

Submission from the global health community: Views on the approach to the consideration of outputs component of the first Global Stocktake

February 2023

This submission outlines the views of the World Health Organization (WHO), in consultation with the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA), the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, the Wellcome Trust, and other members of the global health community, on the approach to the consideration of outputs component of the first global stocktake (GST). Supporting evidence can be found in technical submissions made by these organisations throughout the cycle of the first GST.

This submission comprises guiding principles for the GST consideration of outputs component, proposed GST outputs, and a proposed procedural approach.

Guiding principles for GST Consideration of Outputs component

The outputs of the GST should give a clear signal to Parties and other stakeholders to increase ambition and implementation, in order to deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement. The GST Consideration of Outputs component will lay the foundations for the final outcome of the GST. This outcome will ultimately define the multilateral political response to the technical findings of the GST.

We recommend the following guiding principles for the outputs of the GST:

The GST must be science-based.

In order to successfully assess progress and inform the raising of ambition, the GST outcomes must be in line with the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other robust, scientific evidence. This should be complemented with context-specific knowledge and practices from frontline communities and Indigenous peoples.

According to the IPCC, there is a rapidly shrinking window to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and limit global warming to 1.5°C. Immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors are required this decade in order to limit warming to 1.5°C, in the order of at least 43% by 2030 compared to 2019 levels. Data from WHO, the Lancet Countdown, and others, have demonstrated that the impacts of climate change are already harming people's health and wellbeing, and are degrading the ecosystems, economies, and social systems they depend on. The IPCC has repeatedly found that overshooting the 1.5°C limit will result in irreversible impacts and greater loss of human lives and livelihoods. Meanwhile, limiting average global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will not only prevent health impacts of climate change but can also yield extensive health co-benefits.

The GST must raise collective ambition.

The GST should serve as a mechanism to ratchet up ambition and cooperation of Parties across all pillars of the Paris Agreement - including mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, and means of implementation. The GST

must answer how we can get on track to limiting warming to 1.5°C, while promoting measures to achieve health, equity and developmental goals, building resilience, and avoiding harmful climate impacts to the world's populations, including to their health and wellbeing.

This requires the identification and promotion of systemic transformations, alongside international and sectoral enablers to enhance action and support, with a view of strengthening Parties' Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), while improving international cooperation.

The GST must protect the health and wellbeing of people.

The outputs from the GST should guide transformational action that will lead to the long-term health and wellbeing of people and ecosystems.

The GST must protect people, and the ecosystems they depend on, from the current and future impacts of climate change. It must support them to mitigate and adapt, and address loss and damage to avoid worsening climate impacts and achieve climate justice, in an adequate and fair manner. Its outputs must be forward-looking, and focused on transformational and long-term health and wellbeing.¹

Proposed GST outputs

This section briefly outlines our views on the central findings from the GST, which are meant to strengthen action and enhance support, and which we recommend for inclusion in the consideration of outputs component of the GST, and COP28 GST decision text.

We recommend the following outputs:

A rapid, equitable phase out of fossil fuels is essential for 1.5°C and for a liveable future.

The burning of fossil fuels is the main contributor to global climate change, which is already affecting the health and survival of populations worldwide. In addition, almost one in five deaths worldwide is caused by fossil fuel-related air pollution. The continued use and expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure and production is a threat to the health and wellbeing of current and future generations.

The political outcome of the GST should include a strong commitment for the phase-out of all fossil fuels, including coal, oil and gas, before 2050, alongside an urgent phase-out of all fossil fuel subsidies.

It is essential that fossil fuel phase-out maximises equity and health gains, and reflects the principles of a just transition. For emissions reductions in the energy sector to be effective, we cannot rely on false solutions which have been proven to be unviable at scale, such as CCS, an over-reliance on off-setting, or so-called "efficient" fossil fuels, as these options would continue to worsen global warming and would continue to harm people, due to the impacts not only of fossil fuel combustion but also of extraction and processing. Only a full and rapid fossil

¹ The March 2023 GST technical submission by the Global Climate and Health Alliance, University of Wisconsin, and partners will detail mitigation policies across sectors which maximise health and equity co-benefits, as well as offering criteria to support decision-making to promote health and equity.

fuel phase-out will deliver the protection and benefits needed, while enabling low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

Evaluate the extensive health and economic benefits of climate action.

The GST is the accountability mechanism of the Paris Agreement - its design should contribute to the raising of ambition and guide the transformational action that will lead to the long-term health and wellbeing of people and ecosystems.

All Parties to the UNFCCC agreed to take climate change considerations into account in their relevant social, economic and environmental policies and actions, and employ methods to minimise adverse effects on the economy, on public health and on the quality of the environment (article 4.1.f).

Health and equity are outcomes and indicators of successful climate mitigation and adaptation action across sectors, and as such should be integrated into the consideration of outputs component of the first GST (see August 2022 GST submission by WHO and partners²). Strengthened national surveillance and submission of this data to the GST is necessary in order to ensure health and equity can be protected and fully addressed.

Reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions will lead to substantial benefits for public health, equity, and economies. Therefore, an important function of the GST should be to monitor and quantify the health harms avoided, and the health co-benefits that are generated, by climate policies. This includes the health co-benefits from reduced air pollution, improved diets, physical activity, and others. Climate interventions which offer health co-benefits will also yield higher returns on investment, and hence provide the largest opportunities for strengthening action. These economic gains should also be monitored in the GST to inform a comprehensive economic assessment of climate goals and policies.

Strengthen adaptation action for long-term resilience and wellbeing.

The Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh Work programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation will conclude at COP28, and its outcomes should be an important pillar on which the GST can guide Parties on the necessary actions to step up adaptation and support in order to accelerate towards the achievement of the GGA.

The political outcome of the GST should acknowledge the outcome of the GlaSS work programme on the GGA, and include a commitment by all Parties for the inclusion of agreed GGA goals and metrics in their respective NDCs and LT-LEDS, in order to enable transformational adaptation actions that will lead to long-term resilience and wellbeing.

The protection of human health and wellbeing must be at the centre of adaptation efforts. It is therefore imperative to include metrics on health adaptation and resilience within the health sector (including by scaling up investments in climate-resilient health systems) and health-relevant sectors (including the water and sanitation, agriculture, and transport sectors). In addition, since healthy populations are more able to recover from climate shocks and stresses, the incorporation of public health metrics for measuring progress on

² WHO, Global Climate and Health Alliance and Partners. Submission to the UNFCCC First Global Stocktake, Second Technical Call, August 2022 www4.unfccc.int/sites/SubmissionsStaging/Documents/202208051800---Submission%20by%20World%20Health%20Organization,%20Global%20Climate%20and%20Health%20Alliance,%20and%20Partners_5%20August%202022.pdf

adaptation is highly relevant. This can be understood as “health resilience” (additional detail is provided in the August 2022 GST submission by WHO and partners²).

Protect people from loss and damage.

At COP28, Parties will agree on the governance arrangements for a Loss and Damage fund for vulnerable countries hit hard by climate disasters, alongside the operationalisation of the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage.

The political outcome of the GST should acknowledge the establishment of a Loss and Damage fund, and should reinforce the process for scaling up both quantity and quality of climate finance provisions, while ensuring the additionality of loss and damage funding, the doubling of adaptation finance before 2025, and the provision of public grant financing as the main form of financial support.

Parties can improve the assessment of impacts and needs in relation to Loss and Damage by quantifying the health and economic impacts of climate change, by including Vulnerability and Adaptation assessments (V&As) in their respective NDCs and LT-LEDS, and by identifying and prioritising health system preparedness and response interventions. Available data from the IPCC, WHO, the Lancet Countdown, and other scientific assessments could feed into this effort.

Financial commitments and reforms to achieve the Paris goals.

The COP27 cover decision, known as the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, highlights that a global transformation to a low-carbon economy is expected to require investments of at least USD 4-6 trillion a year. While associated savings would outweigh these costs, delivering such funding will require a swift and comprehensive transformation of the financial system and its structures and processes.

The political outcome of the GST should include a commitment for developed country Parties to fulfil their previous climate finance pledges, alongside a commitment to scale up both quantity and quality of climate finance provisions, and the recognition that delivering such investments will require the transformation of the financial system and its structures and processes.

Parties can improve the understanding of their financial needs and priorities by quantifying their finance needs in their respective NDCs and LT-LEDS, in particular for vulnerable and underfunded sectors such as health. In addition, Parties can strengthen their LT-LEDS by committing to financial reforms that maximise climate and health gains.

Respect and promote human rights.

As recognized by the Paris Agreement, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote, and consider their respective obligations on human rights, including the right to health, and the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Due attention to the principle of a just transition, the protection of vulnerable populations disproportionately impacted by climate change, and the promotion of equity and gender equality is necessary to provide a foundation to protect and promote these rights for populations and communities everywhere.

The political outcome of the GST should include a concrete commitment by Parties to effectively integrate human rights in the design, implementation and evaluation of NDCs and LT-LEDS.

Strengthen our ability to track progress.

Various synthesis reports of the GST's First and Second Technical dialogues have highlighted the need for capacity building - at global, regional and national level - to track, monitor, evaluate and report on progress.³ Monitoring and evaluation systems are needed that combine different sets of evidence, allow for regional aggregation, measure effectiveness, quantify the means of implementation and support, and help answer policy questions, in order to make progress towards the Paris Goals.⁴

For example, the Lancet Countdown brings together nearly 100 academic institutions and UN partners, and has already developed a global evidence infrastructure to monitor health-related loss and damage, its economic implications, and the potential health and wellbeing gains from progress on climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. It also works closely with regional and national partners to provide more regionalised monitoring and evidence-based policy recommendations.

The political outcome of the GST should recommend the development of an evidence infrastructure for the GST that builds on such pre-existing efforts, and can support monitoring efforts, improve transparency, close data gaps, and provide policy guidance.

Procedural proposals for GST Consideration of Outputs component

This section briefly outlines our views on the process and structure of the GST Consideration of Outputs component.

The GST should aim to provide a clear process throughout 2023 for building a common and ambitious vision for its outcome among Parties and Non-Party Stakeholders (NPS). The political outcome of the GST should reflect the findings of the GST technical assessment component, through an inclusive, science-led process.

We recommend the following steps:

GST workshop - April 2023: The first workshop to discuss the political outcome of the GST should be held in April 2023. This should be open to both Parties and NPS, and take place in a hybrid format. Discussions should centre around the format and key messages of the GST outcome, with the aim of identifying potential elements for discussion at the third Technical Dialogue during SB58.

Third Technical Dialogue: The third technical dialogue is expected to take place between 5 to 15 June at the Bonn UNFCCC intersessional. Discussions should centre around the key messages from the GST technical phase, that should be taken forward to the political phase. The Technical Dialogue should take into account the elements proposed in the April workshop, to help deepen its technical discussion. The Joint Contact Group should be provided with adequate meeting time throughout the 2-week period of SB58, and should focus its efforts on the transition from the technical to the political phase of the GST. Before or at SB58, the COP27 and

³ UNFCCC. Paris Committee on Capacity-building. Synthesis report for the technical assessment component of the first global stocktake. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/PCCB_SR_GST.pdf

⁴ UNFCCC. Least Developed Countries Expert Group. Synthesis report for the technical assessment component of the first global stocktake. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LEG_SR_GST.pdf

COP28 Presidencies and SB Chairs should present a work plan and schedule of events for the GST for the period June-December 2023.

High-level political events on the GST: A schedule of events in support of the GST should be presented at SB58. Events throughout this period should aim to leverage political attention on the GST, while exploring the transformational pathways that are needed for various sectors and issues, with the support of international organisations, Parties and non-Party stakeholders. This includes:

- The World Health Assembly (May 2023)
- UN General Assembly (September)
- UNSG Climate Ambition Summit (September)
- Pre-COP (October)
- Regional Climate Weeks
- G7 and G20 Climate Ministers' and Leaders' Meetings

These events should seek to generate a clear outcome, demonstrating that leaders are committed to agreeing an ambitious GST outcome at COP28 and subsequently implement required actions, including through enhanced NDCs and LT-LEDS.

GST workshop - October 2023: The final workshop to discuss the political outcome of the GST should be held in October 2023. This should be open to both Parties and NPS, and take place in person. Discussions should centre around identifying the final elements for the Consideration of Outputs component, based on the outcomes of the Technical Dialogues and other high-level political events on the GST organised in 2023.

COP28 - week 1: The first week of COP28 should help provide negotiators with a clear political mandate to deliver an ambitious GST outcome.

The GST high-level committee should invite multilateral initiatives to convene ministerial roundtables that provide an update on progress of accelerated action in their focus areas. These could include: a climate and health ministerial, co-hosted by WHO; the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, co-hosted by UNDP; the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, co-hosted by UNEP; and existing and multilateral initiatives including the Global Methane Pledge, the Glasgow Breakthroughs, the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, the Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

In addition, the thematic days at COP28 should be used to highlight sectoral action and progress, and explore how the GST outcomes can support the COP28 action agenda.

COP28 - week 2: The negotiations for a final COP28 Global Stocktake decision should take place under the Joint Contact Group.

The final COP28 decision text on the GST should adopt and endorse the synthesis reports of the three technical dialogues, as prepared by the co-facilitators, and contain clear, practicable and actionable guidelines for Parties to raise ambition and accelerate implementation of climate action.

This should include a roadmap across all Parties, sectors, and actors on what actions are required to limit warming to 1.5°C, while promoting measures to achieve health, equity and developmental goals, building resilience, and avoiding harmful climate impacts.