

The Key to Increasing Ambition is Equity

Input to the Talanoa Dialogue

Recommendations:

- ! The Talanoa Dialogue must assess the actions of countries against both their historical responsibility and the remaining carbon budget available for 1.5°C.
- ! The Talanoa Dialogue must assess the provision of support from donor countries and bear this assessment in mind when assessing the actions of developing countries.
- ! The Talanoa Dialogue must privilege the perspectives of affected communities while safeguarding against potential conflicts of interest.

Introduction

We would like to thank the Fijian COP23 Presidency for taking ownership of the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue (now known as the Talanoa Dialogue 2018) and for attempting to raise its political relevance. Leadership from developing countries benefits the process and goes some way towards distributing influence in the negotiations in a more representative manner. We welcome the opportunity to formally share our views on the record.

In this submission we shall primarily address the third guiding question “*How do we get there [where we want to go]?*” We will address this question in two parts: i) What should climate action look like to meet the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C goal; ii) What the Talanoa Dialogue process itself needs to look like to achieve this.

i) What should climate action look like to meet the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C Goal?

Increased and equitable ambition

Climate change science outlines an increasingly alarming picture of a warming world; climate change impacts add the colour and tone. With the world on average 1°C warmer than it was in pre-industrial times we are witnessing an unprecedented uptick in the frequency and severity of storms, droughts, floods, and fires jeopardizing the lives and livelihoods of millions of people, particularly in the developing countries. It was with this reality in mind that the Paris Agreement contained the goal of limiting temperatures increases to 1.5°C.

However the approach the Agreement supposed would meet this goal relies on bottom-up calculations. The result is that the current round of countries' pledged climate action (the Nationally Determined Contributions) will still result in upwards of 3°C warming. This is assuming they are fully implemented and that the conditionality of a great number of pledges is addressed

Coming to the Talanoa Dialogue, Parties must justify their current pledges as fair contributions to a 1.5°C global effort in clear and transparent equity terms that can be universalized and applied to all Parties at all levels of development.

A broad range of civil society organisations, including environmental, developmental, and faith organisations, social movements and trade unions have jointly developed a positive vision for how to assess the NDCs with a view to bridging the ambition gap and holding temperature rise below 1.5°C. Now with over 150 organisational signatories, the CSO Equity Review has a broad-

based support among non-State actors in the UNFCCC process, and beyond. The outputs of their collaboration can be found at the Civil Society Equity Review website: www.civilsocietyreview.org.

The CSO Equity Review assessed countries' pledges by placing them within global mitigation budgets associated with a minimal chance of keeping warming below 1.5°C, and a 66% chance of keeping below 2°C. Fair shares were calculated as an “equity range” which considers two factors in equal balance: 1) historical responsibility, using start dates of 1850 and 1950; 2) capacity to take climate action, using as the principal indicator national income *over* what is needed to provide basic living standards—estimated as \$7,500 annual per-capita.

Assessed in such a way, the NDCs of developed countries fall far short of their fair share (which include both domestic action and international finance), while the NDCs of developing countries exceed or broadly meet their fair share. Most developing countries have greater mitigation potential than their fair share, while most developed countries have fair shares that are already too large to fulfil exclusively within their borders, even with extremely ambitious domestic actions.

The current NDCs represent barely half of the reduction in emissions required by 2030 to avoid breaching the 1.5°C temperature threshold. Given that a temperature rise of 2°C would have catastrophic impacts in agricultural areas, in tropical and polar regions, and in critical ecosystems, there is an urgent need to accelerate emissions reductions in the remaining years of this decade and the early part of the coming decade. There must be a tremendous push for a rapid global emissions peak before 2020, as the pre-2020 period will define the post-2020 reality, both politically and physically. This must happen despite the core reality that ours is a world of nations at starkly disparate levels of economic and material development. The necessary mobilization will therefore not be achieved without equity. To succeed, the global low-carbon transition must be widely seen as both beneficial and fair.

The key realisation that civil society has come to is that equity is the key to unlocking ambition because it is the key to ensuring cooperation. If CSOs can realise this and overcome vast differences in perspective to develop a methodology for operationalising equity then it stands to reason that Parties can too.

Means of implementation

The required increase in ambition would mean developing countries doing more than what is “fair”. These additional actions on their part would have to rely on financial resources from developed countries who themselves face physical limitations on meeting their fair share of mitigation action at home.

Additionally, the Framework Convention's Article 4 and every subsequent COP decision as well as the Paris Agreement (which is meant to enhance the implementation of the Convention) recognises that those developed countries who are most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions must provide support to the developing countries in line with their historical responsibility. This support is not only to allow other countries to undergo the transformation required to reduce their emissions, but also to take meaningful actions to adapt to the realities of climate change while ensuring sustainable development.

The means of implementation must be taken seriously if the world is to have a chance of avoiding an excess of 1.5°C warming. For us to get where we need to go, developed countries must significantly step up their financial and technology transfer contributions.

ii) What should the Talanoa Dialogue process look like to achieve this?

Assessment of historical responsibility and action against a carbon budget

The first question for the Talanoa Dialogue is “*where are we?*” Embedded in this question is another which must also be considered: *how did we get here?*

Both the current levels of warming (and their associated impacts) and the size of the remaining carbon budget for 1.5°C are a result of historical emissions—from industrialisation through to present today. For the Talanoa Dialogue to live up to expectations it must consider not only the ambition of the first period NDCs (post-2020) but also the ambition of pre-2020 actions and the proportion of the overall carbon budget each country has already spent.

There are existing commitments under the Doha Amendment of the Kyoto Protocol, in which Parties agreed to an aggregate reduction of 18% by 2014, as well as to revisit those reductions in order to align them with the upper end of the IPCC AR4 recommendation of 25-40% reductions on 1990 levels for annex 1 countries. The adequacy, and crucially the implementation, of these commitments must be assessed in addition to the assessment of the NDCs because they inform any assessment of how ambitious those NDCs really are. Also important is to assess the mitigation efforts of developed countries who have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol or the Doha Amendment, so that there is a comparability of the efforts of all developed countries.

At the Facilitative Dialogue in 2016, civil society organisations, citing the UNFCCC Secretariat synthesis report, reminded Parties that the remaining budget for 1.5 is 550 GtCO₂eq and that even if the efforts contained in the NDCs are implemented, this budget will have been exhausted by 2025.

Historical responsibility can be assumed in the non-confrontational spirit implicit to the Talanoa Dialogue, but it remains a responsibility that cannot be shirked.

Parties must use the Talanoa Dialogue to begin building a framework of a common vision for equity, as civil society has already done. Such a framework will bridge different national views and deepen our understanding of the many ways in which injustice blocks ambition, while equity drives fair and ambitious action by all countries. Such a mutual understanding among Parties would support much greater cooperation, enable meaningful self-assessment and peer-assessment, and break ground toward meaningful exchanges on equitable differentiation and fair paths toward the fulfilment of the Paris objectives.

Assessment of provision of means of implementation

Given the critical nature of support for actions, the Talanoa Dialogue must include in its scope an assessment of the financial, technological, and capacity building support that has been provided by developed countries to developing countries.

Provision of support has been a cornerstone of this process since its inception and is enshrined in the Framework Convention and the Paris Agreement.

Furthermore, as many developing countries offered NDCs which were entirely or partially conditional on the provision of additional means of implementation, the Talanoa Dialogue cannot conduct a fair or meaningful assessment of their ambition without simultaneously assessing the ambition of the support they have been provided.

As the CSO Equity Review 2016 report stated, if the necessary resources are not flowing effectively by 2020, any subsequent ambition ratcheting system will be extremely hard pressed to deliver the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. In the absence of robust pre-2020 action, the still-continuing process of fossil-fuel “lock in” will continue. Where additional energy is needed, new fossil-fuel infrastructure will be constructed, making more communities dependent on fossil fuels and making ambitious post-2020 reductions even more challenging.

In assessing the adequacy of the means of support, the Talanoa Dialogue should draw from a range of estimates for the cost of adhering to a 1.5C pathway. The CSO Equity Review has used IEA and other sources to estimate that a true 1.5°C effort could require incremental investments of at least \$750 billion in 2020, relative to those needed to fulfil current climate policies, and point out that when investments in other sectors of the economy are also taken into account, total incremental mitigation costs will be higher still. When the costs of adaptation and loss and damage are also included, the figure rises dramatically yet again.

An assessment of the means of support must also consider the relationship between financial contributions and amount of CO₂ reductions required as part of a 1.5°C pathway. Again, civil society gave input during the 2016 Facilitative Dialogue which combined information in reports from Oxfam and the IEA to estimate that the \$100 billion pledge by developed countries translates to approximately \$14 billion in grants in 2020, resulting only in an additional 240 MtCO₂eq of CO₂ reductions. Compared to the annual reductions of 14 GtCO₂eq by 2020 required for 1.5°C, this is negligible.

No conflict of interest

The voices telling the stories at the Talanoa Dialogue table, and the voices shaping the global response to this crisis, must necessarily and truly represent people who are struggling for the common good as outlined in the objectives and goals in the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, rather than private, vested interests that actually only seek to serve their own private ambition. Therefore, moving forward, both within the Talanoa Dialogue and UNFCCC processes in general, a necessary first step to achieving ambition and equity is ensuring that the critical conversations happening here do not give way to conflicts of interest.

Conclusion

In this Party-driven process we see the role of non-Parties as being the moral voice. We have a vision for international cooperation to make possible a liveable and just future. We share that vision with Parties in the hope that it inspires a revision of contributions which, if left as they are, will jeopardise that just, liveable world.

It has been over two years since the Paris Agreement was signed. We must now move the discussion towards assessing the adequacy and fairness of collective ambition, and of individual country contributions past, present, and future, in a transparent process. Processes must be defined that provide the information, analysis and insights required for meaningful exercises in mutual assessment and comparison, all of which must take place within the context of our now sharply limited global carbon budget.

It *is* possible for diverse interests to come together and agree broad principles under a framework approach to a grave problem. This is evident in the very existence of the Framework Convention, as well as in civil society initiatives such as the Equity Review.