



Paris Committee on Capacity-building

1 May 2020

Fourth meeting

Virtual meeting, 22–25 June 2020

Background note on the 2021 focus area of the Paris Committee on Capacity-building

Recommended actions by the Paris Committee on Capacity-building

The Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) will be invited to:

- a) Discuss and agree on its focus area for 2021;
- b) Consider and agree on the approach that it will take to implement its focus area in the next workplan period.

I. Possible actions for consideration by the Paris Committee on Capacity-building

A. Discussion and agreement on the 2021 focus area

1. The PCCB may wish to agree on its specific focus area of work for 2021 with a view to including information thereon in its annual technical progress report.

2. The PCCB may also wish to consider the following procedural options for agreeing on the focus area:

(a) **Option 1:** Agree on the 2021 focus area at the 4th meeting of the PCCB;

(b) **Option 2:** Agree on the 2021 focus area intersessionally. This will involve intersessional work and decision-making via conference calls and other electronic means to agree on the 2021 focus area on a no-objection basis.

3. The PCCB may further wish to consider the following options for its 2021 focus area, which were all determined on the basis of previous work performed by the PCCB, including at its annual Capacity-building Hubs:

(a) **Building capacity to facilitate the coherent implementation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** The PCCB, with its strong mandate to engage with other bodies under and outside the Convention, is well positioned to promote coherence in achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement and fulfilling the SDGs. Despite great opportunities for synergies, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement still proceed on different tracks. To foster coherence in their implementation, an enhanced understanding of the connections between climate change and sustainable development is required. Research from the Stockholm Environment Institute¹ found that the greatest links between the NDCs and the SDGs are in the areas of land use, food, energy and water. Many SDGs are insufficiently represented in NDC activities, particularly SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and

¹ Dzebo A, Janetschek H, Brandi C, et al. 2019. *Connections between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda: the case for policy coherence*. SEI Working Paper. Available at <https://www.sei.org/publications/connections-between-the-paris-agreement-and-the-2030-agenda/>. <https://www.sei.org/publications/connections-between-the-paris-agreement-and-the-2030-agenda/>.

strong institutions), a gap that needs to be addressed in future iterations of NDCs. By choosing to promote the coherent implementation of NDCs and SDGs as its 2021 focus area, the PCCB could help to build sector-relevant capacity for SDG-NDC mainstreaming, as well as build capacity to align NDC implementation with the SDGs at the sectoral and local level. To do this, it could collaborate with organizations and initiatives such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Resources Institute, the German Agency for International Cooperation and the NDC Partnership, which have already defined common objectives and coordination modalities in order to provide countries with integrated support for joint SDG–NDC mainstreaming, SDG–NDC screening of existing development plans, and capacity-building.² The PCCB could help Parties to learn from each other’s approaches to policy planning, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. It could also promote greater awareness and knowledge of feasible ways to utilize potential links and synergies, thereby fostering more ambitious climate action across multiple stakeholder groups and increasing the ambition of future NDCs. The launch of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030)³ would also make 2021 a compelling year to highlight the need for coherence in NDC–SDG implementation.

(b) **Enhancing the monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building activities.** Sustainable capacity-building is critical for effectively implementing the Paris Agreement. In this context, it is essential to enhance the understanding of capacity-building and the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts. Given the lack of agreed indicators, metrics and tools, Parties are struggling to regularly track and evaluate their capacity-building activities. In the light of this, stakeholders engaged in the UNFCCC process have highlighted measuring the effectiveness and impacts of capacity-building activities through enhanced monitoring and evaluation as a key area for improvement. Monitoring plays an essential role in the success of capacity-building activities; through well-planned and suitable monitoring and evaluation practices, resources could be more efficiently allocated and the effectiveness of capacity-building activities increased. Stakeholders such as the European Capacity Building Initiative and the World Resources Institute have suggested that the PCCB is key to supporting this work.^{4,5} Under this focus area, the PCCB could build on the discussions on this topic initiated at the 8th Durban Forum on capacity-building in 2019 to promote technical exchanges and gather and disseminate best practices and available tools or methodologies for assessing the impact and effectiveness of capacity-building activities. Such work could also result in a compendium of good practices for monitoring and evaluating capacity-building activities to support the work performed under the Convention and the Paris Agreement. Promoting well-developed, well-applied metrics is crucial, as they help to enhance understanding of the key factors in successful capacity-building and to measure progress. Such efforts would also contribute to measuring progress under the global stocktake established under Article 14 of the Paris Agreement.

(c) **Increasing climate ambition through capacity-building among youth and educators.** Education (both formal and informal) contributes to institutional building in both the short and the long term and supports human resource development. While academic institutions play a central role in climate change related capacity-building, concerted efforts are needed from multiple stakeholder groups, including the youth. Young people are key actors in tackling climate change and are involved in a broad range of activities, ranging from raising awareness of climate change issues, running educational programmes and promoting sustainable lifestyles and nature conservation work to implementing adaptation and mitigation projects. Under this focus area, the PCCB could explore and shed light on the importance of climate education for building technical and institutional capacity, and intensify its collaboration with educators such as universities and university networks,⁶ research and independent and youth non-governmental organizations, and other actors involved in

² For further details see: Bouyé M, Harmeling S and Schulz N. 2018. *Connecting the dots: Elements for a joined-up implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement*. Available at <https://www.wri.org/publication/connectingthedots-ndc-sdg>.

³ More information is available at <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>.

⁴ See, for example, Khan M, Sagar A, Huq S, et al. 2018. *Pocket Guide to Capacity Building for Climate Change (updated 2018 Edition)*. Available at <https://ecbi.org/news/updated-2018-edition-pocket-guide-capacity-building-climate-change>.

⁵ The submission of the World Resources Institute on the PCCB review held at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties is available at <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx>.

⁶ To date, the PCCB has engaged and/or collaborated with, for example, the Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change, the Universities Network for Climate Capacity, the Global Alliance of Universities on Climate, the United Nations University and the Pan-African University.

Action for Climate Empowerment, such as the United Nations Alliance of Climate Change Education, Training and Public Awareness. Work under this focus area could build on the relevant discussions and findings from the 2019–2020 series of Capacity-building Knowledge to Action Days⁷ at the regional and at COP level, as well as on its previous activities conducted in support of issues of youth and elements of Action for Climate Empowerment. By facilitating technical discussions, highlighting evidence-based case studies and enabling and promoting the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, the PCCB could effectively support efforts to empower youth, academics and other educators to raise climate ambition at the local and national level through enhanced, long-term capacity-building.

B. Consideration of and agreement on an approach to implementing the focus area in the next workplan period

4. The PCCB may wish to consider and agree on an approach to implementing its annual focus area in the next workplan period. The draft PCCB workplan for 2021–2024 (see document PCCB/2020/3) sets out a cross-fertilization approach, creating an interchange between discussions at the annual Durban Forum, which is thematically aligned with the annual PCCB focus area, and the annual work of the PCCB related to the focus area. This approach is as follows:

(a) The PCCB actively participates in the Durban Forum, including, as appropriate, as resource persons;

(b) The key messages of the Durban Forum are discussed at the annual PCCB meeting with a view to translating key findings into recommendations to the Conference of the Parties (COP) and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement and other stakeholders, as appropriate;

(c) In the second half of each year, the PCCB organizes one or more webinars to discuss the topic or selected subtopics of the Durban Forum in more detail, which it could hold as part of its PCCB Network webinars, offering Network members the opportunity to (co-)host the webinars. The PCCB could also consider organizing a set of regional webinars in order to obtain region-specific findings;

(d) The PCCB organizes a dedicated focus area day at the annual Capacity-building Hub at the COP.

II. Background

5. COP 21 decided that the PCCB will annually focus on an area or theme related to enhanced technical exchange on capacity-building, with the purpose of maintaining up-to-date knowledge on the successes and challenges in building capacity effectively in a particular area.⁸

6. At its forty-fifth session, the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) agreed that the first focus area or theme for the PCCB in 2017 would be on capacity-building activities for the implementation of NDCs in the context of the Paris Agreement.⁹

7. COP 22 decided that the PCCB shall invite six representatives from bodies established under the Convention and from the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism to participate in the meetings of the PCCB in line with its annual focus area. It also decided that the PCCB may invite other bodies established under the Convention and the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism to identify representatives to collaborate, as appropriate, on specific activities related to its work.¹⁰

8. As in previous years, relevant constituted bodies under the Convention, as well as the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, received an invitation [6 May 2020] to participate in the annual meeting of the PCCB, including a dialogue session on enhancing coherence and

⁷ See <https://unfccc.int/pccb/capacity-building-knowledge-to-action-days-in-regional-climate-weeks>.

⁸ Decision 1/CP.21, para. 74.

⁹ FCCC/SBI/2016/20, para. 91.

¹⁰ Decision 2/CP.22, annex, paras. 3 and 14.

coordination of capacity-building under the Convention and the Paris Agreement.¹¹ As more than six bodies and entities are actively involved in capacity-building work that is of relevance to the PCCB, the PCCB has invited more than six bodies and entities to nominate representatives to participate in the annual meetings of the PCCB for reasons of comprehensiveness and inclusiveness.

9. In line with established practice, these bodies and entities were also requested, in the same letter, to nominate a focal point for liaison with the PCCB for a duration of one year.

10. COP 22 also decided that the PCCB will prepare annual technical progress reports on its work for submission to the COP through the SBI and will make these reports available at the sessions of the SBI coinciding with the sessions of the COP.¹²

11. COP 24 requested the SBI to thematically align the annual meetings of the Durban Forum with the annual focus area of the PCCB.¹³

¹¹ On an exceptional basis, it was agreed that the 4th meeting of the PCCB will take place virtually owing to travel restrictions related to the coronavirus disease 2019.

¹² Decision 2/CP.22, annex, para. 17.

¹³ Decision 15/CP.24, para. 6.