TALANOA DIALOGUE

On behalf of the Arab Group, Saudi Arabia welcomes this opportunity to submit the Arab Group's collective input for the Talanoa Dialogue, as encouraged in Annex II to 1/CP.23.

The Arab group stresses on the importance of highlighting the principles that shall guide the dialogue, in this regard the following elements are to be considered:

1- Main principles of the UNFCCC Convention provide the relevant guidance in the dialogue, in particular in relation to the clear responsibilities of parties in line with their respective capacities, the CBDR principle is a guiding element in the discussion not only in assessing where we are but also in formulating where we want to go and how to achieve that;
2- Equity, is crucial in looking forward, especially in assessing what countries should be considering in terms of actions and policies, as poverty eradication and economic and social development are clear priorities for non-Annex I (developing) countries, this also relates to issues of response measures and if they were adequately handled since the start of implementation of the Convention up until now and in the future;
3- Dialogue should consider all elements related to climate change, respecting the facts that the adaptation burden developing countries are facing is due to actions taken by developed countries (Annex I) since the industrial revolution, thus, historical responsibility, has to be clarified and highlighted. Adaptation should be a component of the dialogue be it in assessing where we are and also where we want to go and how to achieve that;
4- In any logical assessment of the status and future of collective action to face global challenges, issues related to availability, adequacy, predictability, accessibility and sustainability of means of implementation in particular finance and technology are the enablers of national actions and catalyst for enhancing ambition, therefore, the dialogue should also examine means of implementation in particular finance through evaluation of the criteria highlighted above**.**

Why are we here?

The story of climate change begins with the first industrial revolution, which started around 1750 in Britain and spread throughout Western Europe and North America. The industrial revolution kicked off significant increases in atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gasses, caused by human activities.

Cumulative historical emissions account for the buildup of gasses in the atmosphere. Studies that assess past emissions conclude that advanced industrialized countries are responsible for most of current emissions and consequently its adverse effects.

By the mid-20th century and onwards, there was a growing amount of evidence linking climate change to the increased concentrations of greenhouse gasses. In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its first assessment report concluding that anthropogenic emissions are increasing in the atmosphere and that the increase would be expected to result in temperature rise, all following reports reinforced the earlier findings and reiterated that current climate change is a result of human activities and it shed light on different and widespread effects of change in the climate either witnessed or projected in the future. Two years later, in 1992, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, governments adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Its key objective is "stabilization

of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". The Convention acknowledges the need for broad cooperation on climate change, and also, central to the Convention, are historic responsibility, equity and social considerations. These considerations are reflected in the requirement for developed county parties to take the lead and to assist developing countries, in the recognition that developing countries' emissions are relatively low and will need to grow to meet their legitimate social, economic and developmental needs, and that actions should be in accordance with countries' common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions and needs.

Several commitments covering different periods have been made under the Convention. The first commitment falls under the Convention itself, and it requests Annex I parties to return their emissions levels by 2000 to their 1990 levels. After that, under the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period covering the years 2008-2012, Annex I parties committed to reduce their emissions levels by an average of 5% compared to 1990 levels. In the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol (Doha Amendment), Parties committed to reduce GHG emissions by at least 18 percent below 1990 levels. However, up until now, the amendment has not entered into force as not enough parties have accepted the amendment.

Where are we now?

Over the period 1990–2015, total aggregate GHG emissions without land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) emissions and removals from for all Annex I Parties decreased by 12.9%, while total GHG emissions and removals with LULUCF decreased by 17.9%. For Annex I Parties with economies in transition, GHG emissions without LULUCF decreased by 38.3%, while those with LULUCF decreased by 48.5%. For Annex I Parties that do not have economies in transition, GHG emissions without LULUCF decreased by 0.7%, while those with LULUCF decreased by 2.1%. Therefore, GHG emissions from Annex I countries have declined but largely due to lower emissions from economies in transition.

As the focus shifts from the Kyoto Protocol to the Paris Agreement, it is essential to reflect on the progress that has been made. While there have been reductions in GHG emissions from Annex I parties, not all Annex I parties were able to meet their pledges, in fact, some Annex I parties' emissions have increased. It is also worth noting that some Annex I Parties (developed countries) have officially withdrawn from the Kyoto Protocol, others refrained from joining a second commitment period, although they face no capacities constrains or development challenges.

Furthermore, and in relation to fulfilling the commitments under articles 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 of the Convention, flows of funds from developed to developing nations have not been sufficient nor adequate or predictable. Several COP decisions have called for scaling up of finance, enhancing predictability, responding to developing countries' needs, and enhancing country ownership. Such COP guidance saw very limited implementation, as such, developing countries were not able to plan or enhance their efforts to tackle climate change, especially with the burden of adaptation. It is also worth noting that the Kyoto Protocol, through its Clean Development Mechanism, aimed at establishing a carbon market with carbon pricing, this approach has proven to be unsuccessful as carbon prices crashed, and it showed that such approach should not be considered as a source of funding or as a catalyst for action.

In Copenhagen, in 2009, two goals were set for climate finance, one is a fast start finance of 30 billion USD, and the second is an annual 100 billion USD by 2020. Current figures of available climate change funds are far below the set target. Support from Annex I Parties to Non-Annex I Parties on areas of technology transfer and capacity building is far from developing Parties' needs as well.

In addition, existing climate related funds, in particular the GEF, Adaptation Fund, LDCF and SCCF have not provided any significant resources to assist developing countries to transition to more climate friendly technology. Accessing those funds has been a challenge and predictability of the resources is a regular concern by the COP.

Zooming in on the Arab Group, the countries are highly vulnerable to adverse effect of climate change and response measures, which is likely to compound persisting development challenges. The Arab Group is in a region that is already recognized as the most water scarce region in the world and has to import more than half of its food, which can have severe implications on food security. The IPCC predicts that climate change will rapidly reduce precipitation in the region and resulting hydrological changes could reduce water availability per person by 30 - 70% by 2025, diminish agricultural productivity, and also heighten the risk of flooding in highly populated urban and coastal areas. It is worth noting that all Arab countries are already facing several negative impacts of climate change, this includes extreme weather events like heat waves, dust and sand storms, increasing salinity of ground water in coastal areas, increase in number and magnitude of storms, all of which are being dealt with mainly through national budgets and national funding.

According to the latest IPCC assessment, the climate is predicted to become even hotter in most of the Arab countries. Higher temperatures and reduced precipitation will increase the occurrence and severity of droughts. It is further estimated that an additional 80–100 million people will be exposed by 2025 to water stress, which is likely to result in increased pressure on groundwater resources. In addition, agriculture yields, especially in rain-fed areas, are expected to fluctuate more widely, ultimately falling to a significantly lower long-term average. In urban areas in North Africa, a temperature increase of 1-3 degrees could expose 6–25 million people to coastal flooding. In addition, heat waves, an increased "heat island effect," water scarcity, decreasing water quality, worsening air quality, and ground ozone formation are likely to affect public health, and more generally lead to challenging living conditions.

Furthermore, special attention is required towards economies under occupation. The foreign occupation of the State of Palestine, a member of the Arab Group and a state party to the convention, extremely amplifies the severe impact of climate change on its highly vulnerable development sectors and on the ability of the country to implement its ambitious climate action plans as represented in its NDC. Two main areas that anticipate significant impacts as a result of climate change are water security and agriculture. Projections predict that decreases in precipitation and increases in temperature will likely lead to increased food and water insecurity for the residents. More frequent droughts and increased desertification will lead to changes in viability of crops, increased crop water requirements, and higher food prices. Special consideration is needed in addressing present capacities dealing with concerns such as water security and availability.

For the Arab Group in general, the social, economic, and environmental impacts are expected to be relatively higher compared to the rest of the world. Low-lying coastal areas in Tunisia, Qatar, Libya, UAE,

Kuwait, Bahrain, Palestine and particularly Egypt are at particular risk. Furthermore, the Arab Group has many economies that are dependent on a single source of income, further adding to their vulnerability.

In addition, climate change response measures instituted to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases often exert profound adverse effect on overriding priorities of sustainable development, poverty eradication, economic development and plans and programs of many developing countries. These effects are particularly severe on those countries whose economies are heavily dependent on a single sector or single commodity such as hydrocarbons, agriculture and tourism. The impacts arising from the implementation of response measures are also pertinent in the areas of agriculture and food security, water availability and water security, energy access, health, livelihoods, employment and the sustainability of economy growth.

- Most developing countries have fragile economies and suffer from low productivity and surplus of labor and increasing unemployment rates, with very significant proportion of their population living below poverty level. They also lack access to essential modern energy, water and sanitation services.
- Many Arab, African countries, least developed countries and small island developing States of such category are vulnerable to response measures due to the (a) geographical distance from main export markets, (b) high dependency on agriculture exports, (c) high dependency on exporting commodities, (d) high dependency on a single commodity; (e) unsustainable land use and land-use change patterns, and (f) insufficient relevant data and information for assessing, measuring and forecasting economic fluctuations (UNFCCC, 2014a).
- The sectors which might be subject to significant vulnerability due to impacts of response measures are (a) conventional oil, gas and coal fuels, (b) energy-intensive trade-exposed goods (aluminum, iron and steel, cement, chemicals, and pulp and paper), (c) tourism, and (d) agriculture (UNFCCC, 2016b). Others include consumer goods subject to eco-labelling and standards, air-freighted goods and marine-transported goods.

Climate finance in the Arab Group is largely concentrated in a small number of large projects in the form of loans or concessional loans. The money largely goes towards mitigation efforts despite pressing adaptation needs in the region, especially for water conservation and food security measures.

Where do we want to go?

All parties to the Convention want to achieve the objectives of the Convention and the Paris Agreement. Achieving those objectives requires a scale up in the context of sustainable development for mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, and capacity building efforts, taking fully into account that economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of the developing country Parties.

It is important that there exists a functioning and implementation-oriented regime that follows clear principles and acknowledges the different circumstances between developed and developing countries, acknowledging that level of action by developing countries directly relates to level of support provided by developed countries. In order to achieve active and efficient response to the challenging impact of climate change, it is crucial to secure adequate, predictable and sustainable means of implementation to developing countries in order to implement NDCs, adequately deal with adaptation challenges, and build resilience while maintaining a balanced support between adaptation and mitigation.

How do we get there?

Taking into account historical responsibility, previously made commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, and the different achievement levels of these commitments by developed nations, it is important to constantly build trust and promote cooperation between developed and developing nations, and this can be achieved by implementing the equity principles enshrined in the Convention and in the Paris Agreement.

As stated in the introduction, the concept of equity is prominent in the Convention. A major determinant in achieving the Convention's and Paris Agreement's objectives is to continue to see developed country parties taking the lead, fulfilling their commitments, scaling up their ambitions and their support to developing country parties. Furthermore, it is important to ensure predictability and sustainability of support provided from developed countries.

Trust and cooperation can only be maintained if nations believe that other nations are doing their fair share to address the problem. In a world that is characterized by deep disparities, it is crucial to uphold developing countries' right for development, and take into account that climate change policy should not aggravate existing disparities between developed and developing nations.

Aware of the vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change and response measures, countries of the Arab Group have begun taking action to confront the phenomenon. However, the challenge for the region remains in raising resilience.

Recommendations include:

- Take into full account the legitimate priority needs of developing countries for the achievement of sustained economic growth and the eradication of poverty
- Ensure that equity and CBDR are implemented in across the Paris Agreement Work Program
- Take into account the impacts of the implementation of response measures
- Ensure that actions cover all sectors and all emissions
- Focus on technology development and transfer as a primary means for addressing climate change and removing all barriers that may hinder it
- Assess and enhance pre-2020 commitments and actions
- Establish a clear process for monitoring progress and reporting of financial support
- Identify ways to further scale up funds, and ensure that provision of scaled-up financial resources should aim to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation, taking into account country-driven strategies, and the priorities and needs of developing country Parties
- Most vulnerable parties and parties under occupation shall receive special attention and more support to respond to climate change challenges.

Once more, the Arab Group greatly appreciates this opportunity to submit its input for the Talanoa Dialogue, and highlights the importance of maintaining the simple approach to the discussion, in order to stay true to the Talanoa principles in a manner that maintains inclusivity to all.