

Synthesis of submissions on agenda item 4 of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement

Non-paper by the co-facilitators

16 October 2017

I. Introduction

1. Actions taken by the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement on this agenda item, at the third part of its first session (APA 1.3), were as follows:¹

(a) Invited Parties to make, by 15 September 2017, focused submissions on the proposals for elements and skeleton outlines as contained in the informal note on this agenda item;

(b) Requested the persons who facilitated discussions under this agenda item at APA 1.3, under the guidance of the APA Co-Chairs and with the support of the secretariat, to synthesize into a non-paper the submissions referred to in paragraph 12(a) above by 15 October 2017.

2. In response to the above invitation, as at 15 October, Parties and groups of Parties made 15 submissions. As requested by the APA, the co-facilitators, Ms. Beth Lavender and Mr. Nicolás Zambrano, have prepared this non-paper, synthesizing those submissions, under the guidance of the APA Co-Chairs and with the support of the secretariat.

3. In their submissions, Parties presented general ideas about the adaptation communication and the five themes being discussed (purpose, elements, vehicle, linkages, and flexibility/discretion/choice/optionality) and provided elaborated proposals for skeleton outlines of possible guidance. Section II of this paper includes a synthesis of the general ideas and views on the five themes, section III contains general observations on the suggested skeleton outlines and the annex contains an overview of the skeleton outlines included in the submissions.

II. General views and suggestions on the five themes

4. In terms of the general approach to the adaptation communication and the further guidance being developed, the submissions highlighted that in particular Article 7, paragraphs 1, 9, 10, 11 and 14, Article 13, paragraph 8, and Article 14, paragraph 1, of the Paris Agreement provide important framing. It was noted that differentiation and flexibility embedded in the Paris Agreement should be incorporated in the guidance and that adaptation communications should reflect the localised, context-specific nature of adaptation.

5. It was indicated that the lack of guidelines for an adaptation communication creates uncertainty for developing countries in the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans (NAPs) and preparing adaptation-related communications or documents. While there are guidelines for reporting on adaptation in other communication or documents, no guidelines exist for the inclusion of an adaptation communication in nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

6. It was suggested that the current transparency arrangements are not sufficient to fulfil the adaptation-related purposes of the global stocktake (e.g. no reporting on effectiveness of action or support).

7. The avoidance of additional burden on developing countries was emphasized, and to this end it was proposed that the guidance being developed should, inter alia, maximize the overlap between the information required for adaptation communications and the information for efficient national planning and implementation.

8. It was also stated that, in accordance with the Paris Agreement, continuous and enhanced support shall be provided to developing countries (e.g. for the preparation, submission and implementation of the plans and actions outlined in the adaptation communication) and that it would be difficult to provide quantified information

¹ See document FCCC/APA/2017/2, paragraph 24(a) and (c).

on, for example, the results of adaptation actions or strategies with the present capability of many developing countries.

9. It was noted that significant challenges in monitoring and evaluation are arising from the fact that adaptation outcomes are the aggregate results of multiple actions, as well as from a lack of single indicators or baselines. New and additional support, as well as enhanced use of national and regional monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, could address these challenges, with the co-benefits of promoting globally comparable and consistent monitoring and evaluation and enhancing the consistency and comparability of information in national reports submitted to the secretariat.

10. Another challenge that was highlighted is that the bulk of support goes directly to non-governmental organizations outside official development assistance channels. It was suggested that to resolve this, development partners should enable precise reporting by reporting all adaptation support as new and additional climate finance.

PURPOSE

11. The submissions suggested several possible purposes for an adaptation communication that are not mutually exclusive and are sometimes related, including the following:

- (a) Allowing countries to communicate, inter alia, their priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions and progress in adaptation efforts and towards national goals. This should enable an overview of the collective progress made towards the objective stipulated in Article 2, paragraph 1(b), of the Paris Agreement and the global goal on adaptation and thus provide an input to the global stocktake. The need to ensure consistency of information was also highlighted;
- (b) Recognizing adaptation efforts of developing country Parties, and highlighting adaptation actions, plans, priorities and needs, to achieve parity with mitigation.
- (c) Sharing good practices, experiences and lessons learned (in e.g. planning, implementing, and funding adaptation);
- (d) Enhancing adaptation action and domestic implementation, including by enhancing support for actions and plans, as well as by helping to identify and build capacities, resources and support, by helping to balance large adaptation needs with limited resources and to allocate support at sectoral and subnational levels, and by providing an opportunity to articulate a long-term adaptation vision and incorporate adaptation actions into development strategies; and incentivizing action;
- (e) Signalling priorities and needs to decision makers, the private sector and donors to encourage investment and shared responsibility for risk and to help investors understand the ability of the country to be resilient, costs of ensuring resilience and economic vulnerabilities;
- (f) Providing an opportunity to the private sector to showcase adaptation measures and activities to support others to adapt.

12. It was also emphasized that the purpose should be focused and that the effectiveness of the adaptation communication should not be diluted by assigning it too many purposes, considering that other UNFCCC instruments are also advancing related purposes.

ELEMENTS

13. In terms of the possible elements of an adaptation communication, the submissions highlighted the following:

- (a) The Paris Agreement, in particular Articles 7, 13, and 14, indicates what information could be included in an adaptation communication, while providing flexibility on the elements to include;
- (b) It would be useful to have a set of common elements that Parties may include in accordance with national circumstances, as well as development priorities and objectives, and apply that set independently of the format or channel Parties use. In addition to common elements, it was suggested to define additional opt-in/opt-out elements;
- (c) Parties could leverage the elements of their process to formulate and implement NAPs as an input for their adaptation communication.

14. In the submissions, the following broad elements were suggested by Parties:
- (a) National circumstances, including legal frameworks and institutions;
 - (b) Impacts, vulnerabilities and risk assessments, including future scenarios and risks faced in the short, medium and long term and information on adaptive capacity;
 - (c) Priority plans, priorities and actions including policies, strategies, and programmes, other resilience-building activities, and their expected results;
 - (d) Implementation and support needs of developing countries, including, for example finance, technology, and capacity-building support needs and the costs of meeting the identified adaptation needs;
 - (e) Biennial information on indicative levels of financial, technology, and capacity-building support provided by developed countries;
 - (f) Information on adaptation efforts of developing countries (for the purpose of recognition of those efforts), understood as concluded or ongoing actions, as well as associated costs of implemented actions, results achieved and/or progress made;
 - (g) Monitoring and evaluation of adaptation actions, including the approach used;
 - (h) Co-benefits of adaptation actions;
 - (i) Cooperation at national, regional and international levels, including to share information, good practices, tools and methods, experiences and lessons learned.

15. The various elements suggested in the skeleton outlines are also listed in the annex, together with the skeleton proposals. In addition to the broad elements synthesized above and reflected in the annex, the submissions also contained a wide range of more specific sub-elements that could be included in an adaptation communication as part of each of the broader elements. The specific sub-elements are not reflected in this summary for the sake of brevity, but the upcoming session provides an opportunity to consider them.

VEHICLES

16. With regard to vehicles, it was highlighted that, while possible vehicles are identified in Article 7, paragraph 11, the freedom of choice provided by Article 7 of the Paris Agreement in terms of choosing the vehicle must be maintained. It was also mentioned that the adaptation communication should be clearly delineated when submitting together with other communications or documents.

17. Parties also identified the vehicles that could be used. It was suggested, *inter alia*, that Parties could:
- (a) Use existing vehicles (NDCs, NAPs, national communications (NCs), or biennial update reports (BURs));
 - (b) Apply the reporting arrangements being developed under Article 13, paragraph 8, of the Paris Agreement;
 - (c) Use existing guidance for the process to formulate and implement NAPs or include adaptation information in NAP reports and attach a similar summary to their NDCs;
 - (d) Submit the adaptation communication as a stand-alone communication or report, assuming that Article 7, paragraph 11, is not exclusively attached to NDC reporting because it links with NAPs, NDCs and NCs, that the use of these three vehicles is not mutually exclusive and that Parties can decide which vehicle they use.

18. It was also suggested that to avoid additional burdens on developing countries, adaptation communications should not duplicate existing reporting processes, and innovative and/or Internet-based tools could be applied to reduce burden.

LINKAGES

19. In terms of linkages, it was highlighted that the discussions on adaptation communications are linked with other APA negotiating tracks, including the transparency framework, the global stocktake and the registry to house the adaptation communications.

20. Regarding the linkages with APA item 5 (transparency), Parties suggested how to manage the links and to avoid duplications. It was proposed that the guidance developed in relation to the adaptation communication should also be integrated into the modalities, procedures and guidelines developed for the transparency framework in relation to Article 13, paragraph 8, of the Paris Agreement. It was also highlighted that the information related to climate impacts and adaptation in the context of Article 13, paragraph 8, of the Paris Agreement should not be subject to any kind of review.

21. It was also emphasized that the guidance developed for both Articles 7 and 13 should not impose additional burdens on developing countries and should avoid duplication, and that one way to avoid such a burden would be to develop one set of guidance for communicating information on impacts and adaptation, no matter which channel/vehicle is used to communicate that information. This would also enhance the consistency of the guidelines under the Paris Agreement. In this context, it was highlighted that it is important to ensure consistency between information included in adaptation communications and information submitted under the transparency framework to provide clear and transparent inputs to the global stocktake.

22. Regarding linkages with APA item 6 (global stocktake), it was highlighted that the adaptation communication should serve as an input to the global stocktake to enable the stocktake to undertake its adaptation-related functions, but also that the current reporting requirements do not provide enough information to fulfil the adaptation-related purposes of the global stocktake. The submissions also indicated that the extent to which Parties provide information in their adaptation communication will affect the ability to provide an overview of progress towards the objective of Article 2, paragraph 1(b) of the Paris Agreement and the global goal on adaptation. It was further suggested that the guidance prepared under item 4 should inform future decisions related to the global stocktake and that the secretariat should prepare a synthesis report for the global stocktake.

23. In terms of linkages with the registry, it was suggested that the mitigation and adaptation registries should be treated separately due to different technology aspects, planning horizons, and life cycles of mitigation and adaptation, as linking adaptation actions to a mitigation cycle might also present an undue reporting burden, and while the submission and registration of adaptation communications are individual processes undertaken by each Party, the processes within the registry and the global stocktake are collective.

24. In terms of linkages with other processes, it was suggested that the adaptation communications could bridge the gap with other reporting processes addressing adaptation issues, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, regional policies and national frameworks. Such synergies should be recognized, particularly for SIDS who have capacity constraints. It would be useful to explore how these regimes can benefit and complement each other. Adaptation communications may help to inform reporting for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development agenda and Sendai Framework, or these two agendas could inform the preparation of the adaptation communication. This way, Parties could avoid communicating the same information twice.

FLEXIBILITY/DISCRETION/CHOICE/OPTIONALITY

25. The submissions emphasized that flexibility/discretion/choice/optionality is needed because the resources required to identify and collate adaptation information is beyond the national capacity of a number of Parties, and requesting those Parties to submit multiple reports, communications or documents would create additional burdens.

26. The submissions also highlighted that flexibility/discretion/choice/optionality should be applied to vehicles, depth of information, frequency of reporting, the language used to draft the guidance and countries with low capacity and that Article 7, paragraph 10 and 11, of the Paris Agreement recognizes the need for flexibility/discretion/choice/optionality by stipulating and implying the following:

- (a) Submitting an adaptation communication is not mandatory;
- (b) Updating and submission should not create an additional burden on developing countries and should be iterative and successive;
- (c) If a Party chooses to make an adaptation communication, it can do so with flexibility, and the guidance must respect the ability to choose which “vehicle” to use.

27. It was also suggested that different ways to provide flexibility/discretion/choice/optionality could be considered for each element while retaining features that allow for the comparability of information where required.

III. Proposals for skeleton outlines of possible guidance

28. Most submissions provide elaborated proposals for skeleton outlines of possible guidance and/or a decision by the Conference of the Parties (COP)/Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) to adopt the guidance. This section summarizes general observations on this matter, while an overview of the proposals for skeleton outlines is contained in the annex.

29. In terms of the structure of the possible guidance, the submissions highlighted the following:

(a) The outcome of the work on this item could have two parts: high-level guidance and a COP/CMA decision that adopts the guidance, with the guidance included in an annex;

(b) An adopting decision could contain a preamble recalling relevant Articles of the Paris Agreement, including those relating to flexibility, vehicles and links with other processes, and would also adopt the guidance, specify when Parties would start using it and, if it is reviewed, when it would be reviewed, and by which UNFCCC body.

30. There are many commonalities in the skeleton outlines of possible guidance. In particular, the following sections were suggested for the guidance:

(a) Preamble/introductory remarks;

(b) Guiding principles;

(c) Paragraphs of a CMA decision adopting the guidance;

(d) Purpose;

(e) General approach/modalities for submission;

(f) Substantive content of an adaptation communication / elements;

- That is, in cases divided into common elements and opt-in and opt-out elements;

- Broad elements suggested include information on national circumstances, impacts and vulnerability, plans, priorities, policies, strategies, actions, needs, support for developing country Parties, international cooperation, information sharing, learning, progress in implementation, and monitoring and evaluation;

(g) Vehicles;

(h) Linkages (e.g. to transparency framework, global stocktake, and registry);

(i) Provisions for revising/updating the guidance;

(j) Other matters.

31. For each section, Parties provided many suggestions for the types of information and specific provisions that could be incorporated, including in the form of drafted decision language.

IV. Other information

32. In their submissions Parties also suggested next steps for the work, including that:

(a) The round table on this item on 4 November should focus on the skeleton outline and elements, as well as on linkages with item 5, and that APA 1.4 should create convergence on a skeleton outline and elements to enable the co-chairs or co-facilitators to start preparing a draft decision text for consideration and adoption of CMA 1.3.

(b) The adaptation communication should be developed in stages, namely by (1) developing a registry for adaptation communications (Subsidiary Body for Implementation item 6) and considering how to use existing platforms (e.g. the NAP Central); (2) submissions of NAPs, including reporting on adaptation priorities (CMA could recognize existing NAPs as adaptation communications) and (3) final communication under the transparency framework to report challenges in implementation, linking to information provided in earlier steps.

Annex

Overview of skeleton proposals included in the submissions

This annex provides an overview of the skeleton outlines included in the submissions. It includes the general headings of each skeleton, and, for each skeleton, outlines the suggested broad elements.

Proposal 1	Proposal 2	Proposal 3	Proposal 4	Proposal 5
1. Preamble/ introductory remarks 1.1. Guiding principles/guidance 2. Purpose 3. Elements 3.1 Common elements 3.1.1 National circumstances 3.1.2 Impacts, vulnerabilities, and risk 3.1.3 Priorities, policies, plans, actions, strategies, programmes 3.1.4 Adaptation support needs of developing country Parties 3.1.5 Adaptation efforts of developing countries for recognition 3.1.6 Biennial communication of indicative support by developed countries 3.2 Additional/opt-in and opt-out elements 4. Vehicles 5. Linkages 6. Support for developing country Parties 7. Other matters	Decision text: 1. Preamble 2. Operational aspects Annex: 1. Purpose 2. Guidance 2.1 Common elements 2.1.1 National circumstances 2.1.2 Impacts, vulnerabilities, and risk 2.1.3 Prioritized actions, strategies, and programmes 2.1.4 Adaptation support needs 2.2 Additional opt-in/opt-out elements 2.2.1 Co-benefits of adaptation 2.2.2 Monitoring and evaluation of progress 2.3 Other information	1. Preamble/ introductory remarks 2. Purpose 3. Elements A. Resilience-building activities/actions B. Plans, strategies and priorities C. Implementation and support needs 4. Vehicles 5. Linkages 6. Support 7. Other matters	1. Preamble/ introductory remarks 1.1. Guiding principle/guidance 2. Purpose 3. Elements 3.1 Common Elements 3.1.1 National circumstances, legal frameworks, institutions 3.1.2 Impacts, vulnerability, and risk 3.1.3 Priorities, policies, plans, actions, strategies and/or programs 3.1.4 Biennial communication of indicative support by developed country Parties 3.1.5 Adaptation efforts of developing countries for recognition 3.2 Opt-in/opt-out 3.2.1 Monitoring and evaluation 3.2.2 Cooperation 4. Vehicles 5. Linkages 6. Support for developing country Parties 7. Other matters	Outline of a skeleton: Adopting decision Annex: 1. Purpose 2. Elements 2.1 Impacts, risks and vulnerability 2.2 Plans, strategies, priorities, and needs 2.3 Cooperation, information sharing and learning 3. Plans, strategies, priorities and needs 4. Cooperation, information sharing and learning

Proposal 6	Proposal 7	Proposal 8	Proposal 9	Proposal 10
<p>1. Purpose</p> <p>2. Approach/scope</p> <p>3. Content</p> <p>3.1 Impacts</p> <p>3.2 Vulnerabilities, risks and adaptive capacity</p> <p>3.3 Priorities, plans, strategies, planned actions and expected results</p> <p>3.4 Cooperation on enhancing adaptation</p>	<p>1. Preamble</p> <p>2. Purposes</p> <p>3. Elements</p> <p>Annex:</p> <p>1. National context and circumstances</p> <p>2. Plans, priorities, actions, programmes, and strategies</p> <p>3. Adaptation efforts and progress made</p> <p>4. Monitoring and evaluation, outcomes and findings</p> <p>5. Implementation and support needs</p>	<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>2. National circumstances, including impacts, vulnerability, capacity, legal frameworks, and national goals</p> <p>3. Adaptation planning and action, including strategies, priorities, and expected outcomes</p> <p>4. Adaptation support, including implementation and support needs, support received, and adequacy of support</p> <p>5. Adaptation efforts and future plans, including progress in implementation</p>	<p>1. Preamble/ introductory remarks</p> <p>2. Purpose</p> <p>3. Elements</p> <p>A. Common elements</p> <p>1. National circumstances</p> <p>2. Impacts, vulnerabilities, and risk</p> <p>3. Priorities, policies, plans, actions, strategies, programmes</p> <p>4. Adaptation efforts of developing countries (for recognition)</p> <p>5. Support provided by developed countries</p> <p>B. Additional/opt-in and opt-out elements</p> <p>4. Vehicles</p> <p>5. Linkages</p> <p>6. Support for developing country Parties</p>	<p>CMA decision part:</p> <p>1. Preambular</p> <p>2. Paragraphs following preambular</p> <p>Annex:</p> <p>1. Purposes</p> <p>2. Elements</p> <p>2.1 Impacts and vulnerabilities</p> <p>2.2 Policies, plans and priorities</p> <p>2.3 Implementation and support needs</p> <p>2.4 Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>2.5 International cooperation</p>

Proposal 11	Proposal 12	Proposal 13	Proposal 14	Proposal 15
<p>1. Preamble/ introductory remark</p> <p>2. Guiding principles/ Guidance</p> <p>3. Purpose</p> <p>4. Elements</p> <p>(a) Common elements</p> <p>1. Vulnerabilities and risk</p> <p>2. Plans, priorities and actions</p> <p>3. Adaptation support needs of developing countries</p> <p>4. Biennial information on indicative level of support by developed countries</p> <p>(b) Additional/opt-in and opt-out/optional elements</p> <p>1. Legal and institutional frameworks</p> <p>2. Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>5. Vehicles</p> <p>6. Linkages</p> <p>7. Support for developing country Parties</p> <p>8. Other matters</p>	<p>1. Adopting decision</p> <p>1.1 Preamble</p> <p>1.2 Operational paragraphs</p> <p>Annex:</p> <p>1. Purpose</p> <p>2. Approach</p> <p>3. Structure and content</p> <p>A. Expected impacts</p> <p>B. Risks and vulnerability</p> <p>C. Actions taken to plan for and adapt to climate change</p> <p>D. Cooperation to enhance adaptation</p> <p>4. Updating the guidance</p>	<p>1. Adopting decision</p> <p>1.1 Preamble</p> <p>1.2 Operational paragraphs</p> <p>Annex:</p> <p>Elements</p> <p>1. Impact, risks, and vulnerability</p> <p>2. Planning and action</p> <p>3. Support needs</p> <p>4. Implementation and results achieved</p> <p>5. Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>6. Good practices and lessons learned</p>	<p>1, Purpose</p> <p>2. Elements</p> <p>a) Institutional arrangements</p> <p>b) Legal and policy frameworks</p> <p>c) Implementation approach</p> <p>d) Vulnerability assessment and modelling</p> <p>e) Summary of adaptation priorities</p> <p>f) Transboundary-induced vulnerabilities</p> <p>g) Adaptation support</p> <p>3. Flexibility</p> <p>4. Vehicles</p> <p>5. Linkages</p>	<p>1. Introductory remarks</p> <p>2. Purpose</p> <p>3. Elements</p> <p>3.1 Common elements</p> <p>3.2 Additional/opt-in and opt-out elements</p> <p>4. Vehicles</p> <p>5. Linkages</p> <p>6. Support for developing country Parties</p> <p>7. Other matters</p>