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The 11th Durban Forum on capacity-building

Report by the secretariat

Summary

The 11th Durban Forum was held on 8 June 2022, during the fifty-sixth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, under the overarching theme of capacity-building for integrating implementation of nationally determined contributions into national sustainable recovery plans.

* Tentative dates.



Abbreviations and acronyms

COP	Conference of the Parties
ILO	International Labour Organization
NDC	nationally determined contribution
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCCB	Paris Committee on Capacity-building
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. COP 17 requested the SBI to further enhance the monitoring and review of the effectiveness of capacity-building by organizing an annual in-session Durban Forum for sharing experience and exchanging ideas, best practices and lessons learned among stakeholders regarding the implementation of capacity-building activities. It also requested the secretariat to prepare a summary report on the Durban Forum for consideration by the SBI.¹
2. COP 24 requested the SBI to thematically align the meetings of the Durban Forum with the annual focus area of the PCCB,² which for 2022 is building capacity to facilitate coherent implementation of NDCs in the context of national development plans and sustainable recovery.³ Thus, the lessons learned from and outcomes of the Durban Forum feed directly into the work of the PCCB.
3. COP 25 emphasized the importance of continuing to identify and disseminate lessons learned to enhance the implementation of capacity-building activities through the Durban Forum and the PCCB.⁴

B. Structure of the report

4. Chapter II below presents the outcomes of the 11th Durban Forum, including key messages and information on their subsequent consideration by the PCCB; chapter III below provides information on the organization of the meeting, including its scope and objectives; chapter IV below summarizes the keynote address delivered at the meeting, the panel discussion and the breakout group discussions; and chapter V below presents conclusions.

C. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

5. The SBI may wish to consider the information contained in this report in its deliberations on capacity-building.

II. Outcomes of the 11th Durban Forum

A. Key messages

6. The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic has amplified challenges in various interconnected sectors. Efforts to recover from the impacts of the pandemic present the opportunity to adopt solutions for economic recovery that respond to the climate emergency and facilitate transition to a greener, more equitable and sustainable world. Discussions at the 11th Durban Forum focused on building capacity to promote and support sustainable, green and resilient recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.
7. On the basis of relevant positive experience under the NDC Partnership, countries could consider appointing special economic advisers in different ministries to catalyse and facilitate optimization of synergies, capacity-building and cooperation in relation to NDC planning, development and implementation in the context of preparing comprehensive and appropriate pandemic recovery plans.

¹ Decision 2/CP.17, paras. 144 and 147.

² Decision 15/CP.24, para. 6.

³ FCCC/SBI/2021/10, para. 15.

⁴ Decision 10/CP.25, para. 11.

8. In terms of finance for sustainable recovery, many developing countries lack the capacity to access sufficient funding. The production of financial reports and the lack of availability of data remain a challenge for countries with limited institutional capacity to produce such reports and make such data available, which are often required to access funding. A specific measure to address this challenge could be developing and using a tool for integrating consideration of climate change into short- and long-term national development plans and budgeting. Financial systems need to be adjusted from within: policies, frameworks and standards are needed to incentivize investors to incorporate new climate criteria into their activities in order to efficiently measure the scale of public and private investment in climate activities.

9. Incorporating climate change considerations into legal systems is another way to strengthen government commitment to climate action and promote NDC implementation from a legal perspective.

10. Country-specific capacity-building should not focus on replicating international initiatives. South–South exchanges must take place, capacity must be developed locally and learning and experience-sharing must be enhanced. Support is most effective when capacity-building providers take a partnership and supportive role, enabling developing countries to take ownership, find locally tailored solutions and disseminate them regionally and within networks to countries in similar contexts. Peer-learning networking processes enable the maximization of investment at the local level by promoting the exchange of best practices and facilitating communication among stakeholders.

11. The changes in the labour market induced by the pandemic and recovery measures need to be analysed and discussed to avoid economic dislocation, especially during recovery from the pandemic. In the green transition, many workers, such as those in the fossil fuel industry, may lose their jobs and need to be retrained to work in other sectors. Although the need for such capacity-building for workers has been recognized in many NDCs, few countries have appropriate skills development or analysis measures in place.

12. Compensation and retraining measures in certain sectors, such as coal mining, target male workers, even though many female workers in the upstream supply chain are also being affected and thus remain disadvantaged. Moreover, attention must be paid to how the green transformation of the labour market will disproportionately benefit male over female workers. Partnerships between governments and stakeholders are useful for examining these dynamics and elaborating solutions.

13. Further efforts are needed to better tailor communication strategies to target groups, such as vulnerable communities, youth, and women and girls, when designing and implementing sustainable recovery measures. Gender must be mainstreamed in climate action plans for the development of gender-responsive public and national policies and NDCs.

14. Vulnerability index assessments can be used to support decision-making on allocating resources to where they are most needed, and to inform climate change strategies and risk mapping, with a view to helping to meet the needs of vulnerable countries and people and promoting climate-resilient, low-emission recovery.

15. Capacity-building is a continuous process and capacity retention is essential. Building capacity and supporting leaders, women and youth at the local level promotes a greater sense of ownership and better retention of acquired knowledge and skills. In this context, universities can act as capacity-building hubs to facilitate such retention.

B. Consideration of the key messages by the Paris Committee on Capacity-building

16. COP 21 decided that the inputs to the PCCB include the reports on the Durban Forum.⁵ At its 6th meeting,⁶ the PCCB agreed to consider the outcomes of the 11th Durban Forum intersessionally in preparing its annual technical progress report.

III. Organization of the 11th Durban Forum

A. Background documents

17. The guiding questions for the breakout groups for the 11th Durban Forum⁷ were prepared and made available well in advance of the meeting to facilitate discussions.

B. Scope and objectives

18. The overarching theme of the 11th Durban Forum, namely capacity-building for integrating NDC implementation into national sustainable recovery plans, was selected taking into consideration the request referred to in paragraph 2 above. The theme was divided into subtopics:

- (a) Building capacity to develop bankable project proposals to mobilize financial resources from international financing mechanisms for implementation of NDCs and national development plans;
- (b) Building capacity for increased cross-cutting policymaking and greater coordination and integration between different levels of government;
- (c) Building capacity to improve evidence-based public policy in sustainable recovery plans by reducing data gaps;
- (d) Building capacity to assess labour market information and anticipate skills needs related to NDC implementation.

19. In line with its overarching theme and subtopics, the meeting was guided by the following objectives:

- (a) Identifying key capacity gaps and needs that impede coherent integration of NDC priorities into sustainable recovery plans;
- (b) Exploring how to build capacity for increased cross-cutting integration and coordination between levels of government to improve NDC implementation in line with sustainable recovery strategies;
- (c) Sharing lessons learned from capacity-building for reducing data gaps to facilitate implementation of evidence-based public policy in the context of national development plans focused on promoting resilient recovery.

C. Proceedings

20. The 11th Durban Forum was held on 8 June 2022 during SBI 56. The Chair of the SBI, Marianne Karlsen, opened the meeting. María del Pilar Bueno, Senior Researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council of Argentina and facilitator⁸ of the meeting, provided introductory remarks.

⁵ Decision 1/CP.21, para. 79.

⁶ See <https://unfccc.int/pccb/pccb-meetings-and-documents#eq-7>.

⁷ See <https://unfccc.int/11th-meeting-of-the-durban-forum-on-capacity-building>.

⁸ The event was intended to be led by two co-facilitators, but one was unable to participate for unforeseen health reasons.

21. A keynote address was delivered by Romeo Bertolini, Deputy Director of Country Engagement for the NDC Partnership Support Unit. The subsequent discussion panel, moderated by the meeting facilitator, consisted of:

- (a) Juan Casado-Asensio, Economist and Policy Analyst at OECD;
- (b) Moustapha Gueye, Global Coordinator of the Green Jobs Programme at ILO;
- (c) Miriam Hinojosa, Head of the Global Climate Action Unit at UNEP;
- (d) Mabel Zúñiga, Climate Change Analyst for the Ministry of Environment of Panama.

22. The panellists engaged in a discussion on different aspects of the meeting's overarching theme. This was followed by four parallel breakout group discussions dedicated to the four subtopics, each facilitated by one of the panellists.

23. The meeting facilitator provided closing remarks to conclude the meeting.

24. The meeting agenda, presentations, recording, biographies of resource persons and facilitator, and guiding questions and reports for the breakout groups are available on the web page for the 11th Durban Forum.⁹

IV. Summary of keynote address and discussions

A. Keynote address

25. The keynote address focused on how to build capacity to integrate NDC priorities into national, sectoral and subnational programmes, development plans and sustainable recovery strategies and on relevant NDC Partnership activities.

26. The NDC Partnership aims to identify and address the needs of countries for NDC planning and implementation. With more than 200 members on the country and implementing partner sides, it is able to support its member countries around the world via tailored projects and interventions.

27. The in-country support provided by the NDC Partnership prioritizes whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches in addition to its focus on alignment with NDCs. It examines trends and strategies around NDC planning and implementation in the context of sustainable recovery.

28. The Economic Advisory Initiative, launched by the NDC Partnership in response to the pandemic, is one of its most important projects. The initiative provides support for sustainable recovery plans through the appointment of economic advisers in ministries such as finance and planning. To date, 45 advisers have been appointed across 30 countries to catalyse and facilitate optimization of synergies and capacity-building in relation to NDC planning, development and implementation in the context of the pandemic.

29. In relation to putting NDC priorities at the centre of public policies with the support of in-country economic advice, the following lessons learned were shared:

(a) It is important that climate change be considered in short- and long-term national development plans and budgets. Burkina Faso, for example, received support under the NDC Partnership for aligning its NDC with its national development framework and integrated pandemic-related aspects into its sustainable recovery strategy;

(b) Providing training for preparing concept notes and pre-feasibility studies for NDC-related investments is a useful measure towards creating more bankable projects, which has yielded promising results in Indonesia and Saint Lucia, for example;

(c) With respect to the NDC Partnership's work around climate finance, there is a recognized need to provide support to public and private entities for climate finance access and mobilization, as well as support for implementation of fiscal policies. One example of

⁹ See footnote 7 above.

their work is the climate budget tracking tool developed in Grenada to improve climate finance mobilization in the country.

30. Country exchanges and peer learning need to be promoted so that experience and best practices can be shared. The NDC Partnership is focused on creating more opportunities for such interaction, particularly in relation to:

- (a) Integrating climate considerations into recovery packages;
- (b) Recalibrating national budgets from emergency response to economic recovery and opportunities for climate finance;
- (c) Developing financial instruments and recovery mechanisms, from green bonds to financing facilities for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- (d) Understanding how climate-compatible economic stimulus can promote equity, inclusion and just transition for vulnerable groups.

31. Finally, the NDC Partnership has a number of products and tools that can be used to address countries' diverse needs, including the Climate Toolbox, a searchable database of tools, guidance, platforms and advisory support from leading institutions to help countries to plan and implement their NDCs, and the Climate Finance Explorer, a searchable database of open climate funds and related support for countries' mitigation and adaptation activities.

B. Panel discussion

32. Addressing the subtopics referred to in paragraph 18 above, the panellists responded to the following questions:

- (a) What are the key capacity needs and gaps to facilitate coherent NDC implementation and planning in developing countries that are aligned with and support a sustainable recovery?
- (b) How can partnerships, consortiums, networks, international collaboration and peer learning help identify best practices for integrating NDCs and sustainable recovery?
- (c) Which targeted policy measures need to be taken to address the capacity needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups as part of an inclusive and sustainable transition/recovery from the pandemic?

33. The OECD representative mentioned that accessing finance for implementing NDCs consistently with sustainable recovery is a challenge for developing countries, and countries that manage to access finance often do not achieve the expected results from their projects. Work is ongoing under the NDC Partnership to increase the effectiveness of donor-implemented capacity-building activities and their integration into policy.

34. The UNEP representative stressed the importance of government sectors communicating more effectively with each other and other relevant stakeholders in working to align NDCs and national development plans. The NDC Partnership representative added that this must be translated into financing strategies and bankable projects (with the support of the private sector), not by following global blueprints of financial initiatives. but by ensuring that capacity for designing and implementing projects on the ground is being mobilized.

35. Regarding challenges and constraints due to green transition in labour markets, the ILO representative highlighted the importance of Governments recognizing the need to build capacity to retrain workers. The transition to circular economies and the downsizing of certain sectors, such as coal mining, will affect the labour force by creating new jobs and leading to the loss of some existing ones, and NDCs need to take into consideration people's skills and job transferability in order to avoid mass unemployment and promote sustainable recovery.

36. On aligning NDCs with development and investment strategies, the representative of the Ministry of Environment of Panama shared her country's experience of dealing with the climate integration financing issue. Panama needed an enabling legal framework to promote

the continuity of climate change initiatives, so it developed climate change legislation and included the NDC in the legal framework to strengthen government commitment to climate action also for the future. The representative stated that decision-making processes in different areas and at different levels need to be inclusive and engage women and youth representatives.

37. The panellists spoke at length about the importance and challenge of incorporating gender considerations into climate policy and recovery plans:

(a) The ILO representative emphasized that compensation and retraining measures for miners affected by decarbonization efforts, for example, do not take into account workers in upstream chains, mainly women. New jobs created through the transition to a greener economy are expected to benefit men disproportionately and lead to a widening of the gender gap;

(b) The NDC Partnership representative pointed out that countries supported in considering gender as part of NDC implementation have provided detailed data and recommendations for such consideration. Actively engaging with civil society and including gender considerations in their national and sectoral plans has helped the countries to address a broader range of issues more comprehensively;

(c) The OECD representative pointed out that there is still work to be done in terms of the integration of gender and climate issues;

(d) The UNEP representative indicated that capacity-building training sessions and collaboration with relevant stakeholders should have a greater focus on vulnerable communities, women, youth and indigenous peoples.

38. Subsequently, a question and answer session was held with the meeting participants:

(a) A representative of Bangladesh highlighted the importance of national institutions, such as universities, that build capacity at the national level. They train young people to help design and implement policies at the national and international level and implement capacity-building at the local level. A representative from the European Union agreed and stressed the importance of retaining capacity;

(b) On addressing climate disasters, a PCCB member from Burundi stressed the need to improve NDC implementation at the local level and in communities, but mentioned that this requires increased resources;

(c) A representative of the women and gender constituency pointed out that gender mainstreaming needs to be recognized by stakeholders as central to climate assessments;

(d) A representative from Bhutan mentioned the importance of capacity-building for the least developed countries for NDC implementation, and stated that additional financial support is needed in this regard;

(e) On the effectiveness of funding capacity-building initiatives, a representative from South Africa stated that, while capacity-building is a continuous and dynamic process, it is important to examine why funding is not leading to the expected results;

(f) On the quality of reporting on labour-market trends, a representative from India considered that it must include not only qualitative statements but also scientifically sound quantitative analysis.

C. Breakout group discussions

1. Strengthening capacities for the development of bankable project proposals to mobilize financial resources from international finance mechanisms for the implementation of nationally determined contributions and national development plans

39. The following questions guided the discussion of the relevant breakout group:

(a) What are the specific types of capacity gaps countries are facing with regard to the access of and finance to support NDC implementation and progress and how can capacities be effectively enhanced in a way that benefits the country's fund application capacities?

(b) How can climate finance capacity and support be introduced to conceptualize and package most efficient financing proposals?

(c) How can public sector finance staff better understand and compare financing options and develop appropriate business models?

40. The group reported that the actors involved in applying for funding, such as project developers, banks, various government sectors and private investors, need to be more interconnected so that they can share important information on how to access funding. In addition, there should be more capacity-building for project developers to improve their knowledge of the priorities and criteria of specific funds and banks, increase their technical knowledge on how to prepare convincing applications and improve their English-language skills.

41. Coordination between the government sectors involved, such as planning, budgeting, finance and climate change, needs to be improved so that better project proposals can be developed. Cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary teams could be formed, which could serve as focal points for closer dialogue between the agencies responsible for NDC implementation and the financial institutions.

42. Involving local private investors and arranging opportunities for their participation in providing funding remains a challenge but is important for addressing the lack of both bankable projects and funding.

2. Building capacity for increased cross-cutting policymaking and greater coordination and integration between different levels of government

43. The following questions guided the discussion of the relevant breakout group:

(a) What are the specific types of capacity gaps countries are facing with regard to the lack of institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms that support the integration of climate and development objectives across ministries and sectors at the national, subnational and local level?

(b) How can the integration of NDC and sustainable recovery priorities into national, sectoral and subnational programmes and policies be ensured?

44. The group reported that agencies and ministries with at least one central office that has the capacity to promote better intergovernmental communication and advance sustainable agendas within Government can improve not only horizontal but also vertical integration of climate and development objectives. Engaging subnational entities and groups in integrating climate and development goals across policy areas is another important need to address, particularly because it is an ongoing process that requires resources, time and political will.

45. In addition, preparing and reviewing NDCs is an important process that must be open and transparent to stakeholders to make NDC implementation more coherent and effective. Because different policy implementation tools are used at each level of government, different stakeholders and levels of government need to be involved to ensure that NDC implementation is linked to locally led efforts.

46. In order for Governments to pursue evidence-based policies related to sustainable recovery, data collection and analysis procedures need to be improved. Local institutions such as universities play an important role in working with scientific data and should therefore be recognized as centres of knowledge production and invited to participate in decision-making processes.

3. Building capacity to improve evidence-based public policy by reducing data gaps

47. The following questions guided the discussion of the relevant breakout group:

(a) How can capacity-building providers effectively support developing countries in increasing their institutional capacity and personnel skills for data collection, reporting, archiving and analysis?

(b) How can internationally supported NDC implementation programmes best assist developing countries in using data or evidence-driven tools that take into account local realities?

48. The group reported that capacity-building efforts need to focus not only on ensuring that relevant government staff understand the importance of data generation and data integration into sustainable recovery and climate change projects, but also on improving their equipment and analytical capacity to effectively use data for improving public policy. In this regard, engaging local partners, such as universities, can be a critical step in improving data collection, archiving and analysis, and in creating incentives for data studies related to gender, funding readiness and NDC implementation.

49. Lack of coordination at the national level can be resolved by using common platforms and organizing national, regional and international forums on the subject of evidence-based policies. Creating national statistical agencies that can act as focal points is another useful measure for addressing lack of integration between government sectors.

50. More gender-disaggregated data, greenhouse gas inventory information, and data on funding readiness and long-term strategies should be collected and analysed.

4. Building capacity to assess labour-market information and anticipate skills needs related to implementation of nationally determined contributions

51. The following questions guided the discussion of the relevant breakout group:

(a) Which are the best actions to anticipate capacity needs of the labour market and measure skill requirements for sectors that have green growth potential and will be affected by different processes?

(b) From these assessments, what are the gaps in the successful collection and assessment of labour-market data and information?

52. The group reported that investing in human capital in order to develop not only technical and core competencies, but also soft skills is an important measure for improving people's employability. Moreover, training and retraining can help workers to take on new tasks required for the development and implementation of climate projects or jobs and thus adapt to the different needs of a changing market.

53. Reports on what graduates do after graduation can help Governments to adapt their green transition policies depending on the skills needs and demands of the labour market. A persistent challenge in this context is that education has become commercialized and young people tend to be interested only in areas of study that offer potential for employment and good pay, while disregarding areas of study, such as chemical engineering, in which they could contribute to technical climate projects.

54. There is a need to involve ministries of labour, in addition to the relevant technical or finance ministries, in developing climate change strategies in order to have knowledge of what skills are available in the workforce and ensure that any necessary skills are developed to meet the demands of economies undergoing a green transition.

V. Conclusions

55. The 11th Durban Forum offered a broad range of Parties and non-Party stakeholders the opportunity to constructively discuss capacity-building for integrating NDC implementation into national sustainable recovery plans and resulted in key messages on important aspects of the theme.

56. The Forum's thematic alignment with the annual focus area of the PCCB helped the PCCB to leverage the outcomes of the Forum effectively. After actively engaging in the

Forum, the PCCB took stock of the outcomes at its 6th meeting and agreed to consider them intersessionally.

57. Moreover, the PCCB will consider the findings from the Forum in developing its annual recommendations for the COP and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement.

58. In addition, the PCCB will organize a follow-up webinar, to be held in the second half of 2022, to discuss the subtopics of the Forum in more detail.

59. Finally, the PCCB will hold a focus area day at the 4th Capacity-building Hub, at COP 27, where the findings from the Forum will be disseminated.
