



Options for reducing overlapping items on the provisional agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies

Technical paper by the secretariat

Summary

This paper provides an overview of the preparation of the provisional agendas for sessions of the UNFCCC governing and subsidiary bodies, including trends observed in 1995–2023 and risks and challenges related to agenda-setting; highlights the approaches taken by the secretariat, in consultation with the presiding officers, to reduce overlap of items on such agendas; and presents a synthesis of options, including those proposed by Parties, for rationalizing the agendas, for consideration by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation at its sixtieth session.



Abbreviations and acronyms

CMA	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
CMP	Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
COP	Conference of the Parties
SBI	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice

I. Introduction

A. Context

1. One of the goals of the Paris Agreement is to pursue efforts to limit the increase in the global average temperature to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. This goal cannot be achieved without a UNFCCC process that serves the needs and interests of Parties. With less than six years remaining in this critical decade to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,¹ the UNFCCC process needs to capitalize on multilateralism to catalyse rapid and at scale climate action. At international climate negotiations, which take place against the backdrop of increasing global average temperature, greenhouse gas emissions and natural catastrophes, the urgency of meaningful and collective action has been highlighted by Parties and observers alike.

2. The contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change² notes that the interaction between power, politics and economy is central to explaining why broad commitments do not always translate into urgent action. In this context, the need to increase the efficiency of the UNFCCC process towards enhancing climate ambition and strengthening implementation of action has become apparent. Despite some progress in this regard, Parties have acknowledged the potential for improvement.

3. Effective agenda-setting is crucial to ensuring the efficiency, as well as the transparency and inclusivity, of the UNFCCC process, with the need to reduce the overlapping of items on the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies as part of a Party-driven, consensus-based, transparent, inclusive, equitable and efficient process a priority in this regard. With the ever-growing complexity of the UNFCCC process, the rules governing the preparation of the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies as set out in the draft rules of procedure being applied³ and outlined in the paragraphs 8–9 below may no longer be conducive to delivering on the urgent task of combating climate change and its impacts. At SBI 60, Parties have the opportunity to set out a clear way forward in shaping a process that responds to their collective needs.

B. Mandate

4. The SBI has been discussing the challenges posed by the increasing scale of UNFCCC conferences and approaches to increasing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process for many years.⁴ SBI 58 took note of the preliminary exchange of views among Parties and observer organizations on opportunities for increasing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process towards strengthening implementation and enhancing ambition, including, but not limited to, streamlining the provisional agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies and encouraging the adoption of the rules of procedure by the COP. It noted that any steps taken in this respect should be an outcome of thorough discussion and agreement among Parties.⁵

5. SBI 58 invited Parties and observer organizations to submit views on streamlining the provisional agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies and requested the secretariat to prepare a technical paper for consideration at SBI 60 on options for reducing overlapping

¹ See <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action>.

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2022. *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. P Shukla, J Skea, R Slade, et al. (eds.). Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. Available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3>.

³ See document FCCC/CP/1996/2.

⁴ See documents FCCC/SBI/2023/10, paras. 134–140, FCCC/SBI/2022/10, paras. 161–165, FCCC/SBI/2021/16, para. 104, and FCCC/SBI/2019/9, para. 134.

⁵ FCCC/SBI/2023/10, paras. 134 and 137.

items on the provisional agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies taking into account those views.

C. Scope

6. This paper takes into account the submissions⁶ from 11 Parties and groups of Parties⁷ in response to the invitation referred to in paragraph 5 above, which have been synthesized and included in the relevant sections of the paper. Chapter II below presents the existing process for preparing the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies and associated risks and challenges, which highlight the urgent need for avoiding the overlap of items and enhancing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process. The approaches taken by the secretariat in consultation with the presiding officers⁸ to address the challenges are outlined in chapter III below. Chapter IV below presents options for reducing the overlap of agenda items proposed by Parties in their submissions and the secretariat. To conclude, chapter V below provides recommendations on the way forward.

D. Possible action by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation

7. The SBI may wish to consider the recommendations presented herein and provide guidance on reducing overlap of items on the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies.

II. Preparation of the provisional agendas

8. Rules 9–12 of the draft rules of procedure being applied govern the preparation of the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies.⁹ The provisional agendas include, as appropriate, items arising from the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement as well as from previous decisions of the governing bodies; items for which consideration was not concluded at previous sessions; new items proposed by Parties; and items on organizational and financial matters, such as the proposed budget and the draft rules of procedure being applied. Some items may be included in the agendas for sessions of more than one governing body on the basis of a decision that those matters fall under the authority of more than one governing body; likewise, items may be included in the agendas for sessions of both subsidiary bodies if the relevant governing body or bodies decide that consideration thereof will fall to both the SBSTA and the SBI. In addition, since the subsidiary bodies are typically mandated to forward recommendations pertaining to items on their agendas to the governing bodies for consideration and adoption, some items appear on the agendas for sessions of both the subsidiary bodies and the governing bodies.

9. In the first quarter of each year, the secretariat prepares draft elements for the provisional agendas for the upcoming sessions of the governing bodies in agreement with the President of those sessions. These are shared first with the Bureau of the governing bodies and then with Parties for their consideration under the item “Arrangements for intergovernmental meetings” on the SBI agenda for its first session that year. Subsequently, the secretariat drafts the provisional agendas in agreement with the President. The provisional

⁶ FCCC/SBI/2023/10, paras. 138–139. The submissions are available at <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx> (in the search field, type “arrangements for intergovernmental meetings”).

⁷ Australia and Canada; Belgium on behalf of the European Union; Bolivia on behalf of the Like-minded Developing Countries; Indonesia; Japan; Malawi on behalf of the least developed countries; Norway; Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States; Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Arab Group; Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States; South Africa; and United States of America.

⁸ The presiding officers in the UNFCCC process are the incumbent President of the sessions of the COP, the CMP and the CMA; the SBI and SBSTA Chairs; and the chairs of contact groups and facilitators of consultations during the sessions.

⁹ Pursuant to rule 27, para. 1, of the draft rules of procedure being applied, the draft rules of procedure also apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of the subsidiary bodies.

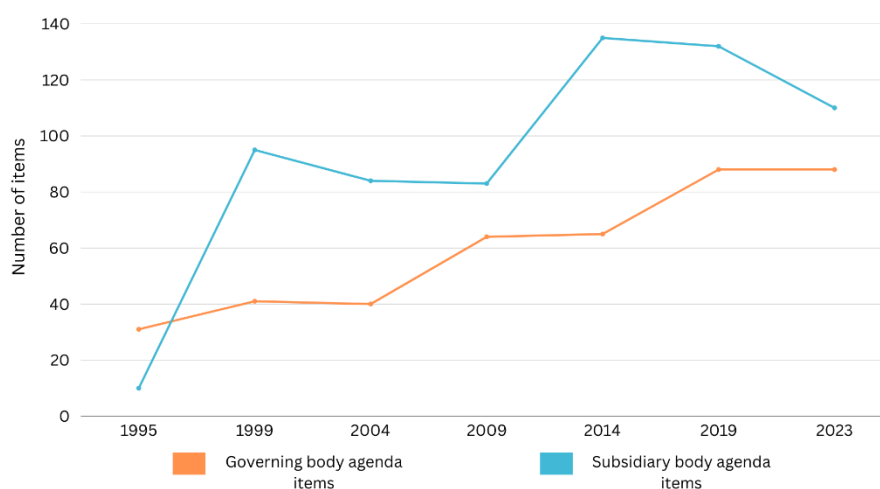
agendas are published in the six official languages of the United Nations before the opening of the relevant session.

A. Trends

10. The number of items on the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies increased by 50 and 87 per cent respectively over 1995–2023 (see figure 1). As a result, many Parties expressed concerns in their submissions that the UNFCCC process is increasing in complexity, posing significant challenges to effective climate change governance and decision-making.

Figure 1

Number of items on the agendas for sessions of the UNFCCC governing and subsidiary bodies in 1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2023



Note: The numbers of agenda items reflect combined totals, as derived from the relevant annotations published by the secretariat, for both sessions of each of the subsidiary bodies and the only session of each of the governing bodies per year.

11. The data presented in figure 1 show that the number of agenda items, and thus the complexity of the agendas, has increased. This is due in part to the establishment of ad hoc working groups¹⁰ to prepare for the adoption and subsequent operationalization of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement as well as the subsequent establishment of the CMP and the CMA. In addition, similar items on the agendas for sessions of more than one governing or subsidiary body arising from the operationalization of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement have led to overlaps.

12. Additionally, the secretariat has witnessed an increase in the number of proposals from Parties for new agenda items, which, as per the draft rules of procedure being applied, are included in the provisional agendas or supplementary versions thereof. The peak was nine proposals across the governing and subsidiary body agendas for the sessions held at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2023.¹¹ Some Parties raised concerns in their submissions about such proposals, noting that additional items necessitate more time and resources for consultations and may disrupt the smooth adoption of the agendas. Other Parties, however, noted that it is a Party's prerogative to propose a new item, and emphasized the importance of consultations in striving to achieve consensus on the inclusion of that item in the relevant agenda.

13. Moreover, there has been an increase in the technical work of the UNFCCC constituted bodies and work related to the implementation of work programmes under the governing and subsidiary bodies, accompanied by growing numbers of related workplans and

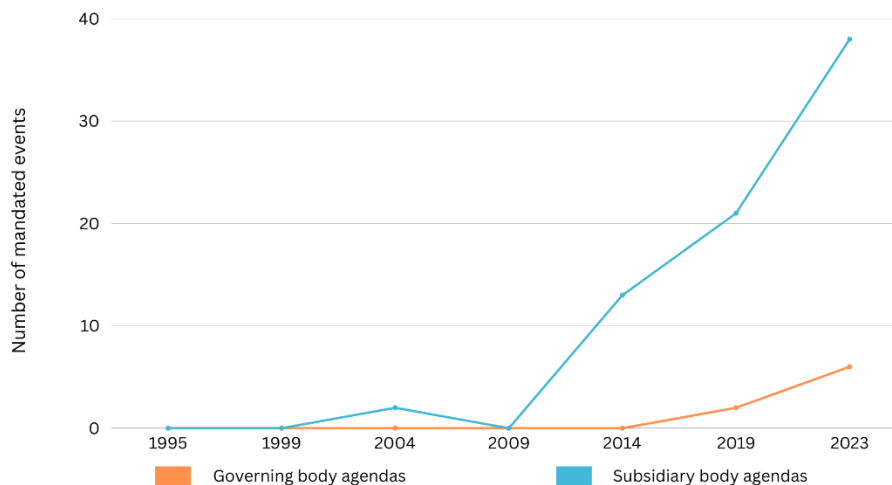
¹⁰ E.g. the Ad Hoc Working Groups on the Berlin Mandate; the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action; Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol; and the Paris Agreement.

¹¹ See document FCCC/CP/2023/11, paras. 6–10.

activities. This is coupled with an ever-increasing number of mandated events, as shown in figure 2, with a record 44 events held during the sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies in 2023. This rising trend poses a significant challenge in terms of ensuring sufficient time and space for negotiations, as well as in terms of the ability of the delegations to focus on the negotiations.

Figure 2

Number of mandated events held at sessions of the UNFCCC governing and subsidiary bodies in 1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2023



Note: The numbers of mandated events reflect combined totals, as derived from the relevant annotations published by the secretariat, for both sessions of each of the subsidiary bodies and the only session of each of the governing bodies per year.

B. Risks and challenges

14. Proliferation in the number of agenda items and mandated events poses several risks and challenges to the efficiency of the UNFCCC process, as identified by many Parties in their submissions and outlined below. This trend underscores the growing complexity of the process, which results in increasing demands being placed on the governing and subsidiary bodies, makes the organization of work challenging and constrains Parties in effectively preparing for and participating in the negotiations.

15. In their submissions, some Parties highlighted that agenda-setting should stem from previously agreed mandates, with careful consideration given by Parties when proposing new items for inclusion in agendas, including whether those matters could instead be discussed under an existing item.

1. Time and scheduling constraints

16. Avoiding or managing clashes in meeting and event scheduling constitutes a significant challenge that only grows with the increasing number of agenda items. The time allotted for negotiations is limited,¹² resulting in work under many agenda items not being concluded at a particular session. Unresolved matters require continued consideration at the subsequent session, leading to an increase in the number of agenda items.

17. In their submissions, some Parties noted that the pace of negotiations across numerous agenda items has been sluggish following the adoption of the Paris Agreement. In some instances, the consideration of an item slated for decision at a specific session has been postponed to a subsequent session, with the original timelines often being extended by several sessions. Such delays not only hinder progress but also perpetuate a cycle of prolonged deliberations on accumulated agenda items.

¹² See document FCCC/SBI/2010/10, paras. 164–165.

2. Thematic imbalance of agenda items

18. Some Parties noted in their submissions the thematic imbalance of agenda items, raising concerns about the imbalance of consideration across the main pillars of the negotiations, namely mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and means of implementation. One Party highlighted the disproportionate number of finance-related items compared with other items (such as on mitigation) on the agendas. In addition, some Parties noted the lack of balance between items focused on financial support and covering financial flows more broadly.

3. Overlaps in agenda items

19. Alongside the increasing trend in the number of items on provisional agendas referred to in paragraph 10 above, an increasing amount of overlap in items has been observed, with some items being included in the agendas for the sessions of all governing and subsidiary bodies during a given sessional period. This affects the efficiency and progress of negotiations.

20. The secretariat, in consultation with the presiding officers, has introduced practical adjustments to the process for preparing provisional agendas and ensuring efficient time management where possible and applied various approaches as outlined in chapter III below to reducing and managing the overlap of agenda items while ensuring compliance with the draft rules of procedure being applied.

4. Strain on small Party delegations

21. In their submissions, some Parties noted that the high number of agenda items and mandated events poses a challenge to the full and effective participation of Parties, especially those with small delegations, in the negotiations as they need to prioritize which meetings and events to attend. Some Parties mentioned in their submissions that this constitutes an impediment to maintaining the inclusivity and transparency of the UNFCCC process.

5. Strain on the secretariat's resources

22. Some Parties highlighted that an increase in agenda items and mandated events necessitates more physical space, services and resources, which are required not only for preparing for sessions but also for addressing any resulting mandates. As a result, the secretariat has to increase its allocation of resources and staffing to, inter alia, service more meeting rooms, make available more audiovisual equipment and ensure efficient time management. This puts a strain on the secretariat's budget, which is already in a precarious state, as certain Parties noted.

III. Current approaches to addressing challenges

A. Preparation of provisional agendas

23. Where possible, the secretariat clusters similar sub-items on the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies, maintaining the balance across thematic areas, and groups related matters under a single agenda item. In this context and in agreement with the presiding officers, the secretariat frames items similar in nature by using the overarching wording "Matters relating to..." to name agenda items. This has allowed related matters to be considered under a single agenda item, as well as enabling the appointment of the same co-chairs or co-facilitators for leading the negotiations on related matters, as appropriate, leading to more efficient time management, including the avoidance of clashes in the scheduling of related meetings and events.

24. The secretariat prepares comprehensive annotations to the provisional agendas with the aim of providing background information on and delineating the scope of considerations under each item, which is particularly useful for items with broader names. The annotations contribute to achieving clarity and coherence of deliberations and outline the expected outcomes thereof.

25. The secretariat now clearly identifies joint items on the provisional agendas for sessions of the subsidiary bodies with an asterisk, helping delegates to swiftly identify joint items and nominate one focal point to follow the negotiations under them, which is particularly relevant to smaller delegations given their human resource constraints.

B. Organization of work

26. At the sessions of the subsidiary bodies, which take place twice a year, the SBI and the SBSTA make recommendations to the governing bodies. At the sessions of the governing bodies, which take place once a year, the COP, the CMP and the CMA consider those recommendations and adopt decisions thereon, as appropriate, as well as deliberate on items specific to their agendas.

27. When an item is included in the provisional agenda for the session of both a governing and a subsidiary body, in-session work proceeds first at the technical level under the subsidiary body. This approach allows outcomes agreed by the subsidiary bodies to be recommended to the governing bodies for consideration and adoption and matters for which consideration has not been concluded to be forwarded to the governing bodies for possible further consideration and finalization of outcomes or carried over for consideration at the next sessions of the subsidiary bodies.

28. In their submissions, several Parties raised concerns about the efficient management of time and the avoidance of scheduling clashes during sessions. In recent years, the secretariat has been taking measures to address these issues, such as convening joint plenaries of the governing bodies to hear opening and closing statements from Parties and observers. High-level segments of the sessions of the governing bodies are also convened jointly. These approaches ensure that sufficient time can be allocated to negotiations.

29. Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the secretariat has optimized the organization of work at sessions by making adjustments to the scheduling of negotiations in order to accommodate work under the Agreement. For example, with many items across the agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies covering different topics, the secretariat has increased the number of negotiations permitted to be held at the same time – from four to six – to avoid clashes. Additionally, to accommodate the growing number of mandated events following the adoption of the Agreement, some of which thematically clash with negotiations, the secretariat aims to dedicate some timeslots to mandated events only, with no negotiations scheduled during that time, allowing participants to attend events that cover the same topics as negotiations.

30. Furthermore, joint items on the agendas for sessions of the subsidiary bodies are considered by a joint contact group or in joint informal consultations, with plenaries convened together to enable outcomes to be adopted simultaneously by the bodies. Similarly, for overlapping or similar items across the agendas of the governing bodies, the matters are considered in a single contact group and/or in informal consultations and led by the same co-chairs or co-facilitators with outcomes adopted by each of the governing bodies. This approach was highlighted in the submission of one Party as conducive to continuity and consistency in the treatment of relevant matters throughout the negotiations conducted under the governing bodies.

31. To assist Parties in preparing for and to increase the efficiency of the sessions, the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies issue a joint note outlining their proposed approach to the sessions, which is also articulated during the pre-session consultations with negotiating groups to ensure alignment of the approach with the objectives of the sessions.

IV. Options for reducing overlapping items on provisional agendas

A. Preparation of provisional agendas

1. Clustering agenda items and using broader names

32. One area in which most Parties' views converged was the clustering of agenda sub-items into single items, the grouping of related matters under a single item and the application of broad names to agenda items. Given that this approach is already being applied for the provisional agendas for sessions of the subsidiary bodies, some Parties viewed clustering matters, possibly coupled with the use of sub-items, on the basis of similarities and overlap as an acceptable way forward for organizing the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing bodies. Two submissions, however, set out a divergent view, namely that clustering should be avoided as it could result in diluted discussions on matters that would benefit from an individual, focused approach. The importance of consensus in the application of clustering was highlighted by all Parties.

33. Some Parties suggested using the wording "Matters relating to..." to frame items similar in nature and applying this practice consistently across all agendas, while a few Parties recommended also applying this approach to items concerning capacity-building or loss and damage, for example.

34. As specific examples of clustering, some Parties proposed merging climate finance related agenda sub-items together under one broader item and merging the item "Arrangements for intergovernmental meetings" with the item "Administrative, financial and institutional matters".

35. Parties expressed divergent views on the clustering of technology-related matters. One Party suggested incorporating consideration of the matter of linkages between the Technology Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism under the item on the joint annual report of the Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre and Network, but other Parties disagreed on account of the importance of the matter to developing countries. With regard to the Poznan strategic programme on technology transfer, one Party requested that the matter not be included in any agenda since activities under the programme have been concluded, while other Parties suggested that it continue to be included in the agendas until it has been replaced by the technology implementation programme.¹³

36. In the light of the establishment of the United Arab Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience, one Party suggested clustering adaptation-related items across the agendas for sessions of the COP, the CMA and the subsidiary bodies. The same Party proposed clustering transparency-related agenda items considered under the Convention in view of the biennial transparency reports replacing the biennial reports and biennial update reports in 2025.

37. It is important to note that Parties have the flexibility to agree on the scope of the discussions under all agenda items, regardless of whether a broad name is applied to an item or matters are clustered under a single item. In addition, the name used or the use of clustering does not change the underlying mandate pertaining to a matter.

2. Reducing overlapping items across agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies

38. To minimize the overlap of items across provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies, the secretariat proposes applying an agile approach if no formal negotiations are to be undertaken by a governing body on a particular matter, namely that the relevant item would be included only in the agenda for the session of the relevant subsidiary body. Specifically, the relevant governing body would have already referred that matter to the subsidiary body for consideration. Any recommendation that the outcome for

¹³ Established in decision 1/CMA.5, para. 110.

that item be considered and adopted by the governing body would be included under the relevant agenda item in the report on the session of the relevant subsidiary body. This would eliminate the need for items related to the adoption of recommendations of the subsidiary bodies to be included in the agendas for the sessions of the governing bodies. While this approach is already being applied for some matters,¹⁴ it could be applied for all relevant matters.

39. In addition, there has been a marked increase in the number of items referred to the subsidiary bodies for their joint consideration.¹⁵ The secretariat proposes that Parties review the need for joint consideration of items taking into account the scope of work of each subsidiary body as provided in Articles 9–10 of the Convention.

3. Streamlining the agenda for sessions of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

40. Some Parties expressed the view that the agenda for sessions of the CMP should be further streamlined to free up more time for negotiations under the COP and the CMA. Other Parties preferred to retain the CMP agenda as it is. One Party proposed that the secretariat prepare a technical paper setting out proposals for phasing out items from the agenda for sessions of the CMP, which would serve as input to the development of a common understanding of the conditions under which an item may be removed from an agenda, noting that such development should be the result of a consensus-based and equitable process with the aim of establishing objective criteria for the removal of an agenda item.

4. Identifying similar agenda items across the governing and subsidiary bodies

41. Following the practice applied for the agendas of the subsidiary bodies (see para. 25 above), the secretariat proposes identifying similar items across the agendas of the governing bodies (e.g. with an asterisk). This practice would provide clarity on the matters that are to be considered jointly.

B. Organization of work

1. Procedural conclusions

42. Some Parties proposed that, for agenda items under which no substantive discussions and outcomes are expected, procedural conclusions could be shared at the opening plenary with a view to adopting them at the closing plenary. As a result, Parties could avoid the repeated application of rule 16 of the draft rules of procedure being applied, whereby any item for which consideration has not been completed at a session is included automatically in the agenda for the next session. They could instead consider postponing the discussion of relevant matters to later sessions in order to allow time for further reflection thereon.

43. In preparing the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies, the secretariat proposes indicating which items are expected to result in procedural conclusions only to allow Parties to consider removing those items from the agendas.

2. Taking note of items

44. One Party recommended that agenda items for which no negotiations are envisaged be taken note of by the subsidiary bodies and reported to the governing bodies under the relevant agenda item in the report on the session of the relevant subsidiary body.

45. A few Parties suggested that no or only limited time be allocated to negotiations on items for which no negotiations are required, should Parties deem this necessary during the

¹⁴ For example, linkages between the Technology Mechanism and the Financial Mechanism and common metrics used to calculate the carbon dioxide equivalence of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removals by sinks.

¹⁵ For example, there were eight joint items on the provisional agendas for SBSTA 58 and SBI 58, compared with four joint items on the provisional agendas for SBSTA 48 and SBI 48.

sessions, unless requested otherwise. This would formalize the practice recommended by the relevant presiding officers at the start of recent sessions.

3. Financial implications of mandates

46. Some Parties proposed that the secretariat inform Parties of the budgetary implications of new mandates stemming from negotiated and agreed draft texts before these mandates are decided on by Parties. This would provide Parties with a better understanding of the costs and resources needed to carry out these mandates.

4. Joint consultations

47. Some Parties suggested expanding the practice of holding joint negotiations for items on the agendas for the sessions of more than one governing body as a means of contributing to the avoidance of or reduction in overlap across the agendas for sessions of the three governing bodies. For example, one Party proposed that the relevant negotiations be co-facilitated or co-chaired by the same pair of presiding officers throughout the sessional period in question to ensure continuity of consideration of the item.

5. Mandated events

48. Regarding the management of mandated events, some Parties proposed that the Bureau define the number of timeslots available at each session and intersessionally, and others that mandated events could be held during the regional climate weeks, with the outcomes thereof then feeding into the subsequent sessions.

49. One Party suggested holding the mandated high-level ministerial dialogues covering overarching topics at the sessions of the governing bodies, such as one dialogue covering all finance-related matters.

6. Multi-annual agenda planning

50. Some Parties in their submissions advocated for applying multi-annual agenda planning to the preparation and consideration of agendas, which would result in more rationalized agendas and in a UNFCCC process with a greater focus on enhanced implementation and ambition. This would provide Parties with the opportunity for more stable, predictable and long-term agenda planning. For example, cycles for mandated work may be five years (e.g. the global stocktake) or two years (e.g. the enhanced transparency framework under the Paris Agreement), or be aligned with mandates to update the Paris Agreement rulebook or the mandates or work programmes of the constituted bodies.

51. Some Parties expressed appreciation for arrangements such as Troika,¹⁶ comprising the current and incoming Presidencies of the two subsequent governing body sessions.

7. Time management

52. One Party advocated for draft texts being tabled early in the negotiations to allow sufficient time for discussions and consultations thereon, whereby contact groups and informal consultations would be aimed at achieving agreement on as many paragraphs of the draft texts as possible.

53. Another Party suggested that the length of statements during the high-level segment be limited to two minutes to improve time management.

8. Virtual meetings

54. While recognizing that virtual meetings are useful for ensuring inclusivity and enhancing participation, some Parties emphasized the importance of holding meetings in person, to the extent possible, as this facilitates building trust, understanding and consensus among Parties to ensure that negotiations and decision-making are effective. Other Parties

¹⁶ See <https://unfccc.int/documents/637525>.

proposed using the hybrid meeting modality for considering ways to implement adopted decisions.

9. Continuation of discussions on arrangements for intergovernmental meetings

55. One Party encouraged the SBI Chair to continue to conduct informal virtual consultations on streamlining the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies with Parties during SBI 60 as well as prior to and during SBI 61 with a view to preparing an informal note and thus informing the discussions and deliberations on the matter at SBI 62 under the agenda item “Arrangements for intergovernmental meetings”.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

56. Overall, Parties expressed in their submissions that the agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies must be streamlined, with overlaps in items reduced and the growing number of agenda items and mandated events limited. The growth in the number of agenda items and mandated events poses challenges relating to progress in negotiations, time management and scheduling of meetings and events held during the sessions. Such challenges constrain Parties with small delegations in particular as they risk not being able to fully and effectively participate owing to limited human resources. While retaining the Party-driven nature of the UNFCCC process, the approach to capturing mandates and preparing provisional agendas would benefit from improvement.

57. In order to address the challenges outlined in chapter II.B above, reduce overlapping items on the agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies and enhance efficiency of the UNFCCC process, the secretariat proposes exploring ways to implement the following set of actionable recommendations:

(a) In terms of the clustering of agenda sub-items under a single item, the grouping of matters into a single agenda item and the application of broad names to agenda items, some Parties noted that either a committee established for this purpose or the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, could take on the responsibility of this task. Such clustering, as well as any other change made to the agenda-setting, needs to be part of a Party-driven, inclusive and transparent process. Streamlining the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies in such a manner would enhance the efficiency, coherence and coordination of work under the agenda items, ultimately leading to more effective discussions on mandates and improved outcomes;

(b) Various Parties recommended that the Bureau play a more active role in preparing provisional agendas and organizing the work of the sessions. In particular, the Bureau could support the consultations of the Presidency of the sessions on potential new agenda items in cases where these items are unlikely to secure the broad support of Parties. Regarding mandated events, the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat, could define the number of timeslots available for mandated events for each upcoming session and for each subsequent intersessional period;

(c) Some Parties recommended that Parties limit the number of new agenda items they propose and that it should first be assessed whether the matters covered could instead be considered under an existing item. A few proposed that only items that are considered by the relevant body to be urgent and important be added to the agenda. The procedure for handling proposals for new agenda items from Parties could be further discussed under the agenda item “Arrangements for intergovernmental meetings” at SBI 60 in accordance with rules 9–16 of the draft rules of procedure being applied;

(d) Some Parties recommended that the presiding officers propose procedural conclusions for agenda items for which no substantive discussions or outcomes are expected and the Presidency could consult with Parties on such items in advance of the sessions by inviting written submissions from them or conducting informal consultations;

(e) The secretariat recommends identifying joint items across the agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies (e.g. with an asterisk);

(f) The secretariat recommends including in the agendas for the second regular sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the year matters for which technical work will be conducted by the subsidiary bodies but no negotiations by the governing bodies are expected;

(g) The secretariat recommends that the SBI Chair convene informal dialogues with Parties on enhancing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process, including streamlining agendas of the governing and subsidiary bodies, noting the positive feedback from Parties on the informal dialogue convened on 2 May 2024.

58. UNFCCC sessions have increased in scale over time,¹⁷ reflected in the growing numbers of agenda items, proposals for new agenda items, mandated events, and facilitators and participants, as well as growth in venue size, with record highs in these areas observed in 2009–2023 (see also figures 1–2). The importance of enhancing the efficiency of the UNFCCC process towards strengthening implementation and raising ambition, including but not limited to reducing overlaps in items across the provisional agendas for sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies, thus cannot be overstated. To that end, at SBI 60, Parties have the opportunity to shape the UNFCCC process so that it meets their needs.

¹⁷ See, for example, document FCCC/SBI/2023/INF.5, para. 22.