



Ministerial consultations on Common time frames for Nationally Determined Contributions referred to in Article 4, paragraph 10, of the Paris Agreement

One of the remaining open issues of the Paris Rulebook relates to the common time frames, i.e. the implementation period covered by Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). While Article 4.9 of the Paris Agreement obliges all Parties to communicate every five years an NDC, it does not clarify the implementation period covered by these NDCs. According to Article 4.10 of the Paris Agreement, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) shall consider common time frames for Nationally Determined Contributions at its first session. In 2018, decision 6/CMA.1 agreed that Parties shall apply common time frames for NDCs to be implemented from 2031 onwards. Most of the current NDCs cover an implementation period of five or ten years. In order to give Parties sufficient time to prepare for the next round of NDCs to be communicated in 2025, it is essential to clarify common time frames.

While the technical discussion of common time frames has allowed us to make progress in considering and understanding the different options of NDC implementation periods, differences on the issue still remain. As it became increasingly clear that a political agreement is needed to reach a decision on common time frames, at the July Ministerial, COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma requested Minister Mujawamariya of Rwanda and Minister Sommaruga of Switzerland to co-lead informal consultations at ministerial level on this issue, building on the efforts of the SBI chair and technical co-facilitators.

Minister Mujawamariya and Minister Sommaruga organized ministerial consultations on 7 September 2021. During these consultations, Parties were asked to share views on i) what specific guidance should the decision on common time frames provide; ii) how possibly conflicting concerns could be reconciled by the different options, especially in the light of the obligation to submit every five years enhanced NDCs; and iii) how the decision might appropriately balance the nationally determined nature of domestic climate policy planning with a suggested common time frame. Following these consultations, Minister Mujawamariya of Rwanda and Minister Sommaruga of Switzerland held a series of bilateral exchanges with delegations, with a view of better understanding concerns and expectations in view of COP26, and identifying potential landing grounds. During the PreCOP in Milan, ministers discussed whether some of the options on the table could be eliminated or merged, and how a decision on common time frames could be aligned with the five-year cycle of the Paris Agreement whilst bearing in mind Parties' domestic circumstances. Minister Mujawamariya and Minister Sommaruga held additional bilateral consultations after these small group discussions at the PreCOP.

Emerging Elements:



During the discussions and consultations, it became clear, that:

- Parties have a clear expectation to adopt a decision in Glasgow, providing further clarity on common time frames.
- All Parties recalled that NDCs have to be communicated or updated every five years, while each Party's successive NDC will represent a progression.
- All Parties similarly confirmed that NDCs are nationally determined and that a decision on common time frames should support and not impede domestic processes
- Some Parties have highlighted that shorter time frames can prevent “locking-in” low ambition, allow to reflect technological progress, are consistent with the provisions of the Paris Agreement, as well as the 5-year Global Stocktake cycle, and are better in line with the obligation to submit every five years an enhanced NDC. Others have highlighted that longer time frames have the benefit of providing more stability and predictability for long term planning and investment, allow for more time for achieving an ambitious NDC, and that they better reflect their domestic policy processes.
- From the different options discussed over the last six years, namely
 - o the option of agreeing on common time frames of five years (i.e. communicating in 2025 NDCs with a common implementation period 2030-2035, in 2030 NDCs with a common implementation period of 2035-2040 NDCs communicated in 2030, and so forth every five years thereafter),
 - o the option of agreeing on common time frames of five or ten years (i.e. communicating in 2025 NDCs with either an implementation period of 2030—2035 or of 2030-2040 and so forth every five years thereafter),
 - o the option of agreeing on common time frames of ten years (i.e. communicating in 2025 NDCs with an implementation period of 2030-2040),
 - o or hybrid options (example: five + five years).

Some of these options received more support than others, and Parties have been increasingly focussed on what a landing zone could look like.

While the different options are technically well understood, further search for a solution will have to focus on the political concerns, namely how the objective of aligning NDCs with the five-year cycle of the Paris Agreement, including that Parties have to submit every five years NDCs that will represent a progression, can be best reconciled with domestic policy processes and national circumstances.

The two Ministers will continue to work with the UK presidency as well as the SBI Chair on finding a common solution on the remaining open questions. Reaching final agreement on common time frames in Glasgow, alongside the other outstanding mandates relating to the Paris Rulebook, will enable us to make the Paris Agreement more robust and to accelerate its implementation.