

Feedback from the Trade Union NGOs (TUNGO) on the functioning of the Marrakesh Partnership

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The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) representing the Trade Union NGOs (TUNGO) at the UNFCCC appreciates the initiative by Mr. Gonzalo Muñoz and Mr. Nigel Topping, the High-Level Champions of COP25 and COP26, to give our feedback on the functioning of the Marrakesh Partnership (MP). We also appreciate it that we had the opportunity to have a thorough discussion with the Climate Champions (CC) and the 9 Constituency focal points on Friday 17 July. The answers to the questions below elaborate on that discussion.

Q1. How would you define success of the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership in terms of enhancing ambition in the next 5 years and beyond?

In order to define “success” we need to start from the facts. The message of the latest UNEP Emission Gap Report is very clear and sobering: *“GHG emissions continue to rise, despite scientific warnings and political commitments.”* The only sensible solution provided by the report, and known to everybody, is straightforward: *“Dramatic strengthening of the NDCs is needed in 2020. Countries must increase their NDC ambitions threefold to achieve the well below 2°C goal and more than fivefold to achieve the 1.5°C goal.”*¹ We all see that this is not happening. Only a handful of countries have presented new or enhanced NDCs.

The introduction of the system of NDCs, where governments decide on the level of national action instead of a top-down decision on the level of emissions reductions that are needed, gave a lot of freedom to the Parties. However, there cannot be freedom without responsibility. Parties need to be and seen to be accountable for the commitments they signed up to in the Paris Agreement. The role (and success) of the High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership must be seen in this context of enhanced and increased ambition of the Parties NDCs. Their work needs to be judged on the contribution to these more ambitious NDCs. The role of the Champions and that of the Parties (the respective COP presidencies) needs to be clearly distinguished and clearly understood by the Parties in relation to their role and that of non-Party stakeholders. If not there remains a confusion about where the agency is, with the Parties or with the non-Parties. Non-Parties, as agents for implementing the transition and the potential to drive greater action for rising ambition is important. The Champions can therefore engage and activate partnerships and coalitions around those roles to reach climate neutrality. Whereas the final responsibility lays with the Parties that signed up to the Paris Agreement. Most are not acting in accordance with meeting their own objectives nor taking responsibility at this point in time. The MP should

¹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/30798/EGR19ESEN.pdf?sequence=13>

clarify any confusion on the respective responsibilities and accountabilities. This is an important step in ensuring more meaningful engagement by all actors.

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?

The biggest challenge to drive ambition and transformation successfully is the integration of the social dimension in the climate policy work. A strong focus on technical and business driven solutions builds on the illusion that with a technological fix the world can continue as today without having to change consumption patterns, economic structures and power balances, trade relations, inequalities between peoples and nations, etc. In order to be able to bring the profound transitions in societies we should focus a lot less on the “winners” (they usually can take care of themselves) and put the “losers” (people, communities that are and will be most affected by climate change) central to the policy debate. This does not mean that we should not focus on industrial and technological solutions. The attention should be on integrating the broader social dimensions into these solutions and the way we implement them in society being aware of consequences of not doing so. From the Trade Union movement, we call this the need for a Just Transition – as both a process and an outcome.

The Paris Agreement acknowledges issues of equity. Most processes driving climate policy have not addressed equity effectively. Delivering and guaranteeing ‘social justice’ is an essential driver for climate ambition. This requires massive investments to ‘climate and employment proof’ the future. The ILO has a comprehensive set of guidelines for Just Transition measures and policies to support governments, employers, workers and CSOs.² Countries have committed to the ‘Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration’³ at COP24 and the ‘Climate Action for Jobs’ initiative⁴ at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019.

Q3. How can the High-Level Champions enhance collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders to further catalyse global climate action?

a) How can Parties benefit from the action resulting from the Global Climate Action movement and how can this action best be reflected in the work of the High-Level Champions?

The MP and the CC should take great attention on keeping the Parties focussed on their first priority: presenting ambitious and enhanced NDCs. The MP and the CC should refrain from showcasing any Party initiative that is not conducive to this objective.

Commitments declared by UN agencies, business groups and cities are very important. However, repackaging commitments already made or failing to demonstrate their impact and relevance means some initiatives are too far from the ground or do not elicit sufficient follow-up.

² https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_432859/lang--en/index.htm

³ <https://cop24.gov.pl/presidency/initiatives/just-transition-declaration/>

⁴ https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/areas-of-work/climate-change/WCMS_732060/lang--en/index.htm

We recommend giving attention to engaging a broader set of stakeholders with actors from the global south and others who can drive genuine community level impact and build greater resilience. Sectoral and geographically specific solutions could be highlighted that encourage solutions that connect shared technologies, job creation, food security; sectoral initiatives to provide financing and shared Intellectual Property. Investment in innovation has tended to be very narrowly framed to date.

b) How can the COP and the UNFCCC process be more effective in the collaboration between Parties and non-Party stakeholders to further catalyse global climate action?

This is a very important question. After 30 years of negotiations, is the UNFCCC and its COPs still fit for purpose? As indicated above with the reference to UNEP's Emission Gaps Report, we think that profound changes are needed. All actors (Parties and non-Parties) have a responsibility in implementing the Paris Agreement. This can't be done without stronger and better cooperation between Parties and non-Parties. How this should be organised is a common responsibility that needs to be assumed and the earlier the better. This is a discussion that goes beyond the MP and the CC. The ITUC appreciates for example the Open Channel initiative set up by the UNFCCC Executive Secretary Ms. Espinoza. The Parties need a voice in this debate, and vice versa, the non-Party stakeholders need a voice in the debate among the Parties as being held for example in the discussions on 'Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings' (AIM).

The ITUC would like to give the following general recommendations for inclusive participation by non-party stakeholders:

- Reaching inclusive participation is a "work in progress" with all the actors involved (UNFCCC secretariat, COP presidency, Parties, and the 9 constituencies. This is especially the case today, since the UNFCCC needs to shift its focus from "negotiating" agreements to the "implementation" of the Paris Agreement and its commitments.
- The role of non-Party stakeholders is crucial, due to the bottom up system with the Nationally Determined Contributions. The Parties decide about their policies, but the international community and Non-State Parties evaluate if it's enough to reach the Paris objectives.
- Inclusive participation can only be reached if a "balance" exists between the different stakeholders. It is important that all legitimate stakeholders access the possibilities to participate that they are entitled to. This means for example that the concept of "stakeholder" is not always appropriate, as some groups are in fact "rights holders". This is the case for workers and their protected fundamental labour rights (established via international labour standards and ILO conventions) but also indigenous peoples, women and others whose rights are defined and protected under international treaties and UN legal mandates.

c) How could the High-Level Champions through their work in accelerating action and ambition of non-Party stakeholders most effectively contribute to the global stocktake of the Paris Agreement?

We don't see a direct role for the High-Level Champions in the global stocktake. The Champions and the MP need to play their role in assisting the Parties to present NDCs that are in line with the climate emergency we face. This is also explained in the answer to question 1.

Q4. On the basis of experience so far, how can the Marrakech Partnership be improved for enhancing ambition, including through new and existing tools?

We see two ways:

- The need to integrate the social dimension in the work of the MP, as explained in the answer to question 2. The ITUC has presented proposals in this respect and tries to contribute to this considering capacity limits.
- The MP is not a forum for the representation of Non-Party actors. Due to its functioning not all Non-Party actors are represented, nor is there a balanced representation. The open access system is appropriate to the objectives of the MP to reach the broadest possible participation of actors and should therefore be maintained. However, it also means that only organisations with available time and (financial) resources can actively participate and invest in the MP. Enhanced and broader participation in the MP can increase its relevance.

For more information you can always take up contact with us:

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