

AGENDA ITEM 4. CURRENT MODES OF OBSERVER ENGAGEMENT

This is a summary of inputs from phase 2 to agenda item 4. The proposed solutions listed under the sub-themes reflect comments and suggestions made under focus group discussions, written submissions and bilateral meetings. Suggestions are not agreed upon for implementation and in several cases fall outside the purview of the review process. They should be read as a collection of ideas and possible actions that served as input for the spin-off discussions during Phase 3. The project report under phase 3 will consolidate the diverse inputs provided across all agenda items and present a list of agreed upon action points aimed at addressing the issues raised throughout the review process, whenever possible.

4.1 Quality of engagement of observer organizations	
4.1.1 How do you define quality engagement? What are the criteria for meaningful engagement? What steps can be taken to promote higher quality engagement for observers? Are there ways for the UNFCCC to become more bottom-up?	
I. Key Concerns:	
(i) A main obstacle to meaningful engagement is the lack of or limited understanding of the negotiation process and ways to engage, especially for new observers.	
II. Shared understanding & secretariat clarifications:	
(i) For participants in focus groups, meaningful engagement mainly translates as the possibility for observers to inform and influence decision-making, to establish two-way conversations with Parties, convey concerns and contribute positively to the process with their expertise and experience, as well as to build awareness and alliances and work collaboratively towards solutions.	
(ii) Capacity building (also mentioned as a solution under agenda items 1-5 discussions) ¹ , active listening, knowing the asks on both sides (observers and Parties), multidisciplinary approaches and wider access to the process (e.g., virtual options) were mentioned as potential enablers to improve the quality of observer engagement.	
III. Proposed solutions*:	Proposed ownership:
(i) Provide capacity-building material with information on how to engage through guides and/or tailored platform bringing together existing initiatives elsewhere (e.g., Admitted NGOs).	Observers, secretariat
(ii) Organize a spin-off group*** to develop tailored capacity-building for observers and report back to secretariat with feasible recommendations for action.	Observers, secretariat
(iii) Schedule information sessions with observers on the different modes of engagement throughout the year.	secretariat
(iv) Consider sharing best practices on how to engage or fostering inter-constituency network for capacity building (e.g., cross-constituency training sessions).	Observers
(v) Prepare Constituency members attending COPs to ensure they are well-briefed.	Admitted NGOs Constituency Focal Points (CFPs)
(vi) Enhance engagement with RINGO and ongoing engagement with the UK Universities Climate Network.	Admitted NGOs
(i) Work effectively and strategically with key partners on engagement at COPs and other UNFCCC sessions.	Admitted NGOs

¹ Cross-references to other agenda items are in red font.

*** **Spin-off groups:** the suggestion of potential spin-off groups to work on specific issues and/or solutions discussed during the focus groups came about organically during the process. Considering the secretariat's resource constraints, these groups are to be taken up by the observers themselves, where key individuals take the lead in driving those forwards and then report back to the secretariat. All observers are welcome to join groups in which they have an interest.

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(ii) Engage proactively with UNFCCC processes throughout the year, not only at COPs, including attendance at constituted bodies' meetings, participation in expert groups and coordinated responses to UNFCCC calls for written submissions.	Admitted NGOs
(iii) Hold multi-stakeholder meetings/ engagement on addressing the issues of communication gaps and narratives on actual countries climate change predicaments.	COP Presidency, Parties, Admitted NGOs, secretariat
(iv) Work together with constituency members so that it encompasses all and sundry in promoting dialogue.	COP Presidency, Parties, CFPs, Admitted NGOs, secretariat
(v) Improve communication with observers e.g. daily bulletin at and in advance of COPs.	COP Presidency, secretariat
(vi) Improve the accessibility of communications, which often assume a high level of understanding of UNFCCC processes and use complex terminology.	secretariat
(vii) Ensure timely access to all documents to observers' organizations, including the texts of the negotiations.	Admitted NGOs, secretariat
(viii) Increase/ improve access for observers to negotiation sessions and confirm in advance of meetings which sessions will be open to observers.	COP Presidency, Parties, secretariat
(ix) Reduce the complexity of the registration systems and ensure timely responses to issues or queries raised through the online registration system.	secretariat, Parties (for funding the secretariat)
(x) Ensure full and effective participation of observer organizations (civil society, Admitted NGOs, social organizations, indigenous peoples, women workers, climate migrants, and climate damages, among others) in processes related to and decisions referring to climate change.	COP Presidency, Parties, secretariat, CFPs
(xi) Include diverse geographical representation in UNFCCC side event plans and submissions; ensure diverse representation in their COP delegations (geographic but also in terms of academic disciplines, staff and students, career stages etc) (intersects with agenda item 2) .	Admitted IGOs, Admitted NGOs
(xii) Increase engagement with non-state actors ahead of the COP, including often marginalized groups such as youth and indigenous peoples (intersects with agenda item 2) .	COP Presidency, Parties
(xiii) Give priority to increase in quota for attending COP meetings, especially when a request is received from climate vulnerable countries (intersects with agenda item 3) .	secretariat
(xiv) Communicate consistently with UNFCCC secretariat and host country embassies the timing challenges observers face in sourcing travel funds to attend COPs and in obtaining Visas (belongs to agenda item 6) .	CFPs, Admitted NGOs
(xv) Improve access to badges and visas, particularly for partners from the Global South and develop strategies for managing COVID-19 vaccine inequities (if still applicable) (belongs to agenda items 3 [badges] and 6 [visas]) .	COP Presidency, Host Country, secretariat
(xvi) Take early measures to address any lack of affordable, safe accommodation, close to conference venues (belongs to agenda item 6) .	COP Presidency, Host Country, secretariat

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(xvii) Provide improved and more widely available translation services, including at UNFCCC side events (belong to agenda item 6) .	COP Presidency, Host Country, secretariat
(xviii) Improve virtual options for remote participation (belongs to agenda item 6) .	COP Presidency, Host Country, secretariat
(xix) Improve online platforms to allow fully interactive hybrid events for those unable to travel to COPs, and fewer restrictions on access to online event participation (belongs to agenda item 6) .	COP Presidency, Host Country, secretariat
(xx) Transmit all negotiation sessions through webcast and show on CCTV (not to be a substitute for attendance by observer organizations at negotiating sessions) (belongs to agenda item 6) .	secretariat
(xxi) Support the incoming COP Presidency in the dialogue it is undertaking with observer organizations to accommodate their participation in various COP or periodic conferences and continuously encourage the future COP Presidencies to continue to consider and discuss the needs of observer organizations in their preparations.	secretariat
(xxii) Ensure in future negotiation sessions, and in particular for COP, that venues can accommodate significant observer participation, and that processes remain open and transparent.	COP Presidency, Parties, secretariat
(xxiii) Provide observer organizations with reasonable opportunities to interact with government delegates and the media, which requires, among other things, access the venue where negotiations are being held.	COP Presidency, other Presiding Officers, Parties, secretariat
(xxiv) Ensure that observer organizations always have a number of slots to make interventions in all sessions and during negotiating meetings.	COP Presidency, other Presiding Officers
(xxv) Give a chance to two NGO Constituency representatives to attend the HLS meetings instead of one slot.	COP Presidency, secretariat
(xxvi) Ensure maximum access (e.g., to CGs and plenaries) through discussions with the secretariat and SB Chairs.	CFPs
(xxvii) Advocate for larger capacity of rooms to ensure access to all CGs and plenaries.	COP Presidency, Host Country, secretariat, NGOs
(xxviii) Request co-facilitators to keep informal consultations and meetings open whenever possible.	Presiding Officers
(xxix) Hold regular meetings with non-state actors from home countries during the COP (several Parties do this already but many do not).	Parties
(xxx) Support existing calls from several Parties and non-state actors to restrict the attendance of fossil fuel representatives at UNFCCC sessions, and to reject their sponsorship (belongs to agenda item 2) .	Parties
(xxxi) Establish that any revision of practices with regard to the participation of observer organizations at COPs should be conducted in close dialogue with the observer organizations and should be disseminated sufficiently in advance of their application.	Parties, secretariat, COP Presidency
(xxxii) Encourage and strengthen the catalytic role of the Convention to the full participation of civil society, building synergies between activities and process, as a way to support to address of climate change.	Parties
(xxxiii) Ensure good political will and commitment.	Parties

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(xxxiv) Ensure that there will be no restrictions placed upon peaceful protest and other forms of non-violent direct action.	secretariat
4.2 Current modes of engagement	
4.2.1 During sessions	
I. Key Concerns:	
<p>(i) Lack of or limited interaction with Parties.</p> <p>(ii) Dynamics during observer dialogues with Parties depend on format/structure and facilitator (some foster less interaction than expected from a dialogue).</p> <p>(iii) Observers' interventions are always assigned to the end of the sessions, when fewer attendees are present or engaged.</p>	
II. Shared understanding & secretariat clarifications	
<p>(i) Most participants in focus groups acknowledged that they participate more actively during sessions (largely through side events/ exhibits and dialogues) than in other meeting opportunities throughout the year.</p> <p>(ii) Dialogues and side events can encourage further interaction and networking between and among different stakeholders.</p> <p>(iii) Parties were against suggested rotation of interventions (observers and Parties) during plenaries on the grounds of UNFCCC being a Party-driven process, but progress is being made in this sense in other forums/interactions, such as the Global Stocktake and technical expert dialogues.</p> <p>(iv) As a lesson learned from the COVID pandemic, hybrid events are useful for those that cannot attend in person, but virtual opportunities should be improved to ensure two-way communication (instead of just receiving information).</p>	
III. Proposed solutions*:	Proposed ownership:
(i) Provide more timely information about side events to allow for proper planning.	secretariat
(ii) Keep side events near negotiations to encourage interaction with Parties.	Host Country, secretariat
(iii) Improve virtual options to allow for questions via chat (belongs to agenda item 6).	COP Presidency, Host Country, secretariat
(iv) Remove the need for virtual speakers to have badges in side events.	secretariat
(v) Consider having a facilitator dedicated to the virtual space to ensure proper virtual participation (belongs to agenda items 6).	secretariat
(vi) Consider including Party delegates as panel speakers as part of the selection criteria for side events (intersects with agenda items 6).	secretariat
(vii) Providing training sessions for facilitators in order to encourage interaction in dialogues.	secretariat
(viii) Increase meeting room availability for observers (belongs to agenda items 6).	secretariat
(ix) Make pavilions available at much reduced rates for charitable organizations.	COP Presidency, Host country
(x) Identify all Parties in favor of alternating interventions (observes and Parties) and work with them to convince other Parties to change rule.	CFPs, Observers
(xi) Encourage Parties to keep as many meetings open as possible and remain in the room for NGO interventions.	Presiding Officers
(xii) Continue to ensure interventions are well prepared.	CFPs
(xiii) Continue to promote timely interventions and ensure they are kept to time.	CFPs

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(xiv) Provide clearer information regarding the regulation of which meetings observers are able to attend.	secretariat
(xv) Ensure screens show the access correctly and security staff at the door is briefed and respond rapidly to changes in access for observers if Parties decide to open a closed negotiation meeting to observers in the middle of the meeting.	secretariat
(xvi) Ensure good communications and commitment to observer engagement.	COP Presidency, other Presiding Officers, secretariat
4.2.2 Throughout the year	
I. Key Concerns:	
(i) Access to timely and clear information about engagement opportunities throughout the year (particularly regional climate weeks – RCWs).	
(ii) Marrakesh Partnership (MP) format seems to result in silos and feels somewhat divorced from what is happening in the negotiation space.	
II. Shared understanding & secretariat clarifications:	
(i) Structured engagement opportunities throughout the year (such as RCWs) allow for a better interaction with Parties, as there are no parallel negotiations to divide their attention and the scale of the events are much smaller; also, as they are still in the process of building their positions for the sessions, it is also a better opportunity to provide technical inputs to them.	
(ii) Regional climate weeks can also provide for a more tailored and participatory approach, as discussions are focused on regional issues.	
(iii) Local and national-level processes (e.g., requests for contributions to NDCs) also offer opportunities to meaningfully engage with and provide inputs to policy - and decision makers.	
(iv) MP and RCWs are also open to participants that are not necessarily admitted organizations (individuals and organizations).	
III. Proposed solutions*:	Proposed ownership:
(i) Raise the profile of RCWs;	Observers, secretariat
(ii) Promote RCWs much earlier to (new or less active) observers in the region.	
(iii) Provide clearer and more timely information about engagement opportunities and events (e.g., RCWs) to allow for proper planning.	Host Country, secretariat
(iv) Engage in various opportunities before the COP (RCWs, SB meetings, constituted bodies meetings, etc) to have better access and interaction with Parties, especially in the formation of national positions.	Observers
(v) Marrakesh Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve information sharing and visibility; – Encourage contributions from observers to inform agenda setting; – Clearly spell out on homepage how non-Party stakeholders (NPS) can become part of the MP; – Include information on MP decision-making; – Consider holding information sharing sessions about the MP and GCA and how NPS can be engaged. 	secretariat
(vi) Provide clearer explanation on how the inputs from NPS will be integrated into GST.	secretariat
(vii) Encourage more invitations to NPS in GST.	Presiding Officers, secretariat

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(viii) Disseminate information more widely about events at RCWs so that observers can have more opportunities to hold side events and participate via representation in the different alternate and intersessional structures.	secretariat
(ix) Establish a platform for observers to share or submit new research findings to the UNFCCC secretariat.	secretariat
(x) Be the point of person between internal teams and UNFCCC.	CFPs
(xi) Work harmoniously with all the Parties/observers and UNFCCC secretariat.	Admitted NGOs, Admitted IGOs
(xii) Consult Admitted IGOs and Admitted NGOs throughout the negotiations process.	Parties

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