossibility of reaching consensus on a decision to repurpose. He said a process for ministers to get involved is needed as they are responsible for the budget, and, thus, they need to better understand the process. He added that "we do not have enough time to talk about how to allocate time" and that we cannot take a decision without ministerial involvement. He noted the fear of losing what is important, and the action agenda is not the solution.

A developed country said we cannot have reform without the Secretariat as they are best positioned to lead on this. She also wondered if the Bureau or Heads of Delegations could lead, and perhaps look at a five-year agenda to make sure all topics have time allocated for discussion. She said the process within the Secretariat is not working either, noting a report from a mandated event in March was not ready in time for Bonn. She also wondered why Kyoto Protocol commitments are still on the agenda.

Another developing country acknowledged that while the UNFCCC process is slow, it is still more efficient than others, and that we should look into the efficiency of the Secretariat's budgeting process. He mentioned all the concurrent events, including high-level segments, and the need to balance political commitments, present difficulties for small delegations who have too many competing commitments.

In conclusion, Watkinson reiterated the importance of the conversation, and that we are discussing undertaking reform, not because the system is failing or broken, but because we need to do better. He stressed the importance of identifying what reform would look like and how we get there, emphasizing that "if we rely on a decision-making process we won't get there, but if we don't change we get will get stuck".

UPDATES FROM THE BRAZILIAN PRESIDENCY ON COP30

Mario Mario Mottin, Brazil provided an update on the Action Agenda for COP30, highlighting the need to determine how to foster climate action and how to shift the international climate regime to implementation mode. He said the COP30 President has called on all stakeholders to act decisively. He explained that the proliferation of initiatives has made this challenging, with 470 initiatives launched in 10 years some of which are under UNFCCC platform and others are not. He emphasized bringing together business, civil society, and government to actively implement agreed outcomes.

He described innovations on the Action Agenda by the incoming COP Presidency, where there is only one Action Agenda, with everyone making an effort to implement the GST outcomes. He noted that previously there was more of a dichotomy, between the private sector and countries with respect to the Action Agenda.

Mottinhighlighted six thematic axes, guided by the GST, covering mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation:

- transitioning energy, industry, and transport
- stewarding forests, oceans, and biodiversity
- transforming agriculture and food systems
- building resilience for cities, infrastructure, and water
- fostering human and social development
- cross-cutting: unleashing enablers and accelerators, including on financing, technology, and capacity building

He said they have received mixed reactions and are not trying to rewrite the Paris Agreement, but rather these are voluntary climate actions that aim to balance economic, social, and environmental concerns. He said that each axis has several key objectives, and people are expected to engage through the key initiatives.

He highlighted a four step process that each of the key objectives will undergo:

- coordinate: coordination of existing initiatives into activation groups
- measure: results and deliverables reported to the UNFCCC
- showcase through a granary of solutions platform to identify the most impactful solutions that can be replicated
- scale: initiatives to present their acceleration plans; collective voluntary plans to accelerate solutions with countries, subnational governments, businesses, investors, and society

He said that, up to this point, almost 70 initiatives have engaged in these action plans, and there are Secretariats for each activation group. He mentioned an AI chat for climate negotiators in over 50 languages, and six thematic spaces and this work within the activation groups. He said the Secretariat for each activation group will ensure the various events run smoothly and bring people together. He acknowledge that within country pavilions, we sometimes remain in our own national bubbles, and the focus is national rather than global. He said this is our attempt to bring people together,

Liliam Chagas, Brazil, presented on an AI chatbot called Macaozinho, in honor of macaws (Ara macao), birds that are one of the symbols of Brazil. "[i]t is a reliable source on global climate change, as it was trained with official documents from UN climate agencies. Proficient in over 50 languages, it provides reliable data on topics related to negotiations at both COP30 in Belém and previous COPs". She explained that it aims to support negotiators and make climate facts accessible on many levels, and that José Miguez, a long-time climate negotiator from Brazil, was a consultant on this project. Found on the Route to Belém, it has over 3000 documents in over 50 languages so that people from all over the world can read the information in their own languages. She explained it can summarize documents in just a few seconds, and reach a broader audience and the general public, and is bringing digital transformation to the COP system.

FOLLOW UP

Following the Seminar, several participants sent expressions of appreciation. One example comes from H.E. Diana Mejía Molina, Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of Economic, Social, and Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia, who stated:

"I wish to convey my deepest appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this year's Fellows Colloquium and Seminar. The program was exceptionally well-organized and intellectually enriching, fostering rigorous dialogue and a valuable exchange of perspectives. The breadth and depth of the discussions greatly contributed to advancing understanding of the issues at hand and hopefully will help us to bring solutions into climate negotiations and the incoming COP. The setting of Magdalen College provided an unparalleled environment that fostered closeness, calm, and reflection, greatly enhancing the quality of the exchanges and the sense of community among participants. Please accept my sincere thanks for your dedication and for creating such a stimulating and collegial environment."