

Submission By the Republic of Zambia on behalf of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN):

Views on the Technical Phase of the First Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement

Overview

Africa's starting point is our long-term vision for sustainable development, in the context of the present and future threat of climate change. This vision is contained in the African Union's Agenda 2063 and is also expressed in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. It includes the vision of building a climate-resilient continent and low-carbon economies through the exploitation of its natural resources, manufacturing, innovation and the creativity and resourcefulness of Africa's people. Long-term climate-resilient and low-emissions development in Africa must therefore first meet sustainable development goals, and contribute to the global long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. The transitions which this development entails must be a just transition; no-one must be left behind. Africa cannot achieve this on its own. The climate change crisis can only be successfully addressed multilaterally, with contributions by countries based on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and in the light of equity and national circumstances. It is therefore critical that all elements of the Paris Agreement are fully implemented and progress therefore assessed as part of the Global Stocktake.

Background

The state of Africa's climate is strongly characterised by changes in temperature and precipitation, both of which have a strong influence on the economic and living conditions in the continent. The variations in these two indicators are having a huge impact on key livelihood activities, especially on agriculture, food security and water resources. Much of Africa has already warmed by more than 1°C since 1901 (WMO, 2020). The latest IPCC Working Group 1 Report also shows that in Africa, the mean temperatures and hot extremes have emerged above natural variability, relative to 1850–1900, in all land regions in Africa. Also, the rate of surface temperature increase has generally been more rapid in Africa than the global average, with human-induced climate change being the dominant driver. It is projected that heatwaves and warm spell durations will increase, suggesting an increased persistence of hot days towards the end of the century (IPCC, 2012). The frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events will also increase almost everywhere in Africa with additional global warming (IPCC, 2021), and this likely to have serious implications on economic activities and livelihoods in Africa where 95% of cropland is rainfed and an estimated 62% of the sub-Saharan workforce employed is in agriculture (IPCC 2022). Limiting global warming to 1.5°C is expected to substantially reduce damages to African economies, agriculture, human health, and ecosystems compared to higher levels of global warming (IPCC, 2022).

Historically, Africa as a region has contributed the least to global emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs). The continent currently accounts about 7% of global emissions, which is on a relative basis, very low compared to other regions. Its relative share of the global GHG emissions is not expected to change very much if African country Parties fulfil their NDC commitments and work towards net zero by mid-century.

To this end, Africa's overall expectations for the first global stocktake are as follows:

- Adaptation to, and loss and damage due to, climate change are a global responsibility, as reaffirmed by the Paris Agreement in its Articles 2 and 7. We are now seeing climate impacts on the Continent which need to be urgently addressed. The GST should consider in depth the extent to which we are meeting the goals, action and support contained in Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, and what additional steps need to be taken to build adequate resilience in developing countries, and to address the urgent needs arising from loss and damage due to climate change;

- COP 26 highlighted the inadequacy of collective mitigation efforts contained in current NDCs and long-term strategies, especially for the midterm (2030). Clearly, we must find ways to increase our collective mitigation efforts to keep the 1.5°C degree goal alive. This must be done within the principles set out in the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement; in other words, in the light of equity, and in the context of common but differentiated responsibilities, and most importantly, must address the question of support for enhanced mitigation action to developing countries;
- African and other developing countries will require significant levels of international support to contribute effectively to achieving the long-term global temperature goal, and to build resilience at a time when many developing countries are facing severe debt crises, exacerbated by the COVID crisis. The issue of debt crisis is a particularly serious concern for African countries that has been, compounded by the challenge of the pandemic. The continent's debt burden is estimated at 70% of the GDP. A report by the IIED, based on World Bank data shows that on average, debt stocks in the 40 sub-Saharan African countries increased by 33.4% as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) between 2018 and 2020. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, many African countries were already facing high debt burdens with 31 of the 37 countries classified as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) from in Africa. Understanding of the fairness of Africa's efforts to address climate change and this unsustainable debt burden should take cognisance of factors including the historical colonial legacy underlying Africa's current external trade relations whereby Africa's exports is dominated by climate sensitive primary products, and fossil and mineral resources. These factors should form a critical part of the just transition agenda especially if the continent must respond effectively to response measures under the Paris Agreement.
- So far, the required levels of support have not been forthcoming, as noted in the Glasgow Climate Pact. Moreover, incurring much higher levels of debt is not economically feasible for many African countries, and will compromise sustainable development goals. The GST should consider how to address the need for support within the context of this debt crisis, and explore climate finance instruments that do not lead to indebtedness. At the same time, support in the context of the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement is not limited to the provision of finance, but includes capacity-building and technology transfer, as well as the effective functioning of the constituted bodies of the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, and the UNFCCC Secretariat itself, supported by adequate resources. It also includes resources to support the effective participation of developing countries in Paris Agreement processes, and the participation of other Southern voices.

The outcomes from these Technical Dialogues will probably raise a number of cross-cutting issues which need to be addressed regarding current and future implementation of the Paris Agreement, including the role of the constituted bodies and the UNFCCC Secretariat in facilitating implementation. This will require a cross-cutting conversation in perhaps either a different format (for instance, in TD3), or a fourth roundtable specifically focused on implementation from TD 2 onwards.

One of the most key cross-cutting issues is that of the just transition. This has until recently been addressed in discussions under the UNFCCC in connection with response measures. It is now widely recognised that the just transition is essential to both mitigation and adaptation, and also to an equitable outcome.

African Group Priorities and Expectations for the GST

The AGN anticipates that the Technical Dialogues will provide a strong evidence base to address the urgent challenges which currently exist in implementing the Paris Agreement, which, after consideration at COP 28, will result in a set of clear action-oriented outcomes, consistent with the Paris Agreement. The technical dialogues should therefore consider in detail the latest science, and specifically the IPCC's 6th Assessment Report, and provide the space for a substantive and balanced discussion of adaptation, mitigation and support in the light of equity. Participation in ALL GST processes should be balanced and representative, reflecting demographic realities in the representation of developed and developing countries.

The AGN also takes note of the fact that there are four parallel processes unfolding at the same time, which to a certain extent overlap with the GST on finance, mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage. Creative ways need to be found to ensure that these processes are mutually reinforcing and not duplicative, in the interests of the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

The Dialogues should be organised taking cognizance of the fact that the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement are international treaties. While non-state actors are making and will inevitably make a valuable contribution to addressing climate change, Parties to the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement will be responsible for adopting outcomes of the GST and acting on these. Representation of non-state actors in the Technical Dialogues and other GST processes should also represent an appropriate balance between those based in developed and developing countries.

Finally, as noted above, there are many cross-cutting issues- especially the connection between mitigation, adaptation and support provided to developing countries. The discussion on support will need to consider information and deliberations in the other two Dialogues. There is a strong case for establishing an additional round table for implementation, to address these cross-cutting issues, from the second Technical Dialogue on.

Expectations for Outcomes

The key outcomes which the AGN expects are laid out below. These are laid out by theme. Cross-cutting outcomes include a comprehensive assessment of gaps in implementing the Paris Agreement, acknowledgement of Africa's special circumstances and needs, and a balanced outcome which is not mitigation-centric.

Adaptation and loss and damage

The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) contained in Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, 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" should form the focus of consideration of adaptation in the GST. The African Group has advocated since the Paris Agreement entered into force in 2016 that Parties elaborate on the GGA to enable this consideration. Parties finally agreed at COP 26 to undertake a work programme on the GGA (the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation). While the two processes xxx, The AGN is strongly in favour of an interim outcome on the work programme at COP 27, which could usefully inform the third technical dialogue.

The key focus of the GST's technical dialogue on adaptation and loss and damage should be a consideration of the extent to which the current implementation of the Paris Agreement is meeting the GGA, in terms of the elements in Article 7. Even though Loss and Damage is identified as a separate theme in the 19/CMA.1 the Group recognises the pragmatic combination of the two themes, however insistent on clearly delineated sections dedicated to these thematic areas in the undertaking and reporting of the TD outcome, such that the relevant bodies can receive clear recommendations for enhanced actions.

Consideration should also be given in terms of Article 2.1(b) to the development of long-term resilience, especially in developing countries.

The latest IPCC Assessment Report's Working Group 2 report is a very valuable basis on which to assess the current state of adaptation and loss and damage, and should be considered in detail, with other information on the current state of adaptation. It will also be essential to consider linkages with other Dialogues – with mitigation on likely global temperature trajectories to 2030 and beyond based on current and expected mitigation ambition (1.5, 2 and 3.2, for instance), to assess adaptation needs – and with support to assess ways in which support will be scaled up to achieve the necessary adaptation outcomes, and to address loss and damage.

Mitigation and Response Measures

Meeting the Paris Agreement's temperature goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees is vital for Africa, as one of the regions that are most vulnerable to climate change. The GST should consider both the urgent question of short-term GHG reductions to 2030, and longer-term pathways to 2050 and beyond. The GST should also revisit the question of what constitutes a "fair and ambitious" contribution – while the GST will not consider the actions of individual countries, the process can usefully address the criteria that countries should consider in assessing whether their contributions are "fair and ambitious" in relation to the global goals of the Paris Agreement, in relation both to mitigation and the support of mitigation in developing countries.

As with adaptation, the Technical Dialogue on mitigation should start with an assessment of collective progress against the global temperature goal set out in the Paris Agreement's Article 2. This should draw on the IPCC's 6th Assessment Working Group 3 report, as well as the UNFCCC Secretariat's updated NDC synthesis report, and should also place the current mitigation gap in 2030 in its historical context, including the context of pre-2020 mitigation, in the light of equity. The TD should also consider the WG III chapter on achieving reductions by 2030 consistent with achieving a 1.5°C degree global pathway.

It is not possible to consider the question of mitigation without considering the question of appropriate support, in accordance with Article 4.5 of the Paris Agreement. An acceleration of decarbonization, in both the long and shorter terms in developing countries, will require considerable additional support. Such support should ensure a just transition in developing countries.

Africa currently contributes the least per capita to global emissions of any region in the world, and has contributed the least to historical GHG emissions. But the two key sectors which currently (and could on a much greater scale in future) contribute to global GHG emissions are also central to Africa's development – energy and land. In the energy sector, Africa has the lowest rate globally of electrification, and in many regions, households still depend on unsafe fuels such as wood, coal and paraffin. At the same time, Africa has the smallest regional share of investment in clean energy technologies such as renewable energy. Land use change is one of the biggest emitting sectors in Africa, and the African land sector is also a massive potential carbon sink in a net zero world. Both of these offer opportunities for sustainable development, with the appropriate support

In addressing response measures, considerations of equity, historical responsibilities and different national circumstances are fundamental. Current arrangements, including the forum and the KCI, are not effectively addressing negative impacts of response measures on developing countries. Consideration of response measures and the way in which these are being addressed should consider a much broader set of issues, including broadening consideration of the just transition, including timelines for countries to transition given our different circumstances, support needed by developing countries (funding, capacity building, technology needs) to transition, needed for job losses and creation of new jobs, the losses in regard to assets and investments and trade issues.

Support (finance, technology transfer, capacity-building)

The recognition of the inadequate provision of support to developing countries for implementation of the Paris Agreement was one of the key outcomes of COP 26. Against this background, and taking cognisance of other processes to define the new long-term finance goal, the key outcomes of the GST on support should be recommendations on the quantum of resources needed to support low emissions and climate-resilient development, including for technology transfer, development and diffusion, capacity building and public education, awareness and training. These should recognize the unique circumstances of Africa, noting Africa's slow progress rate in eradicating poverty and that Africa is one of the regions that contribute the least to climate change, yet is highly vulnerable and exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change. These should also be based on just transition pathways for Africa – increasing access to investment flows tied to the global low-emissions shift - thus enhancing positive economic growth while minimizing the debt burden on countries.