



Subsidiary bodies

17 November 2023

Preparing for the fifty-ninth sessions of the subsidiary bodies

Joint note by the Chairs

This informal note has been prepared jointly by the SBSTA Chair (Harry Vreuls) and the SBI Chair (Nabeel Munir) under their own authority. It should be read in conjunction with the reports on SBSTA and SBI 58¹ and the SBSTA and SBI 59 provisional and supplementary agendas and annotations.²

¹ FCCC/SBSTA/2023/4 and FCCC/SBI/2023/10 and Add.1 and Corr.1.

² FCCC/SBSTA/2023/5 and Add.1 and FCCC/SBI/2023/11 and Add.1.

I. Introduction

1. This year, more than ever before, the devastating impacts of climate change have led to loss of lives and destruction of livelihoods, severely impacting thousands of people in the Global North and South. From devastating floods and fires, regrettably too many to list here, and intense heatwaves around the world, the spiralling impacts of climate change are evident. These and other impacts of climate change are occurring faster than scientists previously warned, heavily impacting the poorest and most vulnerable communities, many of whom are yet to be equipped with the skills, technology and financial resources needed to adapt to the impacts.
2. The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed that, with every increment of global warming, changes in climate and extreme weather become more widespread and pronounced. Current projections based on greenhouse gas emissions scenarios show that, alarmingly, global warming might reach 1.5 °C in the next decade.
3. We are now at a pivotal moment. The first global stocktake, a crucial process that has been examining, over the last two years, where the world stands collectively in meeting the objectives of the Paris Agreement, needs to conclude at COP 28 with a comprehensive outcome that clearly identifies a path towards radical decarbonization of our societies. At the halfway point of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, not only are we far off track from meeting SDG 13 on climate action, but this is also undermining progress towards other SDGs, threatening to reverse gains made in recent decades.
4. Hence the decisions we make at COP 28 will determine whether we are putting ourselves firmly on a path to meeting the objectives of the Convention and the Paris Agreement. The good news is that we have what it takes, including policies, skills, technology and resources, to make headway in addressing climate change. But the magnitude of the problem we are facing requires us to take action at a proportionate scale and do so with radical urgency. It is critical that our process leads to decisions at COP 28 that facilitate implementation of action on the ground at transformational scale.
5. In this context, our work during SB 59 needs to be planned and executed meticulously, all the more so because the time available is extremely limited. After the opening of SB 59 on Thursday, 30 November 2023, negotiations will effectively take place from Friday, 1 December, to Tuesday, 5 December 2023. To this end, we are preparing this informal note, under our own responsibility, with a view to assisting Parties in their preparations for SB 59 and helping them to maximize use of the limited time available.

II. Outlook for the fifty-ninth sessions of the subsidiary bodies

6. While the negotiations during SB 58 were encouraging in relation to some issues – we would like to thank Parties for showing readiness to make progress where possible – we note with concern that progress remained too slow for some critical agenda items. A swift launch of the work, including the smooth adoption of the agendas, and significant collective efforts will be required to ensure successful completion of work at SB 59. As presiding officers, we will do all we can to assist Parties in achieving this.
7. In this regard, we are pleased to note that since SB 58 extensive intersessional work has been carried out to prepare for the work at SB 59.
8. In particular, under the first global stocktake, the synthesis report³ containing findings from the technical process was published on 8 September 2023. Intersessional workshop conducted in October 2023 led to requests for additional intersessional work.⁴ To this end, we conducted informal virtual consultations on 16 November 2023 to continue gathering views on the revised elements of the global stocktake outcome and elaborate on possible landing zones. We hope that Parties can enhance their understanding of the convergences and divergences among views on this prior to SB 59, which will enable them to move forward in considering the outputs of the process during the sessions and concluding the first global stocktake.
9. Similarly, we are hopeful that relevant submissions,⁵ including on elements of draft COP 28 decisions in some cases, annual reports, global dialogue reports, annual compilation reports, technical papers, informal documents,

³ FCCC/SB/2023/9.

⁴ See <https://unfccc.int/documents/632959>

⁵ Available at <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx>

workshops, dialogues and meetings of committees and expert groups relevant to the agenda (sub)items listed below will assist Parties in focusing their deliberations and making the necessary progress as per the respective mandates:

- (a) Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme on the global goal on adaptation referred to in decision 7/CMA.4;⁶
 - (b) Work programme on just transition pathways referred to in the relevant paragraphs of decision 1/CMA.4;
 - (c) Sharm el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme referred to in decision 4/CMA.4;⁷
 - (d) Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security;⁸
 - (e) Report of the Adaptation Committee and review of the progress, effectiveness and performance of the Adaptation Committee;⁹
 - (f) Report of the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts;¹⁰
 - (g) Matters relating to the Santiago network under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts;¹¹
 - (h) Matters relating to least developed countries;¹²
 - (i) Guidance on cooperative approaches referred to Article 6, paragraph 2, of the Paris Agreement;¹³
 - (j) Rules, modalities and procedures for the mechanism established by Article 6, paragraph 4, of the Paris Agreement.¹⁴
10. Further, there are other items on the agendas for SB 59, many of them standing agenda items, including some for which Parties could not conclude considerations at SB 58. These items facilitate critical ongoing implementation of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. It is crucial to have good outcomes for these items to ensure that needed action is ensured, sustained and not further delayed. We urge Parties to come prepared and to approach the deliberations on those items with the sense of urgency required to ensure ambitious outcomes.
11. In addition to the work mandated, several proposals from Parties or group of Parties for new agenda items have been included in the provisional agendas. Those proposals and their rationale are reflected in the provisional agendas and annotations and supplementary provisional agendas.
12. The proponents requested to include their proposed items also on the agendas for COP 28 and CMA 5, as well as CMP 18. On the initiative of the incoming COP 28 Presidency, rounds of informal bilateral consultations with negotiating groups and Parties were launched in October 2023. These consultations are being conducted throughout November 2023 to seek views from Parties on the proposals and on ways to reach a common understanding at the start of the conference so as to ensure swift adoption of the agendas. We are committed to continuing to listen to negotiating groups and Parties and working closely with the COP Presidencies on this matter to start the conference in the right spirit. With the limited time at our disposal and the importance of every item on the agendas, we cannot afford to lose time. We encourage Parties to use the remaining time prior to the opening of the sessions to reach out to your negotiating partners to better understand each other's positions and identify landing zones for the smooth adoption of the agendas.

⁶ See <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/glasgow-sharm-el-sheikh-WP-GGGA>

⁷ See <https://unfccc.int/topics/mitigation/workstreams/mitigation-work-programme>.

⁸ See <https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/agriculture>.

⁹ See <https://unfccc.int/Adaptation-Committee>.

¹⁰ See <https://unfccc.int/wim-excom>.

¹¹ See <https://unfccc.int/event/SN-AsiaPacific> <https://unfccc.int/events/SN-AsiaPacific>

¹² See <https://unfccc.int/LEG>.

¹³ See <https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/cooperative-implementation>.

¹⁴ As footnote 13 above.

III. Organization of work

13. At SB 59, we will organize our work building on the coordinated approach that the SBSTA and the SBI have developed and strengthened over the last few years.
14. With five bodies meeting in parallel, in addition to the World Climate Action Summit and a large number of mandated and COP Presidency events taking place, time for negotiating groups in the first week of the conference will be extremely limited so it is essential that we make the best use of that time. We have asked the secretariat to provide the subsidiary bodies with adequate time and space, including for informal meetings, to make as much progress as possible and to ensure that only the most significant issues are left for political resolution in the second week of the conference. We urge Parties to strive to complete all technical work as expected during the first week.
15. Noting the number of joint agenda items and events, we propose to convene the opening plenaries for SBSTA and SBI 59 together on 30 November 2023, where the respective provisional agendas will be presented for adoption. In our informal conversations with Parties, many have raised the need for a change in the pace of engagement in the light of the limited time available and the urgency of the tasks before us. This makes us confident that we will have a focused plenary to adopt our agendas and launch work swiftly. We propose to organize and launch our work along the following lines:
 - (a) For most items, we will propose to establish a negotiation group (contact group or informal consultations) and assign a pair of co-chairs or co-facilitators;
 - (b) For items that do not require negotiation, we will propose that the respective subsidiary body takes note of the relevant available information;
 - (c) We urge Parties, at the first meeting of each negotiating group, to provide mandates to co-chairs and co-facilitators to produce first drafts of conclusions and draft decision texts in order to speed up the negotiation process.
16. Following the opening of the sessions, statements from Parties, groups of Parties and observers will be heard. We urge speakers to keep their statements short, as they can be uploaded in full to the submission portal.¹⁵
17. Given time constraints and the need to address all items on the agendas, the allocation of slots for negotiation meetings will be given careful consideration, in particular to prevent possible clashes of meetings on similar or closely related topics, including with mandated events.¹⁶ We are cognizant, however, that some clashes may be inevitable, in which case we call on the flexibility and support of Parties.
18. Our guidance to the co-chairs and co-facilitators of negotiation groups for the sessions includes that they should:
 - (a) Assist Parties in using time efficiently and developing textual proposals at the earliest stage of the negotiations, preferably to be discussed at groups' second meetings and, where appropriate, building on technical work conducted during the intersessional period and/or at SB 58;
 - (b) Encourage Parties to allow informal consultations to be open to observers wherever possible, in accordance with relevant [previous SBI conclusions](#);
 - (c) Encourage Parties to extend requests for submissions of information and views to observer organizations where appropriate, in accordance with relevant [previous SBI conclusions](#);
 - (d) Finalize draft conclusions or recommendations resulting from the work of the negotiation groups at the latest by 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 5 December 2023, to allow time for them to be made available in the six official United Nations languages before the closing plenary, which is scheduled to take place in the afternoon of Wednesday, 6 December 2023;
 - (e) Remind Parties that technical work that is not concluded at these sessions will not systematically be carried over to the second week of the conference under the authority of the COP President and will be forwarded to SB 60 for further consideration. Only consideration of issues requiring political engagement may be continued in the second week.
19. We intend to convene the closing plenaries of SBSTA and SBI 59 together, similar to the approach applied at SB 58.¹⁷

¹⁵ As footnote 7 above

¹⁶ See <https://unfccc.int/documents/632476>.

¹⁷ See <https://unfccc.int/documents/628292>.

20. It is our intention to continue the practice of maintaining an open communication channel with observers. We will convene a joint briefing with observer organizations on the issues under consideration.
21. Building on previous experience and using the same modalities, a conference platform will be accessible to all registered participants, and plenary meetings, mandated events and meetings of negotiation groups will be webcast live and accessible to participants according to their badge. More information is available on the [UNFCCC conference web pages](#).
22. It is our firm commitment to continue to remain open to all Parties in order to seek their views on the suggested mode of work and to adjust it as required. We intend to hold pre-sessional meetings, as well as meetings with groups of Parties whenever necessary during the sessions, to ensure effective coordination and that any issues are addressed in a timely manner. We very much look forward to working with Parties at SB 59 and are confident that with their continued support we will be able to make significant progress.

IV. Concluding remarks

23. Progress was made on many issues at SB 58, but it was uneven and insufficient in some cases. This means that Parties will need to be extremely focused on their deliberations to ensure that SB 59 can conclude work on time and forward recommendations to the governing bodies, as relevant. It is up to us all to move the needle towards much needed systemic transformation for a meaningful outcome at COP 28 and beyond.
 24. We encourage Parties to work with each other, as a matter of urgency, to identify landing zones that are feasible and fully aligned with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, focusing on solutions that can overcome divisions and build consensus. As presiding officers, we will make every effort to help Parties to achieve the best possible outcome of SB 59 through a focused, balanced and Party-driven process across the subsidiary bodies.
 25. We believe that Parties have at their disposal all the information, willingness and spirit of compromise needed for successful completion of work at SB 59. We are hopeful that Parties will come prepared and determined to achieve the balanced and comprehensive outcome needed in the light of the climate emergency.
 26. We would like to convey to all Parties our gratitude for the trust and confidence placed in us and look forward to facilitating the negotiations among Parties to ensure the successful completion of our work on 6 December 2023.
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