



Framework Convention on
Climate Change

15 November 2023

Views on the elements of the work programme on just transition

Synthesis report by the secretariat

I. Introduction and overview

A. Background and mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement, at its fourth session (CMA 4), decided to establish, in its decision on the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, a **work programme on just transition** for discussion of pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.¹

2. CMA 4 requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) to recommend a draft decision on this matter for consideration and adoption by CMA 5.² The work programme is to be implemented in a manner that builds on and complements the relevant workstreams under the Convention and the Paris Agreement, including the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme.

3. CMA 4 also decided to convene, as part of the work programme, an annual high-level ministerial round table on just transition, beginning at CMA 5.³

4. The Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, at their fifty-eighth session (SB 58), convened Parties to initiate deliberations and work towards the preparation of a draft decision on the matter for consideration and adoption at CMA 5. In its conclusions, SB 58:⁴

(a) Agreed that the SBSTA and the SBI will continue work on this matter at SB 59, informed by the informal note prepared at SB 58;⁵

(b) Invited Parties and observers to submit via the submission portal views on the different elements of the work programme;

(c) Requested the secretariat to prepare a synthesis report on Parties' submissions with a view to informing Parties' further discussions on the work programme during a workshop on the work programme;

(d) Requested the secretariat to organize, under the guidance of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, a workshop to be held before SB 59 on the work programme to inform further work thereunder, based on the submissions and the synthesis report referred to above, and further requested the secretariat to prepare, under the guidance of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, a summary report on the workshop.

(e) Scope and methodology of the report

5. This report has been prepared by the secretariat under the guidance of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and synthesizes the submissions received from Parties in response to the invitation of SB 58 on views on the elements of the work programme on just transition, taking into consideration the informal note by the co-facilitator.

6. In the informal note, the following were listed as potential draft elements to be included in the work programme:

(a) Overarching considerations

(b) Objectives

(c) Scope

¹ Decision 1/CMA.4, para. 52.

² Decision 1/CMA.4, para. 52.

³ Decision 1/CMA.4, para. 53.

⁴ FCCC/SBI/2023/10, paras. 42–44.

⁵ See https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/IN.SBI58.i8_SBSTA58.i9.4.pdf.

- (d) Institutional arrangements
- (e) Modalities
- (f) Inputs
- (g) Outputs/outcomes.

7. It should be noted that the structure (including headings) and potential draft elements of the work programme set out in the informal note are preliminary, not exhaustive and have not yet been agreed by Parties. Therefore, they have no formal status.

8. Nevertheless, several Parties broadly followed the list of draft elements set out in the informal note in their submissions by presenting proposals under each element, while others did not. Some Parties also presented views on additional potential draft elements that were not listed in the informal note.

9. This synthesis report has been structured around the list of potential draft elements contained in the informal note by the co-facilitators. It summarizes the information presented by Parties in their submissions, using their terminology, under each potential draft element, without prejudging the outcome of the discussion among Parties at CMA 5. In cases where the information and/or proposals provided in Parties' submissions were not presented under a specific potential draft element, such information and/or proposals have been included under the draft element deemed most appropriate to facilitate an understanding thereof, without prejudging the outcome of the discussion among Parties.

B. Overview of submissions received

10. As at 1 November 2023, submissions had been received from 17 Parties on behalf of Party groups or individual Parties,⁶ representing 169 Parties, expressing views on the elements of the work programme on just transition. As at the same date, 16 submissions from observers had also been received.

II. Synthesis of elements of the work programme on just transition

A. Overarching considerations

11. Several Parties highlighted under overarching considerations that the work programme on just transition should be discussed in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring food security, and promoting gender, social and environmental equality and climate justice, and eradicating poverty. Other elements to be considered include promotion of decent work and skills training, intergenerational equity, climate resilience, human rights, security and peace.

12. For some Parties, the work programme could be implemented through various instruments and mechanisms, including through financial flows, nature-based solutions, and deployment and transfer of technology consistent with a pathway

⁶ Submissions had been received from the following Parties or groups of Parties: Australia; Brazil on behalf of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Cuba on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; Indonesia; Japan; Like-minded Developing Countries; Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group; Senegal on behalf of the least developed countries; Spain on behalf of the European Union; Türkiye; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; and Zambia on behalf of the African Group.

towards low-emission and climate-resilient economies, recognizing the principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Parties also mentioned the importance of following principles such as those contained in the Convention and the Paris Agreement, the Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), resolutions and guidelines of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Just Transition Declaration.

13. Parties also expressed the view that the work programme should be used to discuss pathways for achieving the objective of the Convention and the Paris Agreement, ensuring the broad and active participation of society and leaving no one behind.

14. Other overarching considerations mentioned by Parties included the need to consider measures adopted on environmental grounds by developed countries – such as subsidies, standards and other types including levies – that may hinder economic and social development and poverty eradication in developing countries and, therefore, affect the workforce in those countries; potential synergies with sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; potential relationships with climate finance, efforts to achieve net zero carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy; and the need for a holistic approach (involving all sectors) that is just, inclusive, equitable, sustainable and affordable, and respectful of the national circumstances of each Party.

15. Several Parties included examples of national and/or international initiatives related to the topic, such as the Office for a Just Socio-Ecological Transition in Chile; the Green Jobs Taskforce in the United Kingdom; the Justice40 initiative, the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization and the American Climate Corps in the United States; the National Transformation Principles and the Net Zero Economy Agency in Australia; the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities and the Sustainable Jobs Plan for 2023–2025 in Canada; the 2053 goal on green transition in Türkiye; and the Just Energy Transition Partnerships.

16. One group of Parties also indicated that efforts under the work programme should adhere to the Articles of the Convention (e.g. Article 3, paragraph 1; and Article 4, paragraphs 2(a), 3, 5, 7 and 8) and the Paris Agreement (e.g. Article 4, in particular paragraph 4, and Article 9, in particular paragraphs 1, 3 and 5).

B. Concept of “just transition” in the Paris Agreement

17. Several Parties included information on their interpretation of the concept of “just transition” in the context of the Paris Agreement, with one group of Parties indicating that the concept has evolved over the years and is still undergoing further evolution.

18. Some Parties presented a broader understanding of “just transition” covering all three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) in a balanced and integrated manner; the need to embrace various dimensions, including labour, just ecological transition and gender integration; and/or indicating that just transition is not only about achieving climate objectives, but also about addressing the social and economic inequalities that may arise during this process. Other Parties indicated some restrictions and/or limitations regarding the concept, with one Party mentioning that the meaning of “just transition” is already clearly defined in paragraphs 50–51 of decision 1/CMA.4.

19. Some Parties highlighted the need to establish a common understanding of “just transition” using a step-by-step participatory and inclusive approach, while respecting national circumstances and different starting points for each country. On

the other hand, some Parties do not foresee the need to debate the meaning of just transition within the work programme.

20. Regardless of a common understanding of the concept of “just transition”, several Parties acknowledged that Parties have different starting points and various just transition pathways, different timelines and development priorities and that each Party will pursue its own just transition pathway in the light of its national context and development pathway. In the words of one group of Parties, there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution. Similarly, other groups of Parties do not view the work programme as a platform to prescribe national practices for Parties on how to manage the transitions.

21. Finally, one Party mentioned that in other international forums, such as the ILO, a definition and framework for considering just transition issues has already been agreed⁷ and, therefore, suggesting that the ILO is an appropriate forum for further discussions on definitions of “just transition”.

C. Objectives

22. Parties presented different proposals and/or included elements that could be considered in the discussions on the objectives of the work programme on just transition.

23. For the purpose of this synthesis report, Parties’ proposals and potential elements for consideration have been summarized in the following non-exclusionary clusters, without prejudging the outcome of the discussion among Parties at CMA 5:

(a) Promoting discussions to develop a comprehensive understanding of just transition and potential just transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement outlined in Article 2, paragraph 1, in the context of Article 2, paragraph 2, in a manner that builds on and complements the relevant workstreams under the Convention and the Paris Agreement;

(b) Sharing experience, knowledge, best practices and lessons learned (including in financing just transition), with the broad participation of Parties, observers, relevant international organizations and key stakeholders (including communities) to support or assist Parties in developing and implementing national climate change policies, measures, strategies and frameworks for just transitions (with the aim of increasing equality and enhancing climate ambition and/or supporting a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities);

(c) Creating and/or promoting enabling conditions (including access to public and private support) for developing and implementing national climate change policies, measures, strategies and frameworks that incorporate just transition pathways that are fair, inclusive and leave no one behind, bearing in mind varying national circumstances and capacities;

(d) Promoting and enhancing international cooperation for the implementation of just transitions through low-emission and climate-resilient economies, with the promotion of social justice.

24. Some Parties indicated that the objectives of the work programme should not conflict with the objectives of other bodies already established under the Convention and/or the Paris Agreement, such as the Katowice Committee of Experts on the Impacts of the Implementation of Response Measures (KCI).

⁷ ILC.111/Record No. 7A.

D. Scope

25. Several Parties presented elements to be considered in the discussions on the scope of the work programme on just transition, indicating that the scope needs to be broad and flexible and/or integrated and holistic. Other Parties highlighted that the scope of the work programme is already defined in paragraphs 50–52 of decision 1/CMA.4 and in the tenth preambular paragraph of the Paris Agreement.

26. Parties that would prefer a broad and flexible and/or integrated and holistic scope, suggested that it should address all aspects of Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Paris Agreement and include all the topics addressed under the UNFCCC process, including mitigation, adaptation, response measures and means of implementation in relation to finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity-building (in other words, it should not be mitigation-centric).

27. Parties with a preference for a more targeted scope suggested a focus on the transition of the workforce through different national policies and measures with the aim of creating decent work and quality jobs while addressing the challenge of skills shortages, reskilling and upskilling so that the workforce can participate in the transition with dignity and benefit from all opportunities available.

28. The scope could also include elements from outside the UNFCCC process, such as the ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.

29. To facilitate the discussions, some Parties suggested that the scope should be organized around different thematic clusters or areas covering different sectors of the economy. Alternatively, in addition to a sector-based approach, one group of Parties suggested an issue-based approach covering transition pathways to low-emission and climate-resilient economies.

30. According to several Parties, the scope should be defined on the basis of the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances and be aligned with the SDGs.

E. Timeline

31. Some Parties clearly indicated their preference for a limited timeline for the work programme on just transition, both with and without the possibility of extension (ranging from two to three and five years, starting in 2024), while others clearly indicated a preference for an ongoing process with no termination date.

32. Proposals for the frequency of work programme activities included an annual dialogue, two global dialogues preceding the regular session of the subsidiary bodies, multiple workshops throughout the year and a series of workshops at each session of the subsidiary bodies with topics to be informed by Party submissions at the beginning of the year.

33. Several Parties did not include specific proposals and/or information regarding the timeline and frequency of work programme activities.

F. Institutional arrangements

34. Parties proposed institutional arrangements for carrying out the activities of the work programme on just transition including, in no specific order:

(a) Co-chairs or co-facilitators appointed by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies;

(b) A joint contact group, established in accordance with standard UNFCCC practice.

35. One proposal for institutional arrangements was that any technical work under the work programme should be conducted by the KCI.

36. Several Parties did not include specific proposals and/or information regarding institutional arrangements. One Party indicated that it does not see the need for new structures or permanent committees at this stage, while one group of Parties mentioned that it considers it too early to engage in discussions regarding institutional arrangements.

G. Modalities

37. Parties presented proposals for the modalities of the work programme on just transition including, in no specific order:

(a) In-session hybrid workshops and/or technical dialogues, convened by the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and co-facilitated by one developed country representative and one developing country representative, with the participation of Parties, non-Party stakeholders and international organizations;

(b) Contact groups under the subsidiary bodies;

(c) Annual high-level ministerial round tables.

38. Several submissions mentioned that for each workshop, technical dialogue and round table, Parties, observers and other non-Party stakeholders should be invited to submit, via the submission portal, suggestions for topics in line with the scope of the work programme. In addition, the secretariat could be requested to prepare intersessional synthesis or technical papers to inform the discussions.

39. Other submissions mentioned that the experience under other work programmes under the UNFCCC process (e.g. the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change) and/or the Paris Agreement should serve as an example.

40. Regardless of the modalities chosen, several Parties indicated that the work programme should be non-prescriptive, non-punitive and provide practical, pragmatic, inclusive and flexible solutions, recognizing that there is no 'one size fits all', and leave no one behind.

H. Inputs

41. As potential sources of inputs for the activities, discussions and deliberations under the work programme on just transition, Parties identified several sources of information, including submissions from Parties and non-Party stakeholders, mandated events and/or technical reports. Some Parties indicated that information should be based on the best available science, particularly from recent IPCC reports.

42. With regard to observers' inputs, relevant stakeholders were mentioned, such as the ILO, the IPCC, national and/or subnational labour organizations, Indigenous communities, international financing bodies, observer constituencies and civil society.

43. Finally, several Parties indicated that efforts under the work programme should also consider relevant information that has already been elaborated under other relevant UNFCCC bodies and/or workstreams (e.g. synthesis reports on nationally determined contributions, the GST, the KCI, the mitigation work programme, the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work

programme, the gender action plan, the Standing Committee on Finance, the new collective quantified goal on climate finance and the Adaptation Committee).

III. Outputs and/or outcomes

44. Parties identified several potential outputs and/or outcomes from the activities, discussions and deliberations under the work programme on just transition. It should be mentioned that not all submissions made a clear distinction between outputs and outcomes. The following table summarizes the proposals for outputs and/or outcomes made under different headings, bearing in mind that some Parties indicated that there is no need to prepare reports and/or draft decisions for consideration by the CMA and that the outputs/outcomes should be non-prescriptive, non-punitive and facilitative.

Proposals for outputs and/or outcomes under the work programme on just transition

<i>Outputs</i>	<i>Outputs/outcomes</i>
Workshop/dialogue reports	Workshop/dialogue reports
Summary reports	Annual reports to the CMA
Informal reports	Informal summary reports (that could serve as an input to the annual high-level ministerial round table on just transition)
Annual reports	Inputs to other relevant workstreams and constituted bodies
Annual report for the consideration of the SBSTA and the SBI	Recommendations to the Financial Mechanism of the Convention and the Paris Agreement
Report (with recommendations that should be disseminated and considered for implementation at the national and subnational level)	Annual decisions
CMA decisions	Institutional arrangements to build on and operationalize the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the implementation of the Paris Agreement
Political declarations	Sharing knowledge and good practices
Web-based resource platform for sharing knowledge, best practices and experience on just transition pathways	Identifying opportunities, gaps and challenges

45. It was suggested that, under the work programme, information could also be compiled on the relevant enabling conditions at the national level that are currently in place, including legislation, frameworks, action agendas, alignment of financial flows and facilitation of social dialogue, to provide a basis for discussion and explore potential case studies; potential indicators and peer-to-peer evaluation models to measure progress and produce specific outputs could be explored, such as technical reports; and general guidance could be explored for developing methodologies and tools, including a toolbox for just transition.

46. One important aspect mentioned as part of the proposed outputs and/or outcomes of the work programme is their relevance as inputs to:

- (a) The GST, in particular for the second and future GSTs (in cases where submissions also indicated a preference for a continuous process);
- (b) The elaboration and enhancement of future nationally determined contributions.

B. Participation of non-Party stakeholders

47. In general, Parties welcome the participation of non-Party stakeholders in the work programme on just transition, not only through submissions, but also in the different activities proposed by Parties.

48. Different types of non-Party stakeholders were mentioned in the submissions, including observer constituencies and civil society, international financing bodies and mechanisms, multilateral development banks, the ILO, the IPCC, national and/or subnational labour organizations, trade unions, industry, business actors, representatives of populations in vulnerable situations such as women and girls, youth and Indigenous Peoples, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

49. One Party also suggested articulation with the implementation of the six Action for Climate Empowerment elements, namely education, public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation.

50. Many Parties stressed the importance of the public participation of such groups based on their expertise, knowledge, best practices and lessons learned, for example for improving governance and policymaking for just transition.

C. Other elements: linkages with other UNFCCC workstreams and means of implementation

51. Beyond the potential draft list of elements captured in the informal note by the co-facilitators, Parties also included in their submissions other elements that should also be taken into consideration in the discussions under the work programme on just transition.

52. One element highlighted in several submissions is the need to maintain linkages with other relevant bodies and/or workstreams that already exist under the Convention and/or the Paris Agreement and to build on and/or complement the work of such groups, where appropriate. In this regard, several Parties stressed the need to avoid duplication.

53. UNFCCC bodies and/or workstreams mentioned in the submissions include the GST, the KCI, the Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme, the gender action plan, the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment and the Sharm El-Sheikh Implementation Plan, the Standing Committee on Finance, the new collective quantified goal on climate finance and the Adaptation Committee.

54. Other elements presented by several Parties include linkage between the work programme and all means of implementation. In particular, climate finance was raised as an important linkage, including in the context of Article 2, paragraph 1(c), and Article 9, paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 5, of the Paris Agreement. Some Parties indicated that the work programme should not be used for re-interpretations of the Paris Agreement, including its Article 2, paragraph 1(c).

55. Also in relation to climate finance, some Parties indicated the need to identify and prioritize financial instruments and/or financial architecture that promotes just transition and supports impacted workers, communities and other people in vulnerable situations. Some Parties also highlighted the importance of reforming international financial institutions and multilateral development banks to encourage support for just transition pathways. On the other hand, other Parties disagreed that there is a need for distinct, new international finance.

IV. Workshop on the work programme on just transition to be held before the fifty-ninth session of the subsidiary bodies

56. One Party and two groups of Parties included in their submissions proposals for the workshop on the work programme on just transition to be held before SB 59.

57. The Party requested that the secretariat prepare the budgetary implications of the proposed work programme structures made by Parties for presentation at the workshop, in order to ensure future decisions are sustainable.

58. Both group submissions proposed that the workshop be structured around the three pillars of sustainable development so that all positions related to the social, economic and environmental aspects of just transitions can be presented and discussed.

V. Submissions from observers

59. In addition to the submissions received from Parties, synthesized above, 16 submissions from observers were received (totalling 96 pages) and are available via the submission portal.⁸

⁸ See <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx> (in the search field, type "just transition").