

Divisions over mitigation work programme

Dubai, 8 Dec. (Radhika Chatterjee) - The draft [text](#) on the 'Sharm El-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Programme' (MWP) was [transmitted](#) by the Subsidiary Bodies for the consideration of the fifth meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA5) on December 6, at the closing of the work of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Bodies in Dubai.

A key part of the transmitted draft text is in brackets due to the divergences amongst the Parties on the way forward for the programme. At the heart of the divergence is the question of whether MWP decision text should include any high level political messages or not.

Several developing countries stressed that political messages should not be included in the MWP as the objective of the programme was to facilitate dialogues and exchange views to provide an opportunity to Parties to share experiences and learn from each other.

They said that the focus of the MWP should rather be on improving those dialogues to ensure Parties are able to make the most out of the global dialogues conducted under the programme.

Several developing countries also shared that the political messages on mitigation was already

being discussed under the matters of the global stock take (GST) of the Paris Agreement (PA) and that any linkage of messages of the GST to MWP would thus amount to a duplication of work. Further, they expressed concerns about imposing new mitigation targets on developing countries through political messages under the MWP. They argued this would result in going beyond the mandate of the MWP and add a burden on developing countries.

Developed countries and some developing countries especially the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** on the other hand insisted on having "strong outcomes" from MWP by scaling up mitigation ambition keeping in mind the "urgency" of the situation. This they said was to be done through the insertion of high level political messages under MWP.

Some of the key elements for the political messages they emphasized on are: having emission pathways in line with 1.5°C and the peaking of emissions within the next decade, tripling renewable energy, doubling energy efficiency by 2030, phasing out unabated fossil fuels, and eliminating fossil fuel subsidies.

(The work programme for scaling up mitigation ambition was established by [Decision 1./CMA.3](#).)

The work of this programme was advanced next year through [Decision 4./CMA4](#), which states: “the work programme shall be operationalized through focused exchanges of views, information and ideas, noting that the outcomes of the work programme will be non-prescriptive, non-punitive, facilitative, respectful of national sovereignty and national circumstances, take into account the nationally determined nature of nationally determined contributions and will not impose new targets or goals”. According to this decision the work programme is supposed to continue its work till 2026 before the adoption of a decision on further extension of the work.).

Informal discussions on the MWP, began on December 1 as a joint agenda item of the two Subsidiary bodies viz. Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). Co-facilitators **Kay Harrison (New Zealand)** and **Carlos Fuller (Belize)** presided over seven informal consultations over a period of five days to conduct discussions on the MWP.

After the first session, the co-facilitators presented an informal note to Parties. This note did not have any “formal status” and was prepared by them “under their own responsibility”. This informal note was followed by two more iterations. The third iteration that emerged from this note is the one that has been transmitted to CMA5, after the conclusion of the 59th session of the SBSTA and SBI.

Below are highlights of some key interventions during the course of the informal consultations.

Highlights of key interventions

China, speaking on behalf of the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** expressed its appreciation for the dialogues held under the MWP in its first year. It said the dialogues had created the space for practitioners and policy makers to engage at the same platform and exchange views. It said there was a need now to improve the organisation of dialogues and make them more interactive.

In a strong response to the insistence of developed countries on the inclusion of political messages, it said there cannot be a decision to change the

mandate and that any outcome must be in line with Decision 4/CMA4. “Any attempts to renegotiate the mandate violates it” and that MWP cannot be used to impose new targets and goals. The focus should instead be on the progress of MWP, stressed China.

Argentina, speaking on behalf of **Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay (ABU)**, said on the issue of linking of GST with MWP, said that it was “hearing about some interventions mentioning that MWP is the implementation arm of GST, or that this is the space for implementation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs).” “This is confusing as the implementation of PA is through NDCs...Some delegations seem to mistake climate action for renegotiation of decisions,” it said.

Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the **African Group of Negotiators (AGN)**, speaking about the global dialogues under the mitigation work programme, said there is a need to think about how Africa can benefit from access to technology and international cooperation for energy access. Highlighting their concerns about the inclusion of high level political messages under the MWP, it sought clarity on how those messages would be prioritized. “When we stick to the mandate, it is easier”, added Zimbabwe. On the issue of linking GST with MWP, it said, “the GST complements the MWP” and it did not want to see a duplication of effort.

Saudi Arabia, for the Arab Group, highlighted that the dialogues under the MWP “have shown the diversity of solutions and various pathways/approaches to chart out and choose from. There will not be one solution that applies uniformly across all countries. So, not only will a high level signal of a specific target or message overshadow and undermine the entirety of the work we did, it is also in complete conflict with the decision.” It further added that “there are opportunities for improvement to further enhance the effectiveness of these dialogues without compromising the decision and the principles within it.”

On the issue of linking the GST and MWP, it said, “we do not want to duplicate the work done under the GST track. We have a clear mandate and scope which is specific to the implementation of the work programme, and it would not be appropriate to go

beyond this. We cannot accept to adopt a decision that changes what we just agreed last year. Specifically, we reiterate that any outcome from the MWP must be, in line with the decision 4.CMA/4.”

Belize, speaking on behalf of the **Alliance of Small Island States (SIDS)**, said there was a need for course correction to keep the world within the limit of 1.5°C. It said that the lessons learnt in the MWP dialogues could be used further, adding that the focus of should now be on ambition and implementation for strong outcomes. It further stressed on the need for phasing out fossil fuels, ending fossil fuel subsidies and peaking of emissions, as without such actions, it said the future of Small Island States would be in jeopardy.

Samoa, speaking on behalf of **Pacific Small Island States** said for 1.5°C is a matter of survival for them. Emphasizing on the need for delivering ambitious action, it called for a strong outcome in mitigation through peaking of emissions before 2025, and phasing out fossil fuel and subsidies. It added that there is a need for MWP to identify actionable solutions.

Colombia, speaking on behalf of the **Independent Alliance of Latin American and the Caribbean nations (AILAC)**, echoed the views of AOSIS.

Bangladesh, speaking on behalf of the **Least Developed Countries** shared that it preferred a linkage of GST to the MWP. It also said that the investment focused events held under the MWP should be used to attract funds, in order to make the MWP a way of enhancing means of implementation for mitigation action.

In a sharply worded intervention, **India** shared its appreciation of the global dialogues held under MWP and pointed out that those dialogues have vividly illuminated the stark disparity between theoretical models and real-world practices and were significant in understanding the challenges that present themselves on the way forward. “We must resist the temptation to burden this platform with unrealistic expectations of crafting universal instructions immediately following the dialogues. Such expectations could deter real progress,” it said further.

Responding to the call for political messages on the mitigation targets India said that the “MWP must not be a vehicle to impose further obligations on developing countries which will undermine the nationally determined character of our nationally determined contributions (NDCs). The purpose of MWP is not to pressurize developing countries to increase their ambition, without providing commensurate support which needs to be significantly scaled up from current levels.” It further emphasized that it “will not be able to accept any policy prescriptions in the decisions or any discussions regarding specific sectors.”

Outlining its expectations from the work programme in the next two years, it said, “the work programme must rather address how the world can move towards sustainable lifestyles as a response to combat climate change... the MWP... should not duplicate work of other work streams under the PA but complement and support the same”. (This was with reference to the call by developed countries for linking MWP with GST.)

Expressing its appreciation for using science in guiding the way forward on enhancing ambition, India said “We would draw attention to the very clear results from climate science of the direct and almost linear relationship between mean global surface temperature increase and cumulative emissions. The world therefore has to limit cumulative emissions to within a carbon budget to limit warming to levels agreed to in the PA. Combining this with the key principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) of the UNFCCC and its PA, this would mean that the framework of fair and equitable access to the global carbon budget meets the criteria of both – adhering to the best available science and equity. This would also make the MWP much more aligned to provide inputs to the GST,” it stressed further.

Egypt, aligning with the position of **LMDC** and **AGN** reiterated, we have to avoid any duplication with GST and that no specific targets should be included in the MWP. It said it was better to focus on the work programme instead.

Other developing countries such as **Iran, Kuwait, Ghana** and **South Africa** shared similar views.

Stressing for the need for working for an ambitious mitigation decision, the **European Union (EU)** said it would like the MWP decision to focus on three broad elements – overall messages from urgency, science and efforts needed by 2030. It said the MWP should provide messages that help to enhance NDCs of all Parties. Referring to the need for linking GST to MWP, the EU said discussions going on elsewhere at high level should also be included in the MWP decision text. Emphasizing on the need for including messages on urgency and emission pathways that are in line with 1.5°C goal, it said “incremental change will not be sufficient for achieving the objectives of the MWP”. It also said MWP should explicitly include language that is similar to the messages on energy made in Glasgow at COP26.

Switzerland, for the **Environmental Integrity Group**, said given that little time was available, there was a need for MWP to engage on accelerating ambition collectively. Appreciating the dialogues held during the first year of the MWP, it said there was now a need to adopt a robust decision with high level messages. These messages included a reference to reaching 1.5°C pathways; need to peak emissions by 2025 and reach net zero by 2050.

The **United States** said it expected a strong highlight on the issue of urgency in the MWP decision. It asked for an inclusion of high level messages on pathways that were in line with 1.5°C

limit and emphasized on the “need to reflect science”. It further shared it would like to see actionable messages on mitigation and investment in this decade.

The **United Kingdom** said there was a need to stick to emission reduction pathways, phase out unabated fossil fuels and inefficient subsidies. It also stressed on the need to have messages from GST and the ministerial roundtable on the MWP.

Australia said this COP is an opportunity to achieve 1.5°C. Referring to the need for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition, it said MWP cannot let the opportunity pass by. Stressing for the need for a strong outcome, it echoed the key political messages that were shared by other developed countries on the need for tripling renewable energy targets, doubling energy efficiency, and phasing out unabated fossil fuels.

Referring to the high level messages that would be used for linking of GST to MWP, it said it “can accept that these messages will be negotiated in the GST, but these need to be included in the MWP.” It further said, the “mandate is to urgently scale up mitigation – we will not accept any MWP decision that doesn’t have any substance on mitigation.”

Similar views were expressed by other developed countries like **Canada, Japan, Norway, and Republic of Korea**.