

Call for strengthening inter-linkages in the Paris Agreement work

Bonn, 15 May (T Ajit) - A joint meeting of the UNFCCC's bodies tasked with mandates related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement (PA) met to hear Parties on the inter-linkages of their respective work.

The meeting which was held on 13 May in Bonn, saw the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA), the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) come together on the Paris work programme.

(The UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties (COP) had Paris, in 2015, given specific mandates and assigned various tasks across the bodies of the Convention, including the APA, the subsidiary bodies and other constituted bodies in order for Parties to implement the PA.)

The meeting was organized in response to calls mainly by developing countries to enable Parties to track the inter-linkages of work in the various bodies (see related [TWN Update](#)).

(A major concern of developing countries is to ensure even progress across all the elements of the PA, including adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity-building and not just the mitigation element. Developed countries on the other hand, have tended to focus on the mitigation element, the Transparency Framework especially in relation to 'actions' rather than 'support' and the development of market mechanisms under Article 6 of the PA, which are viewed as being a 'mitigation-centric' approach.)

The joint meeting was presided over by APA Co-chairs **Sara Baashan (Saudi Arabia)**, **Jo Tyndall (New Zealand)**, SBI Chair **Tomasz Chruszczow (Poland)** and SBSTA Chair **Carlos Fuller (Belize)**.

Chruszczow explained to Parties about the inter-linkages among the existing bodies, and **Fuller** asked Parties to address two questions and raise any other matter related to inter-linkages in their interventions. The questions posed were: "(i) how can we improve our collective understanding of the key links across the items relating to the PA work programme on the agendas of SBI, SBSTA and APA? and (ii) what implications do these links have for how we conduct our work, and how can we practically manage them?"

In their response, developing countries especially stressed that work should progress in a balanced manner and the inter-linkages should be addressed by conducting joint sessions among related items. They also touched upon the linkages they saw among the different items.

Maldives spoke for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** and said that linkages were crucial across the board to make sure Parties deliver on the necessary outcomes. Maldives stressed that the Executive Committee on Loss and Damage is a constituted body, which had crucial linkages with matters of the APA.

Pointing to other inter-linkages, Maldives said the transparency framework had extensive linkages with other thematic areas under APA as well as the subsidiary bodies. Adaptation has clearest linkages with Article 4 of the PA and the registry discussions under SBI. Maldives also pointed to the linkages between adaptation communication, transparency and the global stocktake (GST) and the work ongoing under the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), the Adaptation Committee (AC) and the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF).

It also said that finance had links with the transparency framework and accounting modalities on support provided and mobilized. It called for the timely conclusion of the accounting modalities so that it feeds into the transparency framework.

Maldives also highlighted the need for work on support needed and received and its link to the Adaptation Fund. It said that AOSIS would like loss and damage to be considered in both transparency framework as well as the GST and called for a placeholder on loss and damage in the two areas of discussion.

It said mitigation had clear link between accounting of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and transparency within the APA as well as with the work on Article 6 under SBSTA on internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs). It said that for future work, it was open to the idea of inter-sessional as well as pre-sessional workshops, but added that workshops should ensure the participation of all Parties.

Tuvalu spoke for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** and said that the [progress tracker](#) on the UNFCCC website was a useful tool (created by the Secretariat) to keep Parties updated on the work going on in the different bodies. (The progress tracker is a division of PA implementation work that has been allocated to the different bodies and contains the latest status of work.) Tuvalu also said there were some linkages that were not so obvious; for instance the conceptual issues related to gender, human rights and indigenous peoples. “Clearly, our first step is to acknowledge the various inter-linkages. We have to go through a process of which agenda item will deal with which linkages,” it said further.

Iran for the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** reiterated that work on the agenda items were linked such that the pace of progress in one element would affect progress in the other elements.

“We need to identify and strengthen the linkages between various APA agenda items and the corresponding relevant agenda items in the subsidiary bodies. In particular, our negotiations on NDC guidance and on transparency of action and support in the APA are integrally linked to the negotiations on the means of implementation under SBSTA agenda item 4 (on the technology

framework under Article 10.4 of the PA) and item11 (on modalities for the accounting of financial resources provided and mobilized through public interventions under Article 9.7, of the PA). It added that negotiations on the GST and on compliance in the APA are also integrally linked to the means of implementation discussions, particularly on finance and technology, under SBI agenda item 10 (on the periodic assessment of the Technology Mechanism), item 11 (on matters relating to climate finance), and item12 (on matters relating to capacity-building) and SBSTA agenda item 4.

Within the APA, “we need further clarity first on the modalities we develop in transparency, GST, and compliance, rather than prematurely discuss their linkages,” said Iran.

It added that the Technology Framework under the PA should support the implementation of the NDCs and Parties’ Technology Assessment Plans. It is also linked to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. In this context, the work on the Technology Framework under SBSTA and on the scope and modalities for the periodic assessment of the Technology Mechanism under SBI agenda are linked, said Iran.

It further said that the negotiations under SBSTA agenda item 10 on matters relating to Article 6 of the PA are linked to the negotiations in the APA on NDC guidance, transparency, GST, and compliance, because of the systemic implications that modalities developed in relation to Article 6 could have on the NDCs that Parties undertake, their implementation of such NDCs.

Iran suggested that to ensure the integrated and balanced treatment of “adaptation, means of implementation, and mitigation by the APA and the subsidiary bodies, joint sessions by the APA and the subsidiary bodies on agenda items relating to the means of implementation should be held to discuss the linkages, avoid duplication, and identify the gaps of our existing work”.

“We also strongly suggest that Parties' experts on means of implementation issues be enabled to participate in the APA negotiations on NDC guidance, transparency, GST, and compliance. To this end, the design and scheduling of formal and informal meetings on NDCs, transparency, GST, and compliance issues should be arranged in a manner that would allow Parties to send their negotiators on finance, technology and

capacity-building to these meetings,” it said further.

Iran also suggested that during the inter-sessional period leading up to COP23, Parties should be invited to make submissions on the inter-linkages, gaps in the work, and division of labour between the APA and the subsidiary bodies on these issues, particularly in relation to the means of implementation.

Guatemala spoke for the **Independent Alliance of the Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)** and said that the guidance on adaptation communications should address linkages with other provisions of the PA. It said transparency of support would be critical to assess mitigation as well as adaptation and that they needed to see progress in accounting of financial resources. It called for advancing of discussions on transparency of action.

China said that the issue of response measures and loss and damage are linked to the GST. Referring to the questions put forth, it said that the two questions could be divided into four questions to further understand the inter-linkages issue: why should we discuss inter-linkages; how could we cluster inter-linkages; how to deal with inter-linkages; what will be achieved through the inter-linkages? China then proceeded to answer the questions.

To the first question China said that thus far, there had been no clear picture on linkages. “When we were in Paris, we had differences in the Paris work plan. Some wanted an intergovernmental committee. Some said such a committee was not required and that existing channels should be used. Parties finally agreed on a middle-ground in establishing the APA to discuss all the mitigation-related tasks and sending finance, technology and capacity-building and most adaptation related issues to the subsidiary bodies,” said China. “That is the reason we need to discuss the linkage issue. We created some chaos but we now have to look forward to a concrete solution on inter-linkages,” it added further.

To the second question on how to cluster, China used the acronym CBDR to cluster the issues and clarified that this reflects the linkages as to concepts, the broader links between issues; linkage to issues that have been “depressed” and issues that are linked “recklessly”.

On the conceptual links, it said there were two

essential conceptual linkages and gave examples. The first was the link between the PA implementation work and the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol (KP). It gave the example of the transparency framework under the APA and existing work related to Measurement Reporting and Verification (MRV) under Convention and the KP. It pointed to ongoing work under the SBSTA (item 8 on methodological issues under the Convention) and item 9 (on methodological issues under the KP). It said that as per the PA, an enhanced transparency framework should build on the existing transparency arrangements and that the SBSTA issues were therefore inter-linked to the APA. The second example it gave was linkage between pre-2020 and post-2020 discussions.

China said that the ambition gap should not be carried over from the pre-2020 to the post-2020 period. It said that the place to discuss this inter-linkage was the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue (FD). China said the FD should focus on pre-2020 commitments to lay a solid foundation for post-2020 work.

On the broader linkages, China said the APA items on NDCs, transparency framework and GST and compliance were linked to means of implementation aspects of SBSTA and SBI. It said that paragraphs 55 and 57 of Decision 1/CP.21 were about ex-ante information on accounting of finance with respect to NDCs. The APA transparency discussions were linked to ongoing work in the SCF as well as accounting of financial resources under SBSTA. It also reiterated the link between work on the periodic review of Technology Mechanism and review of adaptation support with GST.

China then explained what it meant by “depressed linkage”. China said that these were homeless items and there was no place to discuss these items. It said such a linkage was between the collective finance goal and the GST. It said that the GST is to assess the global goals of the PA. While there were clear goals with respect to mitigation, adaptation, long-term vision on technology, but there was no clear picture on a collective finance goal. “If we do not have a clear picture on this, it would result in a very unclear picture on ambition,” it added.

It also said that there was no clear place to discuss support for technology or support for capacity building either. China added that there was a link between the Paris Committee on

Capacity Building (PCCB) and the Capacity Building Initiative on Transparency (CBIT) but the link was not attached to any of the workstreams. It called for the PCCB to discuss and elaborate the mandate of CBIT.

On the ‘reckless’ linkages, it said there were duplications. “For example, some Parties proposed during the APA transparency framework discussions that the description of NDCs and its information should be communicated in the NDC implementation progress reporting under the transparency framework. These Parties also proposed some specific NDC information to be communicated during the reporting of progress.

However, said China, the NDC information issue is under discussion under item 3 of the APA. The PA indicates that the NDCs would be communicated every 5 years. “If a Party was required to communicate its description of NDC and its information in the biennial reporting under the transparency framework, it would mean that Parties’ NDCs would be communicated every 2 years, which would cause inconsistency and duplication with the five-year communication of NDCs in the PA.”

It added that it would be important to avoid inconsistency between these two items, especially with respect to vehicle of reporting and accounting methods. In relation to vehicle of reporting and accounting, China said that under the NDCs should discuss the “what” issue; and transparency should discuss the “how” issue to ensure clear division of labour.

China said another reason for the ‘reckless’ linkages category was because some issues were premature. The modalities of transparency, GST and compliance are not clear, nor agreed to by all Parties, it said and called for discussions on the inter-linkages of these till further clarity was obtained.

To the third question on how to deal with inter-linkages, it said that they could experiment with joint consultations between finance and NDCs and transparency and accounting of financial resources under SBSTA. “We could establish these two pilot projects and see if we need other joint items,” said China and invited the Co-chairs of APA and the Chairs of SBI and SBSTA to provide an informal note or a conceptual note to demonstrate linkages on items.

To the fourth question of what would be the

outcome of inter-linkages, China said that the final outcome is to identify and establish clear and concise links between the ‘action’ aspect and the means of implementation (MOI) aspect. It added that links between action and support is key to ensure durability and sustainability of the PA.

Referring to the 2018 deadline of completing rules related to the implementation of the Paris work programme, China said that if the inter-linkages were identified, it would change the older narrative of nothing is agreed till everything is agreed. The new narrative would be, “Everything on the implementation of PA is agreed, since nothing on support is disagreed,” said China.

Saudi Arabia said in relation to the procedural steps needed to enable to the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures to serve the Paris Agreement, there was consensus to address this under the work being performed under the subsidiary bodies, in accordance with decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 33. “We would like to emphasize that that this approach is without prejudice to the clear intent of the Parties to the Convention to have the forum on response measure continue under, and serve, the PA as mandated by decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 33. We would like to have this reflected in the conclusions on the APA, as well as the subsidiary bodies,” said Saudi Arabia.

(Paragraph 33 reads: *Further decides that the SBSTA and the SBI shall recommend, for consideration and adoption by CMA1, the modalities, work programme and functions of the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures to address the effects of the implementation of response measures under the Agreement by enhancing cooperation amongst Parties on understanding the impacts of mitigation actions under the Agreement and the exchange of information, experiences, and best practices amongst Parties to raise their resilience to these impacts*)

Timor Leste called for the inclusion of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) in the conclusions of the meeting and said financing for loss and damage should be part of finance discussions.

European Union (EU) said that each body should make progress and that there is no hierarchy between issues managed by the different bodies, as there is only one Paris work programme. The EU also said that the issues

related to gender, human rights and science should be taken under the relevant items. EU said that when Parties went into the granular details of the issues, they might identify further areas where inter-linkages might appear. It said that linkages were context-specific and that individual solutions would need to be found. EU also said that inter-linkages should not hold up work and that joint sessions on substantive issues were an “unusual way of proceeding”, the Secretariat should continue to schedule meetings for the relevant experts to discuss transparency of support.

Switzerland referred to “confusion, bewilderment, delusion and rolling back” in its intervention and said it would refrain from stating the acronym for the four terms. Switzerland added that while there are inter-linkages between the different elements, Parties should avoid creating artificial linkages for areas that were not linked to each other. It gave the example of linking information for the clarity, transparency and understanding of NDCs with information in the biennial reports towards individual NDCs. Switzerland said that while these were inter-linked information these were very different information. One is forward looking information while the other information on what a Party had achieved.

Switzerland added that joint sessions for items linked could be a way forward and it would be important to ensure that meetings are organized in a manner where experts could attend them. It added that the progress tracker was useful to keep track of what Parties were doing in the different negotiations.

Norway said with respect to inter-linkages, Parties needed to follow up in the co-facilitated groups in the different bodies and that placeholders could help. It added that when the material is ready in the respective area, it would

be easier to look at how inter-linkages would be reflected and engaged upon.

In response, APA Co-chair Tyndall said the Co-chairs had taken note of specific suggestions. To Saudi Arabia’s suggestion of reflecting work on response measures, Tyndall said that some of that discussion on the issue was happening under Item 8 (Matters related to the implementation of the PA) of the APA and that discussions there would proceed with a view to reflecting it in the draft outcome of the APA.

With respect to calls for including the WIM in such sessions, Tyndall said that the comments were taken on board.

Tyndall also said that the Co-chairs and the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies were discussing issuing some form of communication, which would specifically address linkages with various bodies and make progress for preparing the ground for COP23.

SBI Chair Chruszczow added that in this process, everything was linked to everything. He also said that in this process unless everything is ready, there is no outcome and in this process everybody has a role to play. He said that more joint meetings were needed such as the session they had had. “This gives you the ownership of the process and gives a transparent outlook on where this is taking you. This is reassurance that items are developing in a balanced manner. We need to carefully consider how to organize work for the next sessions. If we have to avoid clashes, we should clash and merge issues and have joint discussions,” said Chruszczow.

SBSTA Chair Carlos Fuller confirmed that as presiding officers, they would coordinate closely with each other.