

## Submission by Poland and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

Warsaw, 27/03/2025

**Subject: Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings – Increasing efficiency in the UNFCCC process, including the streamlining of the agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies.**

### Summary of Key points:

The EU seeks to deepen the discussion on increasing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process and would like to highlight the following elements:

- 1) Following the finalization of the Paris Agreement rulebook, the UNFCCC must develop a more predictable and efficient, multi-year planning process focused on 1) **implementation** (primarily through the operation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework); 2) **ambition** (primarily by responding to the first Global Stocktake and preparing for the second Global Stocktake); and 3) encouraging **international cooperation** (primarily through the constituted bodies with relevant mandates and through a strengthened action agenda). The timeframes set out in the Paris Agreement and related decisions provide the basis for this multi-year planning process.
- 2) The Bureau and the Secretariat should play a strengthened role in providing greater continuity, predictability and efficiency to this multi-year planning process, including by **streamlining the agendas** of the governing and subsidiary bodies, and **managing the number** and costs of mandated events in a manner consistent with UNFCCC budget.
- 3) The full implementation of COP/CMA decisions, and in particular the follow up on the GST, require the UNFCCC process to **improve coordination and interaction with those international organizations** with key sectoral mandates, for example, on energy and transportation, and those with cross-cutting responsibilities, for example, on finance and trade.
- 4) Presiding officers and COP Presidencies, under guidance and responsibility of the Secretariat, must manage the meetings with the **highest possible standards on transparency, inclusivity and efficiency**.
- 5) The **scale, costs and conditions associated with hosting** and managing the UN Climate Change Conference, including the costs and availability of accommodation, should be made more predictable, efficient and affordable, including by increasing the transparency and accountability of the **host country selection process and the agreements** between the UN and the COP hosts.

## Introduction/background

The EU and its 27 Member States (hereinafter ‘the EU’) welcome the call for submissions (FCCC/SBI/2024/L.3) by the SBI of views on increasing efficiency in the UNFCCC process, including the streamlining of the agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies.

As the EU, we have set out our views on the “Future of the UNFCCC” process in numerous submissions, with submissions in 2020 and 2022 addressing the issue with a broad perspective ([202205031018---FR-2022-05-03 EU submission on future of UNFCCC.pdf](#)).

These submissions addressed two main components:

- i) **Making the UNFCCC process fully fit for purpose - to enhance implementation and ambition** by strengthening the ambition cycle and the transparency system and involving more international organisations and other stakeholders in climate action.
- ii) **Increasing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process** by streamlining its agendas and mandated events.

After three decades of incremental growth of the UNFCCC process and the finalisation of the Paris Agreement rulebook, we have an opportunity to adapt the regime’s bodies and procedures and enable them to be fully effective, efficient and in continuously better shape to respond to the threat of climate change.

We note that many actors propose to launch a broader and more thorough reform of the UNFCCC-process, and the EU stands ready to engage and to explore their suggestions.

### General views on increasing efficiency in the UNFCCC process

For the EU, the UNFCCC process must provide an environment and a framework that are attractive for both governmental and non-governmental leaders, as well as being conducive for intergovernmental decision-making and negotiations and providing guidance and incentives for national regulatory approaches.

The UNFCCC process must be instrumental in increasing global ambition, in line with what science tells us, and should be a platform that connects all actors involved in achieving this. Success relies on its ability to foster and maintain engagement and awareness at the highest political level, catalysing higher ambition by governments and non-Party stakeholders, increasing transparency and trust as well as contributing to a much broader mobilisation to live up to the urgency of climate action.

Approaching the effectiveness and efficiency of the UNFCCC process entails a continuous consideration by all actors and within the different workstreams Parties, COP Presidencies and presiding officers, the Bureau, the Secretariat, the High-level Champions, and the constituencies of the observer organisations should contribute in this regard.

The UNFCCC should enhance its role as a catalytic institution, ensuring stronger linkages between its internal formal processes with other UN processes and with the real-economy transitions led by non-Party stakeholders (e.g., businesses, financial institutions, and local governments). This would also support the operationalization of Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement and enhance coordination with multilateral development banks (MDBs), international financial institutions (IFIs), and sectoral transition initiatives.

We strongly welcomed, particularly during past SBI sessions, the increased engagement of Parties and non-Party stakeholders on this issue and hope to make concrete advancements during the upcoming SBI62 meeting.

As for making the UNFCCC process fully fit for the purpose of enhancing implementation and ambition, the EU particularly highlighted the following suggestions in its previous submissions:

- Using the 5-year ambition cycle and the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement as the backbone of the UNFCCC process. Ensuring that there is adequate space to discuss enhancing ambition and implementation and particularly reinforce such opportunities in areas as mitigation and energy transition and related international cooperation where this space is lacking the most;
- Strengthening the interaction between the UNFCCC process and other international organizations and processes with a view to cooperate on implementation and enhancing ambition; as we move our focus to sectoral transition in areas as energy and transport and to mobilizing the investments needed for transition towards resilience and climate neutrality, the UNFCCC process has to bolster its activities into a catalyzing role, joining all relevant actors and institutions in the necessary efforts and providing clarity on how each actor can optimally contribute.
- Ensuring a Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action that has a clear focus on transition towards net zero and climate resilience in different thematic areas and establish a stronger interaction between the intergovernmental process and the action agenda while strengthening the inputs of observer organizations in the intergovernmental negotiations.

Since the above-mentioned suggestions are crucial to the EU, rather than only discussing them under the agenda item on Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings, we will address them also in the context of other relevant ongoing discussions including, among others, on the follow-up of the Global Stocktake and the UAE Dialogue, the Sharm el-Sheik Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme, the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, the Sharm-el-Sheikh dialogue and other finance items, the UNFCCC biennial budget and the performance evaluation of the Secretariat and the consultations with Climate Champions on the Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action. The purpose for the EU will be to make these activities more oriented towards facilitating implementation and enhanced ambition.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, transparency is the backbone of the Paris Agreement and key to building trust among Parties. In this light, we see the need for more space for the consideration of reports under the ETF (such as Biennial Transparency Reports, its review reports and the synthesis reports). This might provide for opportunities to discuss the actions of Parties to implement their NDC's. We also see merit in improving the way processes such as the facilitative multilateral consideration of progress (FMCP) work, while staying within the

mandate of the MPGs (18/CMA.1), with a view to making it more transparent, more efficient and more useful to identify common lessons learned and best practices. Interesting proposals include the scheduling of FMCP sessions taking into account similarities of Parties in terms of their economic and emissions profile as well as their adaptation challenges. We would also like to underline the critical responsibilities of the presiding officers including the COP Presidencies in steering towards a full and balanced implementation of the Paris Agreement and in keeping the process sustainable including the budget and improving efficiency over time. The Bureau and the Secretariat should play a strengthened role in providing greater continuity in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, predictability and efficiency in the multi-year planning process. We also encourage arrangements like the Troika on Mission 1.5° and see the proposal for a Circle of Presidencies as a good opportunity to look into reinforcing multi-annual planning.

For the EU, the key role of the Secretariat is to support the intergovernmental process and to champion the accountability of its follow up. It follows that we expect a UNFCCC Secretariat that takes a pro-active role and supports the presiding officers and the COP Presidencies by providing them with guidance based on know-how on process management including its budget implications. The Secretariat is uniquely positioned to ensure continuity, enhance transparency, and facilitate coordination across successive COP Presidencies.

We are of the view that the UNFCCC Secretariat should take a more assertive role when preparing for a COP meeting. This would entail early engagement by the UNFCCC Executive Secretary with the elected COP Presidency on the choice of the venue and on the elements to be included in the host country agreement and subsequent follow up on the compliance to the host country agreement to ensure inclusivity and efficiency. This engagement should ensure that there are sufficient accommodation facilities close to the venue at a reasonable price for all participants and that UNFCCC sessions are safe and secure spaces where all actors can exercise their human rights, and the freedom of expression and assembly are guaranteed.

We also would request that the UNFCCC Secretariat makes the host country agreement as well as the reports of the fact-finding missions in this respect publicly available and easily accessible on its website.

We encourage presiding officers including the COP Presidencies to manage the meetings with the highest possible standards on transparency, inclusivity and efficiency and see a key role for the Secretariat to assist them in this respect.

### **Streamlining the UNFCCC/Paris Agreement agendas and mandated events**

In this part of the submission, we will focus on concrete suggestions for increasing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process by streamlining its agendas and mandated events.

As we have stated before, it is important to underline that the streamlining of agendas should result in greater transparency, increased efficiency and retain the balance between agreed mandates. Having a streamlined agenda would enhance the effectiveness of the UNFCCC process and thereby be supportive for the ambition and implementation sought by all Parties. Any streamlining must also ensure inclusiveness and aim at avoiding fragmented discussions

and overstretching the capacity of delegations by having an unmanageable number of agenda items.

This exercise should be fully respectful of the legitimate interests of all Parties and reflect in full the mandates and their balance. The agenda setting should remain Party-driven and will have to follow the relevant draft UNFCCC rules of procedure provisionally applied.

In last year's EU submission, we made **several proposals on how streamlining of agendas could be pursued**. In general, we think that the Bureau and the Secretariat should play a strengthened role in streamlining the agenda in an early stage. The presiding officers, including COP Presidencies, could take a more proactive approach where no substantial outcome is expected by steering the Parties towards procedural conclusions and by organizing joint sessions between bodies wherever relevant and by taking a multi-annual approach in agenda-planning and programming. Also, we encourage COP Presidencies to organise prior consultations whenever agenda-items are proposed. Such consultations should explore the most appropriate way forward on these proposed matters. The proposals in our previous submission ([202403251252---BE-2024-03-25 EU submission AIM efficiency of the UNFCCC process.pdf](#)) **remain fully relevant and the EU would like to see them reflected in the Secretariat's technical paper preparing the discussions at SBI62.**

**As for the agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies** we made the proposal to introduce broader agenda headings as organising frameworks, meaning that all the mandated and agreed agenda-items would be included under these broader headings. We expect that these broader headings would then also be reflected in the annotated agendas, in the joint notes prepared by the presiding officers (scenario note on agenda items and on mandated events), and in the COP Presidencies letters reflecting the expectations for the upcoming climate conferences.

The scenario note as presented by the SBI Chairs for SB58 (from 18 May 2023) provided in this regard is a useful example and we could explore from there the following headings:

- Science
- Adaptation
- Loss and Damage
- Mitigation
- Finance flows and means of implementation and support
- Global Stocktake
- Market and non-market approaches
- Transparency
- General and crosscutting aspects
- Intergovernmental, institutional, budgetary and administrative matters.

Using broader thematic headings would increase transparency and refrain us from addressing the subject matters in an overly fragmented way. Within the joint notes and the COP Presidencies letters they could combine the thematic work under the different governing and subsidiary bodies.

During sessions, when facilitators are appointed under the respective bodies, they should to the extent possible, be appointed for a wider scope of issues under the thematic headings, and thus not for each individual agenda item. This would encourage consistency and avoid overlap.

Also, Parties, as well as presiding officers, should explore the possibility of streamlining the agenda-items under each broad heading, allowing for discussions on several related items to happen in one room, as opposed to discussions in “silos”. This applies, inter alia, to a number of agenda sub-items relating to adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, and transparency, respectively.

**As for the mandated events**, the EU proposed last year that the SBI could invite the Bureau, supported by the UNFCCC Secretariat, to define an approximative number of timeslots and venues that could be made available for mandated events for each upcoming session and for each following intersessional period. This should be informed by estimates from the UNFCCC Secretariat on what is manageable in terms of approved budget and in terms of organisational requirements. Ultimately, it would remain the prerogative of the Parties to decide on mandated events, but the indication from the Bureau would provide important information in this regard. We call on all Parties to consider the general balance and feasibility when proposing and approving new mandated events. The Secretariat shall inform Parties, throughout the session, on the proposed/approved mandated events, including the already programmed ones, in order for Parties to assess the overall balance and feasibility before closing the Session.

In addition, the Secretariat should provide Parties during the negotiations with more information on the cost implications of proposed mandated events on the core and supplementary budget. They should actively inform presiding officers and Parties with estimates, soon after proposals are made and, to the extent possible, prior to the final decisions being taken. COP29 decided that the Secretariat should provide Parties an overview of standard costs for workshops, technical papers, etc including the least cost option of modalities. This should help enabling Parties to make better informed decisions on possible mandated events and show more restraint in adding events to an already full schedule.

We note the intentions by the UNFCCC Secretariat to cluster mandated events around reinvigorated regional climate weeks. While we see the potential of this approach, we want to highlight that this should be assessed against the existing budgetary limits. Also, this approach should not scale up mandated events that mostly have clear defined objectives and therefore are often a small scale gathering of experts.

The suggestions above are only a limited number of possible improvements to the UNFCCC process and we are open to consider other interesting ideas.

As the EU we look forward to reading and hearing other Parties’ and non-Party stakeholders’ proposals on enhancing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process and we hope to have a fruitful discussion at SBI62 recommending concrete improvements.

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