

## GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION: HIGH-LEVEL CHAMPIONS' REFLECTIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

### INTRODUCTION

This note contains our reflections on the way forward for global climate action based on discussions and an online consultation<sup>1</sup> undertaken throughout 2016 and building upon our road map for global climate action.

The reflections propose the next steps on how to strengthen global climate action in the years leading up to 2018 and 2020 that we intend to further discuss during COP 22 in Marrakech, Morocco. Based on these further discussions, we will provide our recommended way forward to the COP, and propose a framework for global climate action that will be elaborated at the high-level event on accelerating climate action to be held on 17 November 2016.

### BACKGROUND

#### *The long-term purpose of action*

The Paris Agreement established clear aims for climate action with respect to mitigation and adaptation, grounded in sustainable development. The achievement of these aims requires a transition in financial flows, production systems and consumption patterns. In order to guide such a transition at the national level, each Party will develop and communicate a nationally determined contribution (NDC). Parties' efforts will also be guided by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There is universal recognition of the urgent need to deliver climate action at an accelerated pace and at an enhanced scale across all sectors of society in the pre-2020 period in order to achieve the purpose and goals of the Paris Agreement, through the implementation of NDCs. It is for this reason that decision 1/CP.21 recognized the relevance of the commitments from all actors, including those launched through the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, as well as the urgent need to scale up the global response to climate change and support greater ambition from governments, including in the period 2016-2020.

#### *Accelerating immediate delivery*

To ensure a durable connection between the UNFCCC and the many voluntary and collaborative actions, Parties, through decision 1/CP.21, paragraphs 121-124, decided to establish the position of high-level champions and to set out our task, and that of future champions, to support the successful execution of existing efforts and the scaling-up and introduction of new or strengthened voluntary efforts, initiatives and coalitions for climate action.

COP 22, as an action COP, represents an important milestone in demonstrating tangible progress which can be built upon in the years leading up to 2018 (the year selected by Parties in which to hold the first facilitative dialogue to take stock of the collective efforts of Parties and to inform the preparation of nationally-determined contributions) and 2020. COP 22 also presents an opportunity to refine the approach to enhancing the coherence and effectiveness of the diversity of climate action.

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<sup>1</sup> <<http://newsroom.unfccc.int/climate-action/global-climate-action-agenda/#Call>>.

## THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE AND FUTURE VISION

### *The landscape of action*

Parties have demonstrated their determination to act through the communication of NDCs, the overwhelming number of signatures to the Paris Agreement, the astonishing pace of its entry into force, progress made by on major initiatives announced at COP 21 such as the International Solar Alliance or the African Renewable Energy Initiative and the ongoing ratifications of the Doha amendment. This momentum and commitment to act has carried through into other international forums, in particular through the recent resolutions adopted by International Civil Aviation Organization and the adoption of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Parties will now make efforts to progress the rule book to guide the long-term implementation of the Paris Agreement. As this rulebook is finalized in the coming years, action can, will and must accelerate, in line with the Convention and the spirit of the Paris Agreement.

Cities and regions are planning to implement bold measures to address and respond to climate change, with a 70% increase in cities disclosing to CDP and nearly two-thirds say they are collaborating with business on climate action.<sup>2</sup> The recent merger of the Compact of Mayors and the Covenant of Mayors into the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy has brought together more than 7,100 cities from 119 countries, six continents to coordinate their action on reducing emissions and preparing for climate impacts.<sup>3</sup> Private entities are also increasingly setting science-based targets aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement and are beginning to demonstrate how the commitments they made at COP 21 are being delivered on, with regular CDP reporting acting as a baseline for assessing future action and demonstrating that reducing emissions can correlate with increasing revenue.

There is also growing momentum among voluntary efforts, initiatives and coalitions for climate action to increase the support provided to governments in implementing their NDCs and in helping to deliver on SDGs. The Paris Process on Mobility and Climate has been analyzing how the transport initiatives map to existing NDCs in order to highlight gaps and synergies for implementation.<sup>4</sup> We Mean Business has taken stock of business-related initiatives and has determined what the business contribution to the Paris Agreement could be and plan to regularly update this information to feed into NDC development.<sup>5</sup> Information on the progress that has been made in 2016 will be progressively made available on the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA).<sup>6</sup>

The momentum created in the lead up to COP 21 among public and private entities in mobilizing financial resources for climate action continues to grow. These entities have a key role to play in assisting governments to translate NDCs into investment-ready vehicles as well as to scale up investment in infrastructure that delivers a range of benefits, including ones for addressing climate change in cities and communities.

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<sup>2</sup> <<https://www.cdp.net/en/reports/downloads/1172>>.

<sup>3</sup> <<https://www.compactofmayors.org/globalcovenantofmayors/>>.

<sup>4</sup> <<http://www.ppmc-transport.org/knowledge-products-2/>>.

<sup>5</sup> <<http://www.wemeanbusinesscoalition.org/sites/default/files/The%20Business%20End%20of%20Climate%20Change.pdf>>.

<sup>6</sup> <<http://climateaction.unfccc.int>>.

It is important to recognize, however, that actions by non-Party stakeholders are complementary to and are not a replacement for Parties' commitments. Collaborative actions and initiatives may support interested Parties who wish to over-achieve or raise their ambition in the short and long terms; they are, however not intended to substitute the fulfillment of Parties' commitments, in particular in the pre-2020 period.

### **A vision for accelerating action**

While acknowledging the determination of all to accelerate the pace of implementation, we consider that there is a need for greater coherence and clarity so that all public and private entities can collaborate effectively. Through our discussions with many stakeholders we have identified the following needs:

- To enhance participation by all public and private entities, including civil society, cities, regions, companies and investors in taking climate action in a manner which supports Parties in the implementation of their NDCs and which contributes to delivering on SDGs;
- To facilitate the exchange of information among actors, initiatives and coalitions on planned or ongoing activities in order to enhance collaboration across the full ecosystem of actors;
- To track progress in delivering climate action, built on a system of voluntary reporting by initiatives and actors, and to recognize outcomes which support the achievement of the purpose and goals of the Paris Agreement;
- To strengthen effective engagement between those taking action on climate change and the formal multilateral Party-led process under the UNFCCC.

Therefore, we believe that the core of our champion's mission is as follows:

- To create opportunities to connect the implementation of actions by Parties and non-Parties;
- To promote, facilitate and catalyze initiatives;
- To conduct outreach and engage actors and align the implementation of actions with the NDCs and SDGs, and
- To recognize the outcomes and impact of the actions and inform the formal multilateral process, as well as the general public of the actions that could serve to unlock greater ambition.

## **A CLEAR FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION**

### **Purpose of the framework**

In order to ensure that this work progresses, we propose that a framework for global climate action be established with the following functions and activities:

- Convening actors on an ongoing basis to enhance collaboration and catalyze the scaling up of efforts to collectively identify and address barriers to enhanced implementation;
- Showcasing success through events, including those held in conjunction with UNFCCC sessions as well as other relevant forums, and by guiding the technical examination process on pre-2020 climate action;
- Tracking the progress achieved by those actors and initiatives, aligned towards the achievement of the purpose and goals of the Paris Agreement as well as the assessments of the overall state of action and its impacts;

- Reporting on the overall progress achieved and options to enhance action to the COP President, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the UNFCCC Executive Secretary.

### Convening actors and showcasing success

- We believe very strongly in the champions' mission as conveners and facilitators of an active dialogue between Party and non-Party actors. It is our view that greater coherence in the overall delivery of climate action can also be achieved by creating a more focused rhythm of events before as well as after the COP and by better utilizing the existing processes that have been established within the UNFCCC. The technical examination process, which was strengthened by decision 1/CP.21, but still needs more refinement, can be better aligned with priorities that emerge from discussions among Parties and non-Party stakeholders during the COP and the High-Level Event on Accelerating Climate Action. During COP 22, thematic events will be organized in order to: showcase, enhance climate action, identify priorities and highlight barriers and opportunities. These will be synthesized through the High-Level Event on Climate Action and can then form part of an action plan to be advanced in the years ahead. We also welcome the initiative of non-Party stakeholders to consolidate various climate action events and to enhance the degree to which these events inform the UNFCCC process.

### Principle of organisation

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment that promotes participation by a diverse range of actors and encourages innovation. Initiatives and coalitions are invited to organize themselves as they see fit. We do not believe that proposing a “one-size-fits-all” principle of organization would be helpful. We note, for example, that if a sectorial organization is relevant for some initiatives, it is not for others; some prefer a constituency-based organization; others value a cross-cutting and multi-stakeholders governance.

We strongly believe that all actors willing to do so can be part of the action agenda. The champions are not meant to be gate-keepers nor do they wish to set up an invitation-only club: the fight against climate action requires having all hands on deck.

However, this does not mean that there are no criteria for involvement: all actors must be accountable for their actions and they will be held to the same standards of transparency. To provide the common direction of travel that we do need, we are proposing a set of criteria. We ask initiatives to publicly endorse them and align themselves with the objectives set out by the champions. This broad tent of action will also have a means to ensure the ongoing credibility of the global climate action framework based on the boldness of ambition, delivery of results and impact on the ground.

NAZCA would be the public space for all actions and initiatives. For inclusion in the framework and publication on NAZCA, actions/initiatives should have the following characteristics, bearing in mind that all actors, actions/initiatives can develop and showcase their own additional set of criteria, as they see fit:

- *Relevance*: advance the goals of the Paris Agreement;
- *Scale*: should be or projected to be of sufficient size to have an impact on mitigation and/or adaptation;
- *Specific*: have clear, quantifiable outcomes with defined targets and milestones that allow one to assess progress over time;

- *Transparency in progress*: report progress and results on a periodic basis (e.g. annually);
- *Impact/results-oriented*: need to be focused on concrete, real-world action delivering mitigation outcomes, increased resilience, reduced vulnerability and/or mobilizing finance. Initiatives solely focused on calls to action, information sharing would not meet the criteria to be included in the framework;
- *Ownership/capacity*: the action/initiative is controlled/driven by entity/entities with the overall responsibility to deliver results, including mobilizing the necessary capacity and resources.

### **Tracking progress**

The updated NAZCA platform will act as the entry point for information on all initiatives and actors supporting the global climate action framework. Future events under the auspices of the champions and the framework will draw upon those initiatives and actions which have been recorded in NAZCA.

In order to support the framework and the need for greater transparency and tracking of progress, it is important that NAZCA continues to develop accordingly. This involves an update of NAZCA and collaboration with the NAZCA community of data partners, initiatives and research institutions to evolve the infrastructure enabling deeper insight to the commitments, progress, ambition and impact of non-Party stakeholders in a user-friendly fashion. The recording and analysis of these actions will enhance credibility and provide the empirical evidence to help identify by which means to unlock higher ambition by both Parties and non-Parties.

The champions call on all stakeholders, Party and non-Party alike, to help them make sure that all the information presented by initiatives and individuals on the reformed NAZCA platform is reliable and in line with the criteria for inclusion they proposed. While initiatives do not have to commit to the same level on transparency Parties will after 2020, they will have to prove their seriousness through the yearly publication on NAZCA of their results, in light of their capacity and level of advancement - and of the methodology they used to get them. The verification of these results will be a collaborative effort: we wish that at future COPs, all actors from the action agenda will take stock of their achievements and will have an open debate, facilitated by the champions, on their results and their indicators of progress.

We call on future champions to make sure, as we did, that the broadening of climate action is consistent with the objective of promoting more geographically and thematically diverse initiatives, consistent with the universal nature of action and the full range of NDCs.

### **Reporting progress achieved**

Action will increase if all stakeholders share the same expectations and understanding of how the transformation to a low carbon economy is happening. This is why a clear, precise and as complete as possible picture of climate action is a key factor of success. It will allow governments, cities, regions and businesses to learn from each other, and to compare and improve their own actions. This will generate confidence and optimism on the delivery of the aims of the Paris Agreement.

Therefore, we recommend that an annual report '*a yearbook of climate action*' encompassing all dimensions of action be produced and presented at each COP. This report would not be a new report. Rather, it could include the technical examination process (TEPs) summary for policy makers as well as the executive summaries of various progress reports prepared by

Parties and non-Party stakeholders (such as, inter alia, the Global Compact's Status Report on Business, Climate and the SDGs, the progress reports prepared by We Mean Business, the United Nations Environment Programme, etc.). Governments could present relevant actions they want to highlight, non-Party stakeholders would describe their progress, and new fields of action or cooperation could be identified.

On the basis of the key findings of this report; the champions will be able to highlight priority needs and strategic options to be considered and integrated to future.

It should be drafted by the champions and their support teams in a manner that is highly accessible and relevant to the High-Level Event on Climate Action. An outline of what this report could contain is presented in the Annex.

### **The champions' role**

As a part of this framework, we believe that the future high-level champions will have a central role in strengthening pre-2020 action, recognizing what has been achieved and what needs to be done by the UNFCCC and the wider United Nations system in order to facilitate the continued delivery and strengthening of climate action. Future champions will support the implementation of the framework by convening actors to align implementation with the Convention and the Paris Agreement, highlighting progress and advocating for action by the multilateral process to unlock further ambition. The champions' role as catalysers of climate action is essential as well. Future champions and their teams could act as a 'clearing house' of climate action: gathering requests from stakeholders in need of their intervention and, in turn, helping them get support from relevant institutions such as bilateral or multilateral agencies.

### **Supporting the work of the high-level champions**

Through the adoption of decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 123, Parties have emphasised the need for adequate support for the high-level champions in the delivery and organization of their work. The UNFCCC secretariat has responded by providing operational support to the outreach efforts of the high-level champions with voluntary initiatives and coalitions to climate action, to support the organization of the High-Level Event on Climate Action and other engagement opportunities and to collaborate with a wide range of data providers, initiatives and coalitions. Future champions could benefit from the creation of a support unit which could be hosted by the UNFCCC secretariat and draw upon additional staff from Parties and non-Parties. We expect that this support unit, with the financial and in-kind assistance of Parties and relevant organizations, will:

- Align actors to increase ambition and effectiveness;
- Track action and facilitate the recognition of its impact;
- Help to convene various actors to strengthen climate action, including for example, harnessing the array of organizations and initiatives focused on data analysis, collation and assessment so as to align and harmonize their work;
- Facilitate coordination with other international organizations.

In the light of the interrelations across the various aspects of the development agenda, including SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as a global convener of all sectors of society, will be more important than ever to engage key stakeholders on increasing the pace and scale of climate action, to ensure and highlight linkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to further mobilize the United Nations system and

maximize its contribution. We are therefore grateful for the collaborative support received through the UNFCCC secretariat and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and encourage the support unit to continue to support future champions in this manner.

We have also been supported by a wide network of actors, initiatives and coalitions. Future high-level champions may wish to consider the value of a high-level ‘Friends of Champions’ advisory group/network to assist them in setting the strategic direction and to support their work.

Finally, we encourage future champions to organize an open sharing of information among all interested Parties and non-Party stakeholders on a continuing basis. We started that process by sharing our roadmap, opening consultations on line and publishing contributions as well as our own synthesis of received contributions. An on-going, open conversation will ensure transparency and inclusiveness, and create a forum where ideas experiences and proposals could be exchanged.

### **The role of the technical examination processes**

TEPs, strengthened by decision 1/CP.21, intend to address specific issues so as to enhance rapid climate action. TEPs rely primarily on the technical expert meetings (TEMs), which should therefore be reformed to be better aligned with the priorities that emerge from discussions on implementation among Parties and non-Party stakeholders. They should be more solutions-oriented, more interactive and gather a broader circle of participants, in particular non-State actors and should aim at delivering concrete outcomes, to ultimately feed the policy dialogue.

For example, each TEM could become an ‘open-ended working group’ working on the incubation and strengthening of an initiative of the action agenda addressing a specific issue, to be determined every year.

TEMs should also produce clear and ready to use policy papers that would feed the ‘*yearbook of climate action*’. The champions would determine the subject of each TEM for the following year, based on discussions and consultations to be held throughout the year. The champions would also ask relevant expert organizations (mainly organizations involved in the initiatives to be addressed) to support the secretariat’s organization of these events.

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR CLIMATE ACTION AT COP 22**

### ***Global climate action events***

During COP 22, a series of action events will be organized with the aim to enhance climate action. The action events will start on the second day of COP 22, 8 November 2016, with an introductory event where we will explain our plans for the two weeks of the COP. The focus of this event will be the relationship between climate action by non-Party stakeholders, the Paris Agreement, SDGs and NDCs.

The action events have been grouped around thematic areas, which include a variety of topics. These events will aim to showcase the most effective initiatives, provide a space for dialogue between non-Party stakeholders and Party representatives; scale up the level of ambition; and identify challenges and possible solutions. A high-level event on accelerating climate action will take place on 17 November 2016; its content will be shaped by the outcomes of the action events.

An overview of action events that will be organized during COP 22 is available on the UNFCCC website.<sup>7</sup> For the most up-to-date information on this schedule and the programs of events, participants are encouraged to consult this website where further details will be published on an ongoing basis.

As champions, we were actively involved in the design of two collaborative initiatives, which will greatly enhance climate ambition. The NDC partnership aims to implement NDCs in a spirit of cooperation and will be launched during COP 22; the 2050 strategies platform will also be launched during COP 22.

We strongly encourage Parties to include individuals in their delegations who are directly engaged in the implementation of their NDCs and encourage these individuals to participate actively throughout the thematic days. Parties wishing to receive further information on how they can contribute to the action events at the COP, including through ministerial engagement, are encouraged to contact the global climate action support unit of the UNFCCC secretariat at [globalclimateaction@unfccc.int](mailto:globalclimateaction@unfccc.int). We would be particularly interested to understand how Parties consider that the dialogues and working sessions through COP 22 could best facilitate the alignment of actors with their NDCs.

Furthermore, we understand that many Parties and non-Parties will be organizing complementary events at or during the COP. We greatly encourage these dialogues and in order to assist participants in planning their attendance at the COP have requested that the secretariat compile a daily overview of relevant events on climate action. Should any Party or non-Party be organizing such an event we would encourage them to contact the secretariat to ensure such events are included in this daily overview.

### ***Recognizing progress***

In addition to recognizing progress through the showcase events at the COP it is planned to upgrade and relaunch NAZCA as follows:

- To capture and publish the relevant information for mobilizing participation and tracking the progress made by cooperative initiatives;
- To create an integrated space for the Champions' and their vision and structured approach on Global Climate Action that would allow the featuring of their reports, events, and announcements;
- To progressively update the individual commitments of non-Party stakeholders made since COP 21.

We ask initiatives or coalitions willing to join, to pledge alignment with the aforementioned criteria. They can contact the global climate action support unit of the UNFCCC secretariat at [<globalclimateaction@unfccc.int>](mailto:globalclimateaction@unfccc.int).

### ***Discussing the way forward***

During the COP, we will also facilitate further discussions among Parties and non-Party stakeholders and will undertake outreach meetings with groups of Parties and non-Party stakeholders so as to further refine the framework for global climate action, including on matters related to the technical examination process, how reporting on climate action by the champions and by non-Party stakeholders should be advanced, the role of NAZCA in tracking progress, and what information from initiatives and non-Party stakeholders should be made

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<sup>7</sup> [<http://unfccc.int/paris\\_agreement/items/9951.php>](http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9951.php).

visible in order to enhance the credibility of the idea of creating a ‘friends of the champions’, as well as how the framework should evolve in the future.

We will present a final version of this note, with our definitive recommendations at the high-level event. We will report to the COP on the progress achieved on climate action since COP 21 as well as on the key insights that can help to accelerate climate action in 2017 and beyond.

The COP 22 events and the longer-term framework that has been described in these reflections are designed to encompass all relevant actors that are contributing to global climate action, including those initiatives that were launched at COP 21. We invite actors who have specific proposals on how they could contribute to the implementation of the framework to communicate these to the UNFCCC secretariat at <[globalclimateaction@unfccc.int](mailto:globalclimateaction@unfccc.int)>.

## **Annex I: Possible outline for annual reports on global climate action**

### **I. A joint preface on climate action**

*Providing an overview of progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and highlighting the progress that is required in the year ahead.*

### **II. The yearbook of climate action**

*Providing a high-level summary of information provided by all non-Party stakeholders on their progress, results and commitments. It would also showcase governmental actions: countries willing to do so are invited to share their progress and results on a voluntary basis. It would also highlight the conclusions of the technical examination processes during the year. It would also provide an overview of information provided by Parties.*

### **III. Key findings of the high level champions**

*Providing information on the results of the framework for global climate action, the outcomes of the high level champions efforts during the year as well as recommendations by the champions on how to enhance action in the years ahead.*