

## Some gains made on Adaptation but gaps remain

Kuala Lumpur, Dec 4 (Eqram Mustaqeem) – At the recently concluded climate talks in Baku, Azerbaijan, there were some gains for developing countries on the matter of the Global Goal on Adaptation [GGA] with a substantive outcome. However, on the matters related to National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and on the Adaptation Committee (AC) performance review, no substantive outcomes were possible given divergences between developed and developing countries that only saw procedural conclusions with work being pushed to next year for further work under the UNFCCC’s Subsidiary Bodies.

On the GGA agenda item, despite the strong resistance of most developed countries [with the exception of the **United Kingdom (UK)**] on any text referring to the means of implementation [MOI], the final decision adopted at COP 29, kept the text fairly intact, which is seen as an important win for developing countries.

Also significant from the Baku decision on the GGA, is the establishment of the ‘Baku Adaptation Roadmap’ to advance progress on the matter.

In addition, Parties also agreed to have the GGA as “a standing agenda item”, which “will continue to be included in the agendas for the sixty-fourth (June 2026) and subsequent sessions of the

subsidiary bodies [SBs] and the **eighth** (November 2026) and subsequent sessions of the Conference of the Parties...to the Paris Agreement [CMA], unless otherwise specified by the CMA.”

[See further details below].

### GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION

The GGA agenda item can be separated into three parts which were all mandated through [decision 2/CMA.5](#), also known as the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience (UAE framework).

The first and most critical of the three is the UAE-Belém Work Programme (UBWP), on the development of indicators for measuring progress towards the seven thematic and four dimensional targets outlined in the UAE Framework for the GGA.

[The thematic targets of the GGA cover (i) water, (ii) food and agriculture, (iii) health, (iv) ecosystems and biodiversity, (v) infrastructure and human settlements, (vi) poverty eradication and livelihoods and (viii) protection of cultural heritage, while the dimensional targets are

(i) impact, vulnerability and risk assessment, (ii) planning, (iii) implementation and (iv) monitoring.]

The second is the continued consideration of paragraph 38 of the UAE Framework which outlines five key areas of focus: exchanging knowledge and experience on implementing the UAE Framework; identifying potential inputs for future global stocktakes related to achieving the GGA; enhancing understanding of risks and impacts from different temperature increases across different regions; collaborating with scientific bodies to support the implementation of the UAE Framework; and developing terms and a timeline for reviewing the framework. Work on this para 38 is expected to be completed by COP30 in Belém. [Further details are provided below].

The third part is on ‘transformational adaptation’, where Parties were invited to consider the [technical paper](#) on the matter, prepared by the secretariat in line with paragraph 46 of the UAE Framework.

[Para 46 of the UAE Framework reads as follows: “Requests the secretariat to undertake work to examine how transformational adaptation is defined and understood at different spatial scales and sectors, and how progress in planning and implementing transformational adaptation approaches might be assessed at the global level, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement at its sixth session (November 2024)”.]

### UAE-BELEM WORK PROGRAMME [UBWP]

On the UBWP, the key takeaway from the adopted [Baku GGA decision](#) pertains to the inclusion of MOI language despite staunch opposition from many developed countries.

Developed countries such as **Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union and Canada** vehemently opposed any inclusion of MOI indicators, on the basis that it is not part of the scope of the UBWP. The only exception was the **UK**, which expressed its openness to discuss and hear from experts on the importance of indicators on MOI.

Paragraph 10 of the adopted Baku GGA decision provided further guidance for the experts in continuing the development of indicators and further refinement work. They are to develop or identify from the current compilation, indicators for *“enabling factors for the implementation of adaptation action, including means of implementation”* as per paragraph 10 (d). Regular dialogues and workshops will be organised, as needed, to this effect.

[Para 10(d) reads as follows: “Recognizes that further guidance is required for the experts ... and requests the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies to invite the experts to: ...(d) Develop, if needed, or identify from the compilation and mapping referred to in paragraph 1 above indicators for enabling factors for the implementation of adaptation action, including means of implementation”.]

Through para 21 (g) of the same decision, it was decided that the final outcome of the UBWP should, amongst others, include quantitative and qualitative indicators for *“enabling factors for the implementation of adaptation action, including means of implementation”*.

It is important to note that this phrase *“enabling factors for the implementation of adaptation action, including means of implementation”* was introduced by the COP 29 Presidency, following a strong push from developing countries for clear language on MOI indicators in the decision text.

The phrase was not present in the earlier Presidency text circulated on 22 Nov, and in its place was the phrase *“enablers of implementation of adaptation action as referred to in paragraph 24 of [decision 2/CMA.5](#)”*, which itself was a phrase from the Presidency in their attempt to build bridges between Parties on the much contentious issue of MOI indicators.

[Para 24 of decision 2/CMA.5 (from Dubai) reads as follows: Recognizes that means of implementation for adaptation, such as finance, technology transfer and capacity-building, are crucial to the implementation of the framework for the global goal on adaptation and also recognizes that factors such as leadership, institutional arrangements, policies, data and knowledge, skills

and education, public participation, and strengthened and inclusive governance are also crucial to enabling the implementation of adaptation action]

That earlier phrase of “enabling factors for the implementation of adaptation action, including means of implementation” received much chagrin from **Kenya**, for the **African Group** who released [an official media statement](#) reflecting on the 22 Nov Presidency text, calling for clear guidance on the inclusion of MOI indicators in the decision text.

At face value, the final phrase that was in the decision adopted, seems to be a blend between the much-repeated call from developed countries of the need for enabling environments in developing countries for the implementation of adaptation, and the demands of developing countries for MOI from developed countries. However, how it is understood and reflected in the work on indicators by experts remains to be seen.

Another important outcome of the decision adopted are paragraphs 19 and 20 as regards the UBWP.

In paragraph 19, it was decided “that the final outcome of the UBWP should support an assessment of progress towards achieving the [GGA] targets...and be consistent with Article 7.1 of the Paris Agreement (PA) and the temperature goal referred to in Article 2 of the PA.”

[Article 7.1 of the PA states as follows: “Parties hereby establish the GGA of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal referred to in Article 2.]

Through paragraph 20 of the decision adopted in Baku, Parties also decided that there should be a maximum of 100 indicators that are globally applicable, and that the menu of indicators can be chosen by Parties according to their national circumstances, whilst also enabling the measurement of progress towards achieving the seven thematic and four-dimensional targets outlined in the UAE Framework.

[Last October, at a mandated workshop on the indicators, technical experts refined a [compilation](#) of over 5300 indicators with 16,000 data entries, which were presented by the secretariat.]. The Baku decision has now called for a maximum of 100 indicators that are globally applicable.

[Paragraph 20 reads as follows: “Also decides that, noting the need to avoid placing an additional reporting burden on Parties, the final outcome of the UBWP may include a manageable set of no more than 100 indicators that:

- (a) Are globally applicable with a view to informing an analysis of relevant global trends;
- (b) Constitute a menu that captures various contexts of adaptation action, enabling Parties to choose which indicators they will report on in the light of their national circumstances;
- (c) Are designed to enable assessment of progress towards achieving the different components of the targets referred to in paras 9–10 of decision 2/CMA.5”.]

A progress report of the work on indicators by the experts following further guidance provided in the decision adopted will be made available no later than 4 weeks before the next session of the meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies in June 2025.

## BAKU ADAPTATION ROADMAP TO ADVANCE GGA AND PARA 38 OF THE UAE FRAMEWORK

Outcomes from the Baku decision in respect of paragraph 38 of the UAE Framework witnessed significant wins for developing countries.

[Para 38 reads as follows: “Requests the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to initiate the consideration of matters relating to the GGA at their sixtieth sessions (June 2024),...with a view to providing recommendations for consideration and adoption by the CMA...at its seventh session (November 2025), focusing on, inter alia on:

- (a) The exchange of knowledge, experience and information related to implementing the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, including in relation to efforts to achieve the targets..., with the aim of fostering implementation;

(b) The identification of potential inputs to future global stocktakes related to achieving the global goal on adaptation, including by considering how the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience can facilitate the analysis of information required for assessing progress towards the goal;

(c) The enhancement of understanding of, inter alia, the risks and impacts associated with different temperature increases across different regions;

(d) The opportunities for building on the best available science, including collaboration with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other organizations, to provide information relevant to facilitating implementation of the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, including in relation to the targets ...; to developing indicators, metrics and methodologies; and to identifying adaptation capacity gaps, challenges and the needs of developing countries; (and)

(e) The development of terms of reference for reviewing the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, including the time frame for review.]

Firstly, the Baku GGA decision in paragraph 28 affirmed that the GGA “will continue to be included in the agendas for the sixty-fourth (June 2026) and subsequent sessions of the subsidiary bodies [SBs] and the eighth (November 2026) and subsequent sessions of the Conference of the Parties...to the Paris Agreement [CMA].” [Prior to this, the GGA as an agenda item was originally supposed to end at COP30 next year as work under the agenda item concludes.]

This outcome is a testament of the united push from developing countries to have the GGA as a standing agenda item ever since [GGA talks in COP28 last year](#) which has been largely opposed by their developed country counterparts.

Further, the Baku GGA decision in paragraph 29 established the “*Baku Adaptation Road Map*”, which was a proposal originally made by **Saudi Arabia** on behalf of the **Arab Group**. The the road map is expected to advance progress in line with Article 7.1 of the P), along with supporting the implementation of the elements under paragraph 38 of the UAE Framework.

The modalities of this new road map are yet to be developed, and Parties will be able to submit their written views on the matter and deliberate upon it in the next meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies in June 2025.

Lastly, in paragraph 38 of the Baku GGA decision, Parties decided to initiate considerations on the terms of reference for the review of the UAE Framework after the end of the UBWP, with the review of the UAE Framework itself being conducted after the second global stocktake [which is expected to take place in 2028].

As there were not much input from Parties on paragraph 38 of the UAE Framework, consideration of the matter will continue in the next meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies in June 2025.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL ADAPTATION

Not much was on decided on transformation adaptation in the Baku GGA decision. The only notable outcome was Paragraph 40 which recognizes that both incremental and transformational adaptation approaches are essential for implementing the UAE framework and achieving the GGA.

The lack of outcomes on transformational adaptation can be attributed to the disagreements between Parties on whether to discuss the technical paper on transformational adaptation prepared by the secretariat, owing to the last minute nature of which Parties received the paper. It was finally decided through para 41 of the Baku GGA decision to continue consideration of the technical paper in the next session of the meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies in June 2025.

## NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS [NAP]

After much promise and high hopes amongst Parties to come to a decision on NAPs at COP 29 in the first week of the Baku talks, the sense of optimism quickly deflated in the second week as Parties did not make much progress on the draft decision text, despite intense negotiations.

Much of the NAP discussions in the second week were conducted in an ‘informal-informal’ setting where only Parties were allowed to enter. Only two

informal consultations were organised which were mainly on determining the status of the draft text in the procedural conclusion and the drafting of the procedural conclusion itself.

At the final informal consultation on 19 Nov, Parties agreed on having a [procedural conclusion](#), which was to advance further work next year at the meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies in June 2025.

Prior to reaching agreement on the way forward, the treatment of the draft text was a matter of controversy, as developed countries only wanted the text from Baku to be considered as an informal note, whilst developing countries wanted it to be a draft text that Parties can continue to work upon at the next session of the Subsidiary Bodies.

**Dominican Republic** on behalf of the **Alliance of Small Island States** rightly pointed out that if this Baku text is taken as an informal note, the same situation that arose in Baku would be repeated. [In Baku, Parties had to spend substantial time deliberating on whether to use the informal note from the 60th session of the Subsidiary Bodies or have a new draft text which took away precious time from discussions].

Finally, a consensus was reached to take forward the draft text from Baku for consideration as part of the procedural conclusion.

The procedural conclusion reads as follows: “The Conference of the Parties requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to continue consideration of this matter at its sixty-second session (June 2025) on the basis of the [draft text](#) available on the UNFCCC website with a view to recommending a draft decision for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties at its thirtieth session (November 2025).”

It is obvious from the draft text referred to in the procedural conclusion that clear lines were drawn between Parties. Through the united push of developing countries, language on the need for increased public finance for adaptation, obligations

and commitments of developed countries for finance, capacity-building and technology transfer under the UNFCCC and its PA were well reflected in the draft text.

However, such language was consequently bracketed by developed countries, who instead, emphasised the role of the private sector for financing, planning and implementing NAPs, and stressed the need for enabling environments and conditions for implementing NAPs which were bracketed by developing countries.

[The NAP agenda item has been stuck in a repeating loop of procedural conclusions for the last few years, with both Parties drawing clear red lines. The developed countries in particular have been blocking progress in the NAP agenda item due to their resistance towards any language on MOI and support to developing countries. It remains to be seen whether the agenda item will continue to make progress in the next Subsidiary Bodies meeting in June 2025.]

## ADAPTATION COMMITTEE

There were two agenda items on the Adaptation Committee in Baku. The “Report of the Adaptation Committee” and the “Review of the progress, effectiveness and performance of the Adaptation Committee”.

On the [adopted conclusion](#) of the Adaptation Committee Report, Parties welcomed the [2023](#) and [2024](#) reports of the Adaptation Committee.

On the second agenda item of Adaptation Committee review, Parties agreed to continue consideration of this matter at the next Subsidiary Bodies meeting in June 2025.

The Baku outcomes on the adaptation front is clearly a mixed bag of some gains for developing countries, but with gaps remaining especially on the means to implement adaptation actions.