



WWF Submission on Topics for the 2023 Dialogues under the Mitigation Work Programme

Date: February 1st, 2023

WWF is pleased to respond to the call to Parties, observers and other non-Party stakeholders to submit suggested topics in line with the scope of the work programme referred to in paragraph 4 of FCCC/PA/CMA/2022/L.17, para. 12 to be discussed under the dialogues. We provide our views and inputs below.

Summary

WWF recommends as the initial focus for the Mitigation Work Programme in 2023 the theme 'Electricity systems that produce no net CO₂, including renewable energy'. We also recommend that there are four dialogues in 2023 on the following thematic areas:

- Workshop 1 - Accelerating scale up of renewable energy sources
- Workshop 2 - Accelerating phase-out of fossil fuels
- Workshop 3 - Social transformation in the power sector - Just Energy Transformation and Energy Access
- Workshop 4 - Financing the transition.

WWF notes that the Mitigation Work Programme should consider how to address these sustainable development challenges without increasing the burden on developing countries.

I – Context

WWF sees the Mitigation Work Program (MWP) as a key opportunity to close the mitigation gap in this decade through strengthening cooperation between Parties and other actors within the framework of the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement. We welcome the CMA decision from COP27 on the scope of the work programme, defined as *“broad thematic areas relevant to urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade and include all sectors covered in the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, thematic areas in the contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and relevant enabling conditions, technologies, just transitions and cross-cutting issues”*.

WWF recalls that the IPCC 6th Assessment Report indicates that to meet the Paris Agreement goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C, global GHG emissions need to peak by 2025 and be cut 43% by 2030 (using a 2019 baseline). We highlight that the current level of mitigation ambition and implementation is not compatible with

1.5°C pathways, as confirmed by the UNFCCC NDC synthesis Report and the UNEP Emissions Gap Report of 2022.

Addressing these failures ahead of 2030 is vital to keep the prospect of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C, with limited or low overshoot. To achieve this objective, WWF urges the MWP to adopt annual thematic priorities aligned with science to explore cooperation, action and support in key sectors.

II – A Sectoral Approach as a core element of the MWP

The failure to close the stubborn gap between aggregate emissions trajectories and those required to limit warming to 1.5 C is a clear demonstration that Parties must go beyond existing efforts and explore new approaches. Much attention has been paid to national level targets and their impact. Yet the actions required to shift emissions trajectories and transform economies to meet climate goals will take place at the sectoral level, through interventions that can accelerate the shift to zero emissions technologies in the energy, transport, buildings, urban planning, appliances, lighting, agriculture, land use, etc.

Efforts have been made outside the UNFCCC and Paris regime to explore opportunities around sector level cooperation and coordination. Nevertheless, within the UNFCCC and Paris regime, which is where the world had deposited much of its hopes for addressing the climate emergency, efforts have been sporadic and superficial at best.

The UNFCCC has built up a strong knowledge base and institutions for technological cooperation, capacity building and financial support over the past decades that can be mobilized to support strategies developed by the Mitigation Work Program. One exception is forests, where considerable efforts have been made to create the REDD+ framework under the UNFCCC. However, little comparable effort has gone into addressing by far the largest sources of emissions, which are energy production, transformation and end use. It is here where the battle against runaway climate change will be largely won or lost, and where the Mitigation Work Program can make its greatest contribution.

If countries each decide to tackle emissions within their borders with no efforts to coordinate or cooperate with other jurisdictions, the global effort will be unnecessarily fragmented, siloed, and limited by national boundaries. Globally and transnationally, economic sectors share common technologies, suppliers, markets and have similar challenges and opportunities. Coordinated regional or global strategies can unlock opportunities, leverage large scale transformations, and achieve economies of scale. Sectoral cooperation in the context of the MWP could include, for example:

- Information sharing and voluntary guidance for actions by Parties and subnational and non-state actors;
- Matching of funding and financial flows to enable enhanced actions in developing countries;
- Harmonizing regulations or standards - e.g., minimum efficiency standards for motors, lighting, cooling, buildings, vehicles, appliances or other technologies;
- Coordinated economic measures such as carbon pricing, removals of subsidies for environmentally harmful products, etc.
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III - Priority topic for 2023: The Global Energy Transition

According to the IPCC 6th Assessment Report, global warming cannot be limited to 1.5°C without rapid and deep reductions in energy system CO₂ and GHG emissions¹. Therefore, in order for the MWP to fulfill its mandate, **WWF calls on Parties to prioritize the discussion of activities that will accelerate a global energy transition and further global progress towards a net zero energy system, with consideration for national circumstances and equity.**

¹ In scenarios limiting likely warming to 1.5°C with limited overshoot (likely below 2°C), net energy system CO₂ emissions (interquartile range) fall by 87% to 97% (60% to 79%) in 2050 (WGIII, 6-4)

We recommend as the initial focus of the programme in 2023 the following theme: “Electricity systems that produce no net CO₂, including renewable energy”². The sequencing of actions can vary by country, but as the remaining carbon budget is so limited that the transition needs to be initiated at an accelerated pace immediately, everywhere. Given the complexity of this issue, we believe that four dialogues should be held in 2023 covering the following thematic areas:

- **Workshop 1 - Accelerating scale up of renewable energy sources:** Advancing the technologies, market structures and planning needed to support a global transition.
- **Workshop 2 - Accelerating phase-out of fossil fuels:** Phasing-out incumbent fossil fuel intensive industries at the same time as zero-carbon alternatives are scaled up to avoid locking in a high energy and high carbon future.
- **Workshop 3 - Social transformation in the power sector - Just Energy Transformation and Energy Access:** The transformation needs to be planned carefully, especially in regions that are currently dependent on fossil fuel extraction for jobs and public revenue. Planning for this change is a vital pre-requisite to a successful transformation aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, SDG 7 - to ensure access to affordable, reliable and modern energy for all by 2030 – is also key. According to the IEA, achieving full access by 2030 will require connecting almost 100 million people every year, but the world is not on track to reach this goal. The findings of this workshop will also be relevant for the discussions of the Just Transition Programme established at COP 27.
- **Workshop 4 - Financing the transition:** Increasing finance flows for renewable energy, addressing barriers such as cost of capital; repurposing and redirecting subsidies from fossil fuels to renewables. This workshop could benefit and inform discussions under the New Quantitative Collective Finance Goal process and art. 2.1.c.

Limiting warming to 1.5 well below 2°C will require substantial energy system changes immediately and over the next 30 years, including reduced fossil fuel production and consumption, increased production from low- and zero-carbon energy sources, improved energy efficiency, and increased use of electricity and alternative energy carriers.

Finally, WWF notes that The Mitigation Work Programme should consider core to its remit exploring how to address these sustainable development challenges without increasing the burden on developing countries. Successful mitigation must work in tandem with fundamental development goals such as sustainable and inclusive development³ and access to modern forms of energy⁴.

² See WGIII Ch6-3

³ Projected emissions of existing and currently planned fossil fuel infrastructure (850 [600–1100] GtCO₂) exceed CO₂ emissions in pathways that limit warming to 1.5°C (WG III, p. 20). This projected investment in fossil fuel resources could amount in stranded assets up to trillions of dollars, some mitigation options can provide more immediate and cost-effective emissions reductions.

⁴ There are still hundreds of millions of people who lack even the most basic access to modern energy (770 million people worldwide still live without access to electricity, mostly in Africa and developing countries in Asia). Yet the IPCC report that universal access for households will have a minimal impact on global energy demand (0.2% global growth).

For more information contact:

Fernanda V. de Carvalho
Global Head of Policy – Climate and Energy
fcarvalho@wwfint.org

Shirley Mattheson
Global NDC Coordinator
smatheson@wwf.eu



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For contact details and further information, please visit our international website at www.panda.org