

Submission to the UNFCCC consultation on the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

30 July 2020

Response to the invitation to provide feedback on how to improve the Marrakech Partnership

We hope that with these recommendations we can support the MPGCA in developing its strategy. We believe that **only if these recommendations are coherently and thoroughly implemented, the MPGCA can evolve from its current form to an inclusive platform that can respond to its mission and promote climate action.** Climate action is understood not only in the form of pledges but in the form of implemented actions and proven results – complementary to the mandatory climate action negotiated under the UNFCCC and supporting the common goal of the Paris Agreement.

Who we are

CIDSE is an international family of Catholic social justice organizations working together with others to promote social justice, harness the power of global solidarity, and create transformational change to end poverty and inequalities. It aims at challenging systemic injustice and inequity as well as the destruction of nature. CIDSE promotes just and environmentally sustainable alternatives and believes in a world where every human being has a right to live in dignity.

The CIDSE network works for a society based on social, economic, and gender equality and solidarity; where the economy is at the service of society and functions within its planetary boundaries. We aim at a fairer share of and limits to the use of global resources, democratized governance where people can regain control over their choices, and economies based on the understanding of a shared commons.

CIDSE works for reforms with transformative potential such as: shifting away from fossil fuels and extractivism, limiting global temperature rise below 1.5 °C [1], promoting the right to food and agroecology [2], regulating business to protect human rights, securing sustainable finance and fair wealth distribution, supporting local communities to speak for themselves, working towards gender equality, and enabling sustainable ways of living. To meet these ends, CIDSE contributes to global movements and alliances, promotes people's solutions and alternatives, and advocates at the national and international levels. CIDSE brings together 18 member organizations¹ from Europe and North America. Its international secretariat is based in Brussels.

Intro

CIDSE and its member organizations welcome that the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action (MPGCA) has launched a process of consultation on how to transform the partnership for it to contribute effectively to real climate ambition. CIDSE wishes to take up this invitation. This input draws from the principles of Catholic Social Teaching [3], as well as CIDSE's experiences of working with

¹ [Broederlijk Delen](#) – Belgium • [CAFOD](#) – England and Wales • [CCFD - Terre Solidaire](#) – France • [Cordaid](#) – the Netherlands • [Development & Peace](#) – Canada • [Entraide et Fraternité](#) – Belgium • [eRko](#) – Slovakia • [Fastenopfer](#) – Switzerland • [FEC](#) – Portugal • [FOCSIV](#) – Italy • [KOO](#) – Austria • [Manos Unidas](#) – Spain • [Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns](#) – USA • [MISEREOR](#) – Germany • [Partage.lu](#) (formerly Briderlech Deelen) – Luxembourg • [SCIAF](#) – Scotland • [Trócaire](#) – Ireland • [Vastenactie](#) – the Netherlands

some of the people most vulnerable to climate impacts around the world. We would like to answer the following guiding question:

Q2. How can the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership add the most value and complement existing efforts to drive ambition and transformation in the next 5 years and beyond?

We understand that the MPGCA was launched in 2016 with the mission of “strengthening collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders to allow greater mitigation and adaptation action.”

1. Include local voices and experiences on the ground

Interactions between party stakeholders and non-party stakeholders are indeed important for the partnership’s success. **It is critical that civil society is included and prioritized as an essential "non-party stakeholder," especially people most impacted by climate change.** It is our experience from many places around the world where CIDSE members are active that *local stakeholders, civil society organizations, small-scale enterprises, and communities have well-rooted knowledge on how to tackle the challenges of climate change* – be it on the side of mitigation or adaptation.

In several developing countries, local communities are experimenting with renewable energy solutions to meet their power generation needs and building resilience while facing the challenges of adapting climate change impacts [4] [5]. It is important to actively include such voices in decision-making to (a) harvest the existing knowledge and build on it, (b) to ensure that response measures to climate change are implemented in a socially just manner, and (c) to realize that there is no climate success if people resist change on the ground.

As Pope Francis noted in his encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, we are facing an environmental and social challenge (LS 49) [6]. Upon signing the Paris Agreement, parties committed to keep a global temperature rise this century well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels in this century and to take further steps to reduce the temperature increase to 1.5 °C including implementing a just transition [7] [8]. Thus, the response measures should consider an integrated approach that addresses both the environmental and social aspects at the same time [3]. In this sense, the MPGCA should increase its efforts to bring local-level stakeholders in contact with official party representatives who are negotiating the various work plans for turning the Paris Agreement into an operative multilateral treaty.

The core goal of the Paris Agreement is to improve the global response to the challenge of climate change by sustaining a global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius.

In the past year, the MPGCA has had a significant development by becoming a high-level reference for spurring voluntary climate pledges from non-party stakeholders such as multinational companies and other non-state actors. However, local stakeholders, communities, and civil society have not been actively invited to participate in the spaces provided by the MPGCA. **This perpetual exclusion of local stakeholders by the MPGCA in favor of business representatives and investors reinforces the marginalization of essential voices who are the most harmed by climate change.**

Recommendation 1 – Inclusion

1. It is pivotal for the MPGCA to include local stakeholders (such as local communities, Indigenous Peoples, local small-scale enterprises) faith-based and civil society organizations to effectively fulfill its mission and be a relevant space connecting non-party stakeholders with parties.
 - a. Local stakeholders must be part of the strategic planning, implementation, and accountable governance system of the MPGCA. Such inclusion must not only be applied to the level of individual events organized by the MPGCA but primarily when

drafting the (annual) workplan, setting priorities, defining positions on disputed topics (such as geo-engineering or others) and evaluating the progress of its members via the tracking tools.

2. Provide clarity on the MPGCA governance structure

We note that the current governance structures of the MPGCA lack clarity. We believe that to fulfill its mission, the MPGCA needs transparent, inclusive, and strong governance mechanisms; because only a clearly shaped and well-applied governance system allows a platform (such as the MPGCA) to follow its purpose across the years. This will ensure equal and inclusive participation of the different stakeholder groups.

Recommendation 2 - Governance

2. For the reasons set out above, we recommend that the MPGCA redefine its governance structure to clarify: who are its members what are their roles, who is the executive body, who decides on the strategic development of the MPGCA, how are different members included in the MPGCA's governance structures, what is its formal tie to the UNFCCC secretariat, who is responsible for tracking the pledges made within the MPGCA, and how and to whom is the progress and the lack of progress reported?

3. Develop an effective tracking & transparency framework to monitor progress on pledges

We have noted that an important element of the MPGCA is to spur voluntary climate pledges. The type of pledges registered in the NAZCA platform are diverse and differ in ambition. We think that such a portal showcasing to the world what is underway can have a positive effect on driving global climate ambition. However, it is a fine line between harvesting the fruits of appraisal for these plans and evincing tangible actions that can be verified via monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessments. A clear methodological framework is central to making credible pledges. This framework should make transparent how the pledges' implementation can be monitored. The NAZCA platform does not provide any such framework. The MPGCA, therefore, is currently being used for pledges without traceability [9], thus undermining its credibility.

Recommendation 3 – Tracking & Transparency

3. To establish a system where climate action pledges can be verified there must exist a methodological framework that allows the MPGCA to transparently track and monitor the implementation progress of the pledge. This includes a defined and openly published baseline and implementation milestones (action plan) with regular progress updates. All of these elements need to be publicly available for third parties to check. Stakeholders who fail to meet their goals must not remain as contributors within the partnership.
 - a. Only such a methodologically coherent and transparent system can give credibility to climate action pledges. This recommendation is linked to recommendation 2 on governance, since it has to be clearly established and made public by whom and how the tracking and reporting are executed.
 - b. Only implemented pledges for gross emissions reductions significantly contribute to climate action. Because fossil fuel emissions and biological carbon are not equivalent, and because we need real emissions reductions, *offsetting pledges must not be considered as emissions reductions.*

4. Provide clear guidelines on how the MPGCA efforts will complement the implementation of NDCs

We understand that the MPGCA seeks to *contribute to existing efforts*. In our opinion, this is exactly the approach to follow. Voluntary action is good if it contributes and fastens state-actors' climate ambition.

They shall contribute to, but never substitute, the legally binding climate action negotiated under the UNFCCC in a multilateral framework. The legally binding climate action from parties is enshrined in the NDCs, to be updated every five years [7]. As of now, there is a lack of clarity on how pledges from non-state actors, such as cities, regions, or multinational companies made within the MPGCA are linked to their respective NDCs [9].

Furthermore, when discussing the issue of “*complementarity*” **parties must not use voluntary climate action pledges to reduce the ambition of their NDC submission.** We urge the MPGCA to prevent this dynamic as it would considerably weaken the multilateral negotiation space of the UNFCCC. Thus, for parties, it must be attractive to increase their NDC’s ambition even more in case that substantial pledges concerning their country are registered.

Recommendation 4 - Complementarity

4. As stated above, a contribution needs to be examined from the angle of NDC ambition and the pledges’ credibility. For this reason, we recommend the following:
 - a. The MPGCA should differentiate between (a) pledges that go beyond a respective NDC and thus are fully voluntary and (b) pledges that embody a concrete implementation of an NDC-obligation by a non-party stakeholder.
 - b. Additionally, pledges that implement an existing NDC-obligation (as defined under 4.a., above) have to be declared as such. In this case, the pledge for emission reduction itself is not voluntary. However, it could still be interesting to register such pledges if they are formulated in a way that they make explicit a concrete and ambitious implementation of an NDC-obligation, which is worthwhile to be shared with the larger public.
 - c. The registry of MPGCA pledges should serve as an incentive for more ambitious NDCs as its registry can inspire parties to make their respective NDCs more ambitious – as they see where the voluntary action is already underway in their country.

References

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