

Addressing 'equity' in the global stocktake under the Paris Agreement

Bonn, 14 Nov (TWN) — On 11 Nov, Parties to the UNFCCC's Ad hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) had an interesting exchange on how equity can be operationalized in the global stocktake (GST) that will take place in 2023.

The special session under the informal consultations on the GST was organized following requests from Parties to discuss the various aspects of equity in relation to Article 14(1) of the Paris Agreement (PA), which provides that *"the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Agreement (CMA) shall periodically take stock of the implementation of this Agreement to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of this Agreement and its long-term goals (referred to as the 'global stocktake')"*.

"It shall do so in a comprehensive and facilitative manner, considering mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation and support, and in the light of equity and the best available science." (Emphasis added.)

There were various views from Parties on how equity can be operationalized in three activity areas of the GST process which involves: the preparatory phase, which includes gathering information from different sources; a technical phase, which involves holding dialogues; and a political phase, which involves the outcome of the GST.

These activity areas are captured in what Parties refer to as the ["building blocks"](#) of an informal note prepared by the co-facilitators, which is expected to be agreed upon in the coming days as talks are scheduled to end on 17 Nov.

Further, on 13 Nov, Parties requested the co-facilitators to reflect the discussions on equity better in the building blocks.

Below are some of the highlights of the interventions during the special session.

Speaking for the **G77 and China, Philippines** said equity was a crosscutting element and that it must be made operational in the different activities of the GST process, and this would include the information gathering stage for mitigation, provision of adaptation support, financing and technology, and assessing how much has been provided by developed countries against their commitments.

Equity in the GST is also about how Parties individually and nationally determine how equitable and fair their successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) will be. It also said that in the outcome of GST, equity would mean how much Parties want to enhance their successive NDCs and it would be up to Parties to do that, underscoring that equity is about ensuring fairness.

Speaking for the **Africa Group, Ghana** said equity means reflecting the right of developing countries to sustainable development and poverty eradication, and how developing countries can be helped to achieve these through the operationalization of the differentiated obligations in the PA.

Ghana also said that equity in the GST should be an overarching principle and in the different activities of the GST, there should be support for developing countries to participate in the discussions. It underscored that non-state actors from developing countries should be provided support to ensure there is a geographic balance in their participation in the GST process.

Speaking for the **Arab Group, Saudi Arabia** said, "As GST is focused on the collective progress of Parties, it should help identify barriers related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement, especially with regards to helping developing countries overcome obstacles in order to enhance their actions. It should

also identify the impact of those actions and the effects of the implementation of response measures under the Agreement to ensure a cohesive understanding of actions and impact.”

Saudi Arabia also said that the mechanism in place should ensure “sustainable development, equity, considering individual developing Parties’ national circumstances and limitations, as well as take into account the different roles and responsibilities between developing and developed Parties, highlighting how developed countries are taking the lead”.

Saudi Arabia also said that the mechanism should not entail any undue burden on Parties, and its outcome should be recognized and agreed to by all Parties. Saudi Arabia said that equity is directly linked to sustainable development and the impacts of response measures. “In practice, this can be done throughout the GST process from start to finish, when calling for input by gathering further information on the and during the consideration of these inputs and finally to be reflected in the outcome,” said Saudi Arabia.

Speaking for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Solomon Islands** said that equity is about how the LDCs would be protected and how the have-nots would be helped.

India underscored that equity under the GST is no vague concept, and neither is the concept of equity new. It said that equity has been a part of the Convention’s various Articles and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), which is a form of equity. India added that the special circumstances of developing countries, sustainable development and poverty eradication are all examples of how equity can be operationalized in the GST.

India said that equity could be understood in the context of equity for an individual, where an outcome would affect all individuals equally, and gave the example of per capita emissions.

It also said that equity considerations should also entail looking at the development stage of a country, which would look at indicators such as consumption patterns, historical accumulation of greenhouse gases etc. “Thereafter the global goal needs to be looked at. The nations that have enjoyed the benefits of development have limited the available carbon space for those nations that are not on a high development trajectory. Equity will help the latter attain their development goals,” stressed India.

It also said further that inter-generational equity needs to be employed to understand equity, adding that sufficient natural environment needs to be provided for future generations to survive and it is an imperative for Parties to focus on sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

Various options exist to operationalise equity in the GST process, said India, and pointed to per capita emissions, historical emissions, ability to pay, etc. For the preservation of future development opportunities composite indicators like the human developed index could be used, it added.

It also stressed that the process and the outcome of the GST process should capture equity. “Countries which have enjoyed the carbon budget are not reducing emissions at the same scale which allows a just distribution of the budget. Equity in the GST must pave the way for development space and carbon space for developing countries,” said India.

China said there are three ways to reflect equity: historical responsibility of developed countries; capacity to provide solutions to the global problem of climate change; and recognizing there are different rights at stake, including the right to development. It also said countries must not follow a one-size-fits-all approach and that the GST must look at the distribution of actions that countries have undertaken.

It said further that in the information gathering stage, historical responsibility, the different development stages of countries and national circumstances should be considered. During the technical consideration, the focus should be to ensure that all Parties, especially developing countries, have their capacities enhanced to address climate change. China also called for equity in the process and for supporting the participation of developing countries in the GST process.

South Africa said that equity is a matter of fairness and helping those with less capacity to meet the gaps in action and to enable ambitious action. Equity is not about agreeing on single indicators, but to have an aggregation of what fairness means. It referred to historical responsibility and the contribution to temperature increase, and the capacity of countries, to determine fairness.

On the sources of input, South Africa said there exists a lot of information and there should be a call for inputs and analysis on equity. For the technical

phase, equity is about looking at mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation, and ensuring that poorer countries do not suffer more. Funding for adaptation is a matter of equity and technical considerations should therefore look at who will pay for the gap in finance, technology and adaptation.

Equity is not about Parties having a mathematical formula because it is nationally determined, said South Africa. It also referred to the equity reference framework (ERF) proposal of the Africa Group, and said that the ERF could be used to determine whether countries' NDCs are fair and ambitious.

Brazil said Parties should not spend too much time talking about the details of how equity could be defined because equity itself should be discussed in 2023 and reflected in the outcome in terms of fairness and ambition for the successive NDCs of Parties.

It also said that equity in the information-gathering phase would mean gathering from the inputs on equity from various sources, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). For the technical consideration phase, equity means looking at all the inputs and trying to put an equity frame, depending on how the 2023 process plays out.

Equity in the political consideration means Parties should be enabled to have some reference or guideline as to how equity is considered by Parties in preparing their successive NDCs and could include references and benchmarks.

Brazil emphasized that the consideration of equity issues could happen at the national level in consultation with national stakeholders. On the national part, Brazil said it could for instance use global mean temperature increase as an objective criteria to demonstrate how ambitious is its NDC.

For **Norway**, equity means an integrated way of working and capturing the notion of fairness while walking together on different pathways to contribute to climate action. It said that in practical terms, equity should be addressed in mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation (finance, technology development and transfer, capacity building). Equity must be given balanced consideration to each of the topics, said Norway.

For mitigation, the GST should be used as a space where Parties share experiences and elaborate how they accounted for equity in their previous NDCs.

Norway called for looking into the social dimensions and said Parties must share experiences and challenges but caution must be exercised that it should not be used for "naming and shaming". It also said that there could be no shared criteria for determining whether the Parties' previous NDCs were ambitious or not.

For adaptation, equity involves understanding better climate change impacts impacting the people, it added further and in relation to the means of implementation, equity means looking at the overall flows, the balance between mitigation and adaptation, and the provision of grants to LDCs and SIDS.

The **European Union (EU)** said that equity could serve as a bridge between the long-term goals of the PA and the nationally determined actions in a manner where the latter contributes to the long-term goals. The EU said that in the inputs stage of the GST process, equity must be reflected by being inclusive in relation to sources of inputs, which may include IPCC reports, reports of the Standing Committee on Finance, synthesis reports by the UNFCCC secretariat and the transparency framework.

For the technical consideration phase, equity should be considered in mitigation, adaptation and finance in three separate dialogues and the dialogues must also focus on how international cooperation could be improved, said the EU. For the political phase, equity should be in the form of a political discussion focusing on how the outcome of the GST could be taken by Parties to frame their NDCs in a nationally determined manner.

Switzerland said there was no need to settle on the various approaches to operationalize equity at present because Parties could work on it over the forthcoming years. It said that equity is bottom up and about an aggregated assessment of the previous NDCs serving as the basis to inform the subsequent set of NDCs. In terms of information from sources, it called for information from all sources, including civil society. It said that equity in the process means a joint contact group of the subsidiary bodies, with something such as the 'structured expert dialogue' to assess the information.

For **Canada**, equity means fair access to the economic benefits of climate action. In the context of the GST, Canada said Article 2(1)(c) of the PA should serve as the basis for considering equity.

(Article 2(1)(c) provides as follows: “*Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.*”)

Canada also said that there should be a synergistic consideration of mitigation, adaptation, means of implementation and development issues. It added that part of the equity consideration in the GST is to invite other international organizations to provide inputs on investment flows going into green investment sectors.

Japan said the challenge is to agree on a set of indicators on equity, and that equity for GST means “inclusiveness”.

Australia said that equity was already reflected in differentiation and in national determination and that equity should realize and enable ambition overtime, based on trust. Equity in the GST process means inclusiveness, extending to non-party inputs, it said further.

New Zealand said equity has been dealt with in

the Convention, through CBDR and flexibility, which were already captured in the PA. It also said that equity in the GST is about participation and about assessing the global collective progress and in ensuring that the voices of those that are not being heard are heard. It gave the example of indigenous peoples’ voices. It also said that the purpose of equity in the GST process should not be to address inequity, and that Parties should not look at carbon space since the way forward for countries is to go the renewable energy route.

In response, **Philippines** said that while shifting to renewable energy is an important part of the conversation, as part of equity, discussions must also look at who controls technologies and who owns technologies. “When we talk about equity, it is about how to make the GST a process and result which encourages those who have to help those who have less and those who have not,” it stressed further.