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Submission of the Grupo SUR countries Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay on the dialogues under the UAE Just Transition Work Programme in 2025

Grupo SUR welcomes the opportunity to present its views on the activities undertaken under UAE Just Transition Work Programme in 2025, pursuant to decision 3/CMA.5.

CONTEXT

The agreement at COP28 for adopting the United Arab Emirates Just Transition Work Programme decided that the work programme shall include the following elements:

- Just transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement outlined in Article 2, paragraph 1, in the context of Article 2, paragraph 2;
- Just and equitable transition, which encompasses pathways that include energy, socioeconomic, workforce and other dimensions, all of which must be based on nationally defined development priorities and include social protection so as to mitigate potential impacts associated with the transition;
- Opportunities, challenges and barriers relating to sustainable development and poverty eradication as part of transitions globally to low emissions and climate resilience, taking into account nationally defined development priorities;
- Approaches to enhancing adaptation and climate resilience at the national and international level;
- Just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities, including through social dialogue, social protection and the recognition of labour rights;
- Inclusive and participatory approaches to just transitions that leave no one behind; and
- International cooperation as an enabler of just transition pathways towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

As developing countries, Grupo SUR emphasizes the importance that discussions on just transition take into account different national circumstances between countries and their specific development priorities.

In the view of Grupo SUR, just transitions mean the realization of feasible pathways for achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty while fighting climate change. We must ensure that we leave no one behind and that the transition to a low-emissions and

resilient economy do not reinforce inequalities within countries, widen the existing gaps between countries or, even worse, hamper the right of developing countries to sustainable development.

Social and economic development are an integral part of sustainable development and improve the capacity of countries in adopting measures to address climate change. That is why just transition pathways are those which promote long-term growth, inclusion and well-being for all while keeping a strong focus on improving environmental quality and strengthening actions for addressing climate change in all its dimensions, including mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology and capacity building.

Grupo SUR is convinced that countries should continue exploring pathways centered on the perspective of inclusive sustainable development. Just transitions pathways must also promote social and economic inclusion strengthening livelihoods and national economies. Just transition pathways also must be guided by the respect and protection of human rights, including labor rights, while fulfilling climate commitments. To reach this objective, our solutions and policies for addressing the climate crisis must also aim at promoting justice, ending poverty and eradicating hunger, as well as at reducing inequalities, within and among countries. In reducing inequalities, just transition pathways towards low-carbon and climate-resilient development must contribute to creating local value and capacities in terms of institutions, technologies, skills, and income.

Grupo SUR considers that the discussions on just transitions reinforce the existing nexus between climate change and sustainable development: for development to be sustainable, the transition must be just; and for the transition to be just, it must bring about a reduction in inequalities and promote prosperity for all.

It is of the utmost importance to abide by Article 3.5 of the UNFCCC that states: “The Parties should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to sustainable economic growth and development in all Parties, particularly developing country Parties, thus enabling them better to address the problems of climate change. Measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.”

Grupo SUR highlights that measures adopted on environmental grounds by developed countries – such as subsidies, standards and other types like levies – are incompatible with just transitions pathways, given that they can constitute an active hindrance to the efforts for economic and social development and poverty eradication in developing countries and, therefore, affect the workforce and economy in those countries, jeopardizing the full realization of the sustainable development, including its social, economic and environmental dimensions.

COMMENTS ON THE FIRST DIALOGUE

“Just Transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement through NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs”.”

Grupo SUR believes that one of the fundamental pillars of a just transition is broad social participation, with institutionalized dialogue between government and civil society. Social movements, non-governmental organizations, trade-unions, academia and the private sector must not only be listened to, but they also need to be part of the whole process of drawing up, monitoring and evaluating public policies, programmes and initiatives in the various areas affected by the change from the current economic model to the low-carbon model. The debate on just transitions must also include the perspectives of all the branches of government, specially national, regional and local parliaments.

The drafting/updating of NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDS should include consultations with civil society throughout the process, right up until the document is finalized. It is also important to open up public consultations to the general population, in order to guarantee the participation of all the actors interested in the topic. Any existing official bodies with social participation related to the theme shall be involved in the debates and discussions on NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDS.

In order to increase engagement in the process, wide publicity should be given to all phases of consultations/social participation involving the drafting/updating of NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDS, ensuring transparency and allowing for greater engagement of interested actors and identification of possible other actors not yet involved, in accordance with national procedures and legislation.

Specifically regarding vulnerable groups, broad social participation is essential for adequately representing their perspectives and needs in NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDS, allowing for the inclusion of specific actions and initiatives. It is important that these groups receive special consideration and support to ensuring their inclusion in these processes.

Grupo SUR considers that NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs should be drafted or updated, as appropriate, while incorporating just transition pathways as a crosscutting perspective. Social participation must be ensured throughout the entire process of updating/drafting the mentioned documents. In addition, due to the cross-cutting nature of the issue, broad government engagement and coordination is needed to address the various dimensions of just transition in a balanced way, without leaving social sectors or segments behind. In addition, these documents shall work with socio-economic indicators, together with those directly related to climate, energy and the environment.

The coherence of the inclusion of just transition pathways in the NDCs, NAPS and LT-LEDs requires broad and comprehensive government coordination in the drafting of these documents. Specific just transition plans or programmes, from a cross-cutting, comprehensive and multidimensional perspective, can be important mechanisms for incorporating the issue into government policies in different areas and international action.

Grupo SUR is convinced that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances, is central to ensuring

just transitions pathways, including the fulfillment of finance, technology and capacity building commitments adopted under the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement. Financing, technology transfer and capacity building are key instruments to enable the just transition to be included in the NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs and to function as one of their guiding principles.

Developed countries' support for developing countries should start with the process of drafting/updating their NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs. The logistical and capacity barriers and challenges faced by developing countries in the process of drafting reports and documents under the international climate regime are well known. International support is key to ensuring efficient, inclusive processes that take into account the relevance and cross-cutting nature of the just transition in the NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs.

Furthermore, the means of implementation must be used to implement the policies, initiatives and actions provided for in the NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs. We emphasize the importance of building capacity and value at a local level, mainly in developing countries, rather than exporting solutions from abroad with no connection with the local/regional/national reality.

COMMENTS ON THE SECOND DIALOGUE

“Ensuring support for people-centric and equitable just transition pathways with a focus on the whole-of-society approach and the workforce”.

Grupo SUR understands that the concept of just transitions is, by itself, centered in people and its well-being. There is no just transition without the human being as its main focus. We also believe that a whole-of-society approach includes already the workforce, who is, obviously, part of the society. Excessive focus on workforce could alienate other dimensions of just transitions, such as energy and socioeconomic. In this perspective, Grupo SUR would prefer to have in next dialogues topics that take into account the multidimensionality of just transitions.

Even though we consider reskilling, upskilling and continuous education as relevant tools for just transitioning regarding the workforce, they cannot be considered as the ultimate solution for the challenges faced by the workers in a new low-carbon economy.

Specifically, about the workforce, it is necessary to consider not only the workers included in formal market, but also those in the informal market, unpaid or underpaid workers (such as women and girls working as caregivers), migrants and refugees. Moreover, the gender gap in the workforce must be addressed. Women wages are usually lower than the ones paid for men. The access to the formal and informal market is more difficult for women and the jobs associated with low-carbon economy are commonly destined to men. Those are only examples of some of the many barriers and challenges that must be addressed to guarantee a just transition to the workforce.

Also, it is important that Parties recognize labor rights and have a robust social protection network which could support unemployed workers due to the transition from an intensive-carbon economic model to a low-carbon one.

THIRD AND FOURTH DIALOGUES

Methodology of the dialogues

Grupo SUR strongly supports the realization of a more consultative process to decide the topics of the dialogues and congratulate the chairs of SBI and SBSTA for the improvements adopted for the second dialogue in comparison with the first dialogue. However, we still believe that, regardless of its relevance and importance, the chosen topics of both dialogues are not fully reflecting the widespread calls for greater emphasis on vulnerable groups, adaptation and international cooperation enabling means of implementation. While the transition in the workforce is a fundamental track within the many just transition pathways, the dialogues should not solely address one dimension of this complex process, alienating energy and socioeconomic aspects of the just transition.

Topics of the dialogues

Grupo SUR suggests the following four topics for the dialogues that will be held in the current year.

1. Means of Implementation and international cooperation

Grupo SUR believes that any initiative in just transition requires financial resources for its implementation, as well as technology transfer and capacity building. We highlight that even social participation and capacity-building policies require financial and human resources, which are scarce in developing countries. It will not be possible to implement the policies and actions necessary for a just transition without resources from developed countries.

In this sense, the Grupo SUR reiterates its unreserved support for the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances, present in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement. It is primarily up to developed countries to provide the necessary means of implementation so that developing countries can implement mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and just transition policies. Grupo SUR also considers relevant to highlight the importance of the South-South cooperation in just transition with a complimentary role to the support provided by developed countries.

In this sense, the next dialogues are unique opportunities to improve the knowledge about means of implementation and define how climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building could be cornerstone to the many dimensions of just transitions.

Guiding questions:

- What is the role of international cooperation in the context of just transitions?

- How can international cooperation be linked to the means of implementation for just transitions?
- How to relate technology transfer and capacity building in the context of a just transition?
- What climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building mechanisms already exist, both inside and outside the UNFCCC, that can be used to finance just transitions?
- Apart from developed countries, what could be other sources of finance, technology transfer and capacity building for just transitions?
- How can the operationalization of financing, technology transfer and capacity building for just transition in developing countries can be related to possible concrete outcomes of the work programme?
- How can technology transfer be carried out without making developing countries more dependent on the technology owners?
- How can technology transfer and capacity building be linked in the context of just transition?
- What possible capacity formats/initiatives can be adopted to ensure greater capillarity, quality, efficiency and positive results?

2. Just Adaptation

Grupo SUR believes it is very important to discuss adaptation in the context of changing the current economic model to a low-carbon one and reducing inequalities, or “just adaptation”. Bearing in mind that transition processes have an impact on the whole-of-society and are economy-wide, adaptation policies, actions and strategies in this context must ensure that their effects do not widen inequalities and leave no one behind.

In the context of the transition to a new economic model, adaptation no longer has only a local bias, but is now of global relevance. The analysis of physical risk, exposure and vulnerability - extensively evaluated by scientific bodies such as the IPCC, also encompasses economic risks and vulnerabilities, with potential damage to global value chains and the international financial system. While physical risk directly affects infrastructure, ecosystems and people, in the so-called “real economy”, the transition has the potential to interrupt economic activities, generate stranded assets and increase exposure to market and credit risks, generating instability and deepening inequalities.

We understand that the deep interlinkage between adaptation and just transition is not properly reflected in the negotiations in the UNFCCC and that the coming dialogues can be an opportunity to approach adaptation from a perspective of broadening equality among and within countries in its transition processes. In this way, the incorporation of elements from both themes in the adaptation and just transition tracks has the potential to broaden the understanding of what adaptation means, considering the contributions of just transition, without prejudging the results of negotiations on other negotiating tracks.

Guiding questions:

- What adaptation and resilience-building measures can be adopted to ensure just transitions in the context of a shift from carbon-intensive to low- or zero-emission economic models?
- How can just adaptation measures be linked to the various existing UNFCCC mechanisms and initiatives, such as the Adaptation Fund, NAPs, Global Goals on Adaptation, etc?
- How can international cooperation promote adaptation measures in just transitions?
- How can adaptation measures in just transition be linked to the necessary means of implementation?
- How can resilience and adaptation measures be integrated into national, regional and international just transition strategies?
- How to increase social participation, especially of vulnerable groups, in just adaptation actions, programs and initiatives?
- How to ensure that vulnerable groups will be positively impacted by just adaptation measures?

3. Vulnerable Groups

It is well known that the effects of climate change have different impacts between and within countries. Vulnerable social groups suffer the most from extreme and slow-onset events and are generally those who are least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions and who have benefited the least from, or been excluded from, the emissions-intensive economic model over the years.

The just transition to a climate-resilient economy must take into account the social and economic impacts of reducing emissions, especially considering that women, children, youth, people of African descent, the elderly, people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, workers, indigenous peoples, local communities, family farmers and other vulnerable groups play a crucial role in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through the implementation of sustainable technologies.

Although Grupo SUR considers extremely important to include these groups in social dialogues on just transition in a broad, inclusive and participatory way, it is also essential that these groups are the subject of specific national, regional and international actions, initiatives, partnerships and public policies that meet their needs and demands in the context of just transitions of economic model. In addition, those mentioned actions, initiatives, partnerships and policies should be created, implemented and evaluated with their full participation.

Grupo SUR recommends the following approach in the dialogues towards vulnerable groups:

Indigenous peoples, local communities and people of African descent: How to ensure that their practices, territories and traditional knowledge are recognized, valued and protected in national and international strategies to tackle climate change and guarantee a just transition.

Family farming and sustainability: The role of small producers in climate resilience and in food security and agroecology policies and the need for specific technologies and public policies for the continuity of regenerative and sustainable agricultural practices in the context of just transitions.

Gender equality and social participation: Strategies to strengthen the inclusion of women and vulnerable populations in the energy, agriculture and technology sectors.

Social protection, financial and capacity building instruments: Mechanisms that can support the transition of affected workers and communities, guaranteeing decent conditions for adapting to the new economic and environmental realities.

Strengthening South-South dialogue: Promoting partnerships with countries in the Global South to exchange successful experiences, such as the sustainable management of biomes and agro-ecological practices.

Guiding questions:

- What are the impacts of the various just transition processes on different vulnerable groups?
- How can we increase social participation, especially among vulnerable groups, in just transition actions, programs and initiatives?
- How can we guarantee that just transition projects, actions and initiatives will have a positive impact on vulnerable groups and will not increase inequalities?
- How can vulnerable groups be related to just adaptation actions?
- How can international cooperation guarantee a reduction in inequalities for vulnerable groups in the various just transition processes?
- How can the means of implementation be used as a tool to reduce inequalities, especially for vulnerable groups, in the context of just transitions?

4. Concrete outcomes for the Just Transition Work Programme

Grupo SUR considers essential that the JTWP should be concluded in 2026 with concrete outcomes for the countries and its populations. It is not reasonable that after three years of discussions, the only result would be a report. That is not enough for the Parties, neither for our populations, which are already facing the effects of climate change and the transitions associated to it.

In this juncture, Group SUR is interested in working with other Parties on shared just transition concepts and definitions, in order to facilitate the exchange on the matter. Moreover, for Grupo SUR, the dialogues in 2025 should focus in taking stock of initiatives/mechanisms/proposals/publications on just transition and should have a clear focus on concrete outcomes for the current work programme.

Guiding questions

- What are the possible concrete outcomes of the work programme?
- What mechanisms/processes can be adopted to discuss concrete outcomes proposals?
- How can possible concrete outcomes be linked to actions, initiatives and processes that already exist within the UNFCCC?
- How can we achieve a convergence of just transitions concepts and definitions in the international regime of UNFCCC?