

Challenges in advancing work under the Mitigation Work Programme

10 June 10, Bonn (Radhika Chatterjee): Discussions in Bonn on the 'Sharm-el-Sheikh mitigation ambition and implementation work programme' (referred to commonly as the 'mitigation work programme' [MWP]), have revealed challenges in advancing further work, due to strong divergences over what the content of the outcome should be, in view of the existing mandate of the MWP, and concerns over the changing of the mandate in view of the outcomes of the global stocktake (GST) decision adopted in Dubai last year.

(The MWP decision adopted in 2022 states that *the "the work programme shall be operationalized through focused exchanges of views, information and ideas, noting that the outcomes of the work programme will be non-prescriptive, non-punitive, facilitative, respectful of national sovereignty and national circumstances, take into account the nationally determined nature of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and will not impose new targets or goals"*. The MWP supposed to continue its work till 2026 before the adoption of a decision on further extension of the work.).

Informal consultations which began on June 4 and continued on June 6 and 8, are presided over by co facilitators **Kay Harrison (New Zealand)** and **Carlos Fuller (Belize)**. Recalling decisions

adopted and, the co-facilitators invited Parties to share their views on substantive elements they would like addressed under the MWP and its outcomes. Divergences among Parties became clear.

Some of the key issues of divergence that came to the fore included: whether the MWP decision text should include any high level political messages or not; whether there should be any linkage between the MWP and the GST decision from Dubai last year; whether the MWP should be a vehicle for implementation of the mitigation section of the GST outcome; and the relationship of MWP and the nationally determined contributions (NDCs), especially in light of all Parties needing to communicate their next NDCs by February 2025 (for the 2031-2035 period).

Several developing countries including the **Like-minded developing countries (LMDC)**, the **African Group** and the **Arab Group** stressed that the MWP should not be used to impose any targets on countries, as the objective of the programme was to facilitate dialogues and exchange views to provide an opportunity for Parties to share experiences and learn from each other.

They said that the focus of the MWP should

rather be on improving the global dialogues which are mitigation related and the investment focused events to ensure Parties are able to make the most out of the global dialogues conducted under the programme. They further added that the exchange of information was a very useful exercise for them as it helped their experts learn about different country experiences. They said the purpose of MWP was to inform the current implementation of mitigation actions and not future NDCs. They further argued that any kind of imposition of new mitigation targets on developing countries through the inclusion of key messages would result in going beyond the mandate of the MWP and add a burden on developing countries.

(The global dialogues this year under the MWP will focus on the topic “Cities: buildings and urban systems”. A three-day event was held in Bonn prior to the SB 60 session which took place from 27th to 29th May and a report of the session is to be prepared by the Co-Chairs later in the year).

Developed countries and some developing countries especially the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** on the other hand insisted on having “strong outcomes” from MWP by scaling up mitigation ambition keeping in mind the “urgency” of the situation. This they said was to be done through the insertion of key messages under the MWP.

Some of the key elements for these messages they emphasized on are: having mitigation action aligned with 1.5 °C goal, creating a strong linkage between MWP and GST according to para 186 of GST outcome document, scaling up mitigation action in line with paragraph 28 of the GST outcome document, and using the MWP to inform the process of updating NDCs.

(Para 186 of [GST outcome document](#) states: “Invites the relevant work programmes and constituted bodies under or serving the Paris Agreement to integrate relevant outcomes of the first global stocktake in planning their future work, in line with their mandates;” and para 28 relates to global mitigation efforts including that of “transitioning away from fossil fuels”).

At the end of the third informal consultation on June 8, there was general agreement among Parties to continue the discussions on “improvement of

future global dialogues and the investment focused events (IFE’s)”, based on a proposal advanced by the co- facilitators. However, some Parties also stressed that they also wanted to continue discussions linkages between the MWP and the GST. The next informal consultation under MWP is scheduled for June 10.

HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY INTERVENTIONS

China speaking for the **LMDC** shared its views on the global dialogues adding that the process was very valuable. Calling it a “learning by doing” process, it said, “we have achieved a lot of experience. In the future we will achieve more outcomes and gain a lot from it”. It further added that the decision adopted in Dubai under the MWP set a good example that could be followed for the next couple of years. It stressed the need for respecting the mandate of MWP and shared its reluctance for challenging the current mandate, and added “we do not require a new mandate under this process”.

On the issue of how to consider key findings of the dialogue, it said the “global dialogues provide a good platform for exchanging views on substantive elements” and that they were “very informative”. Referring to the third global dialogue which was on ‘Cities: Urban systems and Buildings’, China said the topic needs more time for discussions before coming up with a report. On the issue of including key findings from the dialogue in the decision text for MWP that would be considered at COP29 later this year.

On the MWP and NDCs relation, China said that in its understanding “the MWP is not to inform the next round of NDCs, but is to inform our current mitigation action implementation. These could be inputs to the second GST, but cannot be a follow up of activities of the first GST.”

At its intervention on the second day of the informal consultations, China said it was important “to achieve consensus on how to move forward”. On the issue of sharing a draft decision document, it said “it is premature to shape a draft decision” as the third global dialogue concluded less than a week ago. Countries were still discussing “how to optimize it” and “how to make good use of it”. Sharing its understanding of what the decision at

COP29 could look like, it said, “last year we achieved a very good outcome,” one in which key findings of the report of the global dialogue were taken note of. On the issue of linking the GST and the MWP as per para 186 of decision 1/CMA.5, it said, that the GST outcome document “does not mean that it should undermine all other existing mandates...we have to continue our work instead of calling for a new MWP. That is our understanding of MWP and GST”. It urged countries to “strictly stick to” the existing MWP mandate.

Developing countries including **Egypt, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar** and **Bolivia** echoed the sentiments of the LMDC.

Bolivia said that the MWP has “a clear mandate and scope” and that “it is not productive to reopen discussions” on this at each SB session and expressed opposition “to reopen or expand the scope of MWP, if the rationale behind this is to find a way to allow developed countries to shift their responsibilities in taking the lead in addressing their mitigation and moving it to developing countries.”

In its intervention during the third informal consultations, Bolivia said it was very respectful of the decision adopted in Egypt, and explained that this is why it had requested to include an agenda item for this SB session for developed countries immediate and urgent achievement of net zero by 2030 and net negative thereafter and did not bring that issue to the MWP, adding that the MWP is not about imposing sectoral targets. It said that developed countries were opposed to its agenda proposal and there was no consensus.

On the issue of including key messages in the decision document, it said “picking and choosing key messages as key political messages is not the way forward. There are different national circumstances. It is very difficult to highlight key messages to foster enhancement of mitigation”. It suggested that instead “we can introduce enhancements to how we are dealing with the dialogues and investment focused events”.

Zimbabwe, for the **African Group**, said “we hope that the session will really have a good reflection on how MWP dialogues and the investment forum

can be effectively used for information exchange and also that they are non-prescriptive, facilitative and non-punitive.” Appreciating the recently concluded third global dialogue, it also shared some concerns regarding the process. It said, “while we made a decision in COP28” to communicate the topic for the next session in a timely manner “so that we could find time to attend”. It pointed out this was not done in the case of the third global dialogue due to which participation was low, and “there was under representation from Africa...want to ensure more planning” to make the dialogues more inclusive. It also highlighted the need for accelerating the scale of international cooperation, which it said was an “important enabler for increased mitigation in Africa.

On the issue of MWPs and NDCs, it said it would continue to look forward to the report from the dialogues and the investment focused events to further work on “how the MWP can continue to enhance ambition and support in unlocking investments in shaping NDCs”. On the issue of identification of key messages, it said, “considering the dialogues were largely a monologue, it would be hard to draw out key messages.”

Sharing its views on the way forward, it said it “will be happy to continue exchange of views this session and also have a procedural conclusion as we don’t have the report of the global dialogue and investment focused event (IFE) as yet.”

South Africa said we need to preserve and respect our mandate in MWP in decision 4/CMA.4 and cautioned against reopening and renegotiating the decision, adding that “we have always looked for a practical and implementable MWP” through a “focused exchange of ideas” as agreed in Sharm el Sheikh. It stressed that there is a need for organizing the global dialogues and IFEs “in a more efficient and effective manner to promote both participation and representation of more developing countries.” On the issue of highlighting key messages, it said countries in the African region were “unfortunately overburdened” and the introduction of “new commitment targets” will add to that burden. It also said that “having a draft decision now is premature since the global dialogue just concluded. We need to have a fourth global dialogue and receive the summary... they are

the main inputs at COP29". It further added, "we can use last year's decision as a blueprint to potentially identify (the) structure (of the decision)."

Brazil, speaking for **Group SUR (Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and itself)**, said "MWP as a space should be considered for sharing of knowledge, best practices, solutions... to mitigate climate change." It added "Greenhouse gas reduction requires immense technology, which is cheap for some, but too costly for others." Stressing on the need "to build trust" it said, "we must not try to export solutions... should not impose burdens on those most vulnerable and least responsible".

Brazil, speaking for itself said the MWP is a crucial space that can also help "in supporting the follow up of the GST." It said the GST has to "inform national policies... and NDCs. We believe this space can provide an opportunity to share what their constraints are in terms of national capacities." Expressing its willingness to engage "in a substantive discussion" in MWP it said, "Brazil has a climate neutrality target of 2050. It would be nice to hear from those developed countries who have targets earlier what their opportunities are". It also wanted to hear from those developed countries whose target for achieving net zero was later than that of Brazil to share why that was the case. Speaking in the context of mitigation implementation, it said it would also like to talk about the "extent" to which "recent trade measures" could help in implementing climate neutrality.

Saudi Arabia, for the **Arab Group**, said "we believe the MWP is indeed delivering on its mandate and making progress." Highlighting some elements of improvement for the dialogue, it said there is a "need for inclusive and wider participation from the developing world; announcing and providing the agenda early (better logistical arrangements); issues with the IFE and the need for inclusive finance providers that cater to wide array of needs; more transparency and clarity on the selection of subtopics for the MWP dialogues; the need to minimize the number of parallel breakouts to allow Parties to benefit from different countries." It further added that the "MWP has showed that the ambition is there it does exist in our developing world, but it also

highlighted the challenges and barriers that come in the way. Namely, the finance that is needed from the developed world."

It also emphasised that the global dialogue did not conclude with any key findings or recommendations. "We want to reiterate that is not even the purpose of the global dialogue. The purpose is to have useful exchanges and sharing of country experience." Elaborating further, it said, "we are not going to engage in a follow up global dialogue in this session, especially not when the dialogue just took place a few days ago. The annual report will... be made available for us to utilize in our national context. Not to pick and choose especially without the presence of our experts who engaged in the dialogue."

Sharing its views on the purpose of the annual report it said the report "is designed to serve as a valuable resource for countries to use in a manner they deem fit and it is not to be politicized. The report needs to be examined as a whole, countries can access a wide range of information that contributes to their knowledge base and they benefit from exposure to diverse viewpoints, which can enhance their understanding of complex issues from different angles, providing deeper understanding of the broader context, enabling them to make more informed decisions and formulate appropriate strategies."

On the invitation from paragraph 186 of decision 1/CMA.5 and the calls to integrate elements of the GST with MWP, it said, it highlighted "that invitation from the GST does have a caveat which is "in line with their (the respective work programmes) mandate" and "we cannot drop our work and what we have at hand and take up something completely new." On the idea of using MWP as an implementing vehicle of GST, it said, that "the GST outcomes are considered by Parties and if something is applicable to national circumstances, and that makes sense with national circumstances, equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, then it can be used to inform the preparation of NDCs, domestically in a bottom-up manner."

Samoa, for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** reflected on its experience of the third global dialogue, and said AOSIS members were not

able to participate in the dialogue due to the short notice provided and asked for better logistical planning. It said the limited participation at the third global dialogue “is an example this MWP is not delivering to our objectives” which is about “scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation”.

It said there was a need for MWP to do much more and “unlock transformational change across sectors” through “many other initiatives.” It further added MWP should have “a role that takes advance of UNFCCC convening power rather than get bogged down with details.” It was not in favour of “overly restrictive interpretations” of the work programme mandate and said, “we cannot agree on interpretations of mandate that seek to deny link to GST outcome. Paragraph 186 of GST decision is clear: to invite relevant work programmes to integrate with GST.” Stressing its disappointment with the current way in which MWP was progressing it said countries “cannot afford to have any mandate take valuable time if it is not delivering.”

It said the “MWP needs to be a breeding ground for 1.5-degree C aligned mitigation actions.” It said the MWP decision should be framed based on the GST document. It added further “key findings on actionable solutions from the third global dialogue that can contribute to mitigation elements of GST decision, especially para 28” should be identified. It said there is a need for headline mitigation messages that are drawn from the GST outcome and 1.5-degree C aligned. It also stressed these should inform NDCs which are due to be updated next year.

Chile for the **Independent Alliance of Latin American and the Caribbean Nations (AILAC)** said that on the global dialogues, it found that the “discussions have been relevant and useful” and pointed the need for improving regional representation and gender representation among experts in the dialogues.” It said “the main objective of the MWP is to identify and make progress in terms of calls for scaling up action on mitigation implementation in this critical decade”. It said there is a need for moving beyond procedural issues and “focus on substantive elements” and that we have a new decision from the GST and “under this new MWP we need to align

our calls and messages to those outcomes of GST.”

Switzerland, for the **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)** said it hopes the MWP delivers on its mandate of scaling up mitigation ambition. It said the MWP is “one of the rare” spaces that countries have at their disposal to respond to the emergency of climate change. They said they wanted to use the SB session to define the elements that they would like to see in this year’s decision at COP29 in Baku.” In the context of upgrading NDCs, it recalled their commitment to mitigation action and the need for maintaining the 1.5-degree C objective of the Paris Agreement. There was a need to respond to para 186 of the GST decision by integrating relevant outcomes with the MWP. It requested for an update on the mitigation elements of GST work under MWP, to help achieve mitigation elements of the GST decision at the global level.

The **European Union (EU)** said it was “disappointed” with the MWP decision at COP28 and that “more needs to be done in delivering MWP” and “contribute to transformational change in all sectors.” Pointing out that there is only one agenda item on mitigation, it outlined a few broad categories that could be a part of the MWP decision at COP29 which included “general messages on mitigation on where we stand and where need to go; to respond to invitation to integrate relevant work programmes according to para 186 of GST; and consider key findings, opportunities, barriers that emerged from the global dialogue”.

On the issue of linking GST and MWP it said, “it is important to reestablish trust in this process and how we can build something together...And how we follow up on GST outcomes can be done by 2030.” Adding further, it said, “we see there is quite some divergence but the process is advancing. Outcomes of GST are being taken forward in several work programmes... [it is] important to be coherent” and for “a constructive way forward and arriving at an ambitious decision that delivers MWP.”

The **United States (US)** said “we hope we can redouble our efforts this year for driving action forward. We are in a new context this year after the GST.” Acknowledging that there were “various views and interpretations of mandates” it expressed hope for finding “common ground”.

Sharing its views on the global dialogue and the link between MWP and NDCs, it said the discussions “gave us a clear view of a particular sector emissions...important for us to use in this session, inter-sessionally, and COP29 to develop some best practices that are able to bridge what we agreed at the GST in Dubai to what we will be doing at home in development of our NDCs with 1.5-degree C objective in our minds.” US also reflected on the need for better logistical arrangements for organizing the dialogue especially in light of the short notice that was given for the dialogues and made travel difficult for its delegates. Regarding the substance of the dialogues, it said it felt the dialogues were missing “a link to policy context of what brings us to the Paris Agreement – how to devolve the issues to NDCs”. On the issue of linking MWP and GST, the US said a “follow up” from the GST outcomes “will also be an appropriate way forward”.

Supporting the proposal of asking the co-facilitators to share a draft text, the US said the substantive sections of the text could include “overarching mitigation messages that reflect on the urgency of action” and report on progress made. This section would be a “discussion focused on GST” and highlight “what was agreed in Dubai, how relevant the findings from MWP are rolled into that, guidance to MWP on how to take up topics in the future.” As an example it said topics for the dialogue could be taken from the GST outcome reinforcing the interrelationships between MWP and GST. Another section could include discussions that “speaks to the global dialogues, IFEs to come up with ideas that should be highlighted and brought forward”. It also said “there should be a decision to give weight to policies at national, domestic and international level” and that “this could be done without prescription”. US also said the draft text could include a section “on new NDCs” and how that work can be linked to the MWP.

Canada said it “was disappointed in what was expressed as a procedural outcome in COP28.” It added “we need to use this work programme to advance our collective actions in mitigation in this decade. We are not looking to impose targets. We are looking to opportunities for information

exchange, learning” and “profiling real actionable solutions”. It said it viewed the MWP as a “key vehicle” for following up on GST outcomes and supported the suggestion of “coming together for a framework for a decision to be considered at the next CMA”.

Australia elaborated on its views on MWP and said “while there have been useful exchanges it is hard to see how this programme is living up to its potential. How it is delivering on scaling up mitigation ambition and delivering GST.” It said it is “important that we work towards delivering on GST outcomes. All existing work programmes have a role in taking forward GST outcomes as per paragraph 186 of GST decision”. Adding further, it said “important outcomes” were “agreed across all pillars of the Paris Agreement in GST document”.

Sharing its views on what the MWP decision should look like in COP29, Australia said it include “substance on mitigation. SB60 could be used to prepare elements of a draft structure decision with general mitigation messages, key dialogues...follow up of GST” and a “clear linkage between different topics and sectors”. It said these suggestions were not an attempt to “impose” and “prescribe”, rather “this is about signalling”.

Supporting the idea of co-facilitators coming up with a draft text with options and no option text, it asked for the inclusion of a summary of key messages of the global dialogue including on opportunities and barriers. Highlighting its views on the process elements of the decision it said “we would support the organization of regional dialogues to make these relevant to different regions” after hearing that “clearly from AOSIS and LDCs”. It also asked for virtual dialogues, especially with experts “to follow up” on the global dialogues. These could focus on capacity building and technology transfer and “would be a good way forward to bring consistency in the dialogue”.

Asking for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition, **Norway** said “MWP should follow up on GST decision” and that “it can help in implementation of mitigation elements of GST. There are many ways in which MWP can help in making GST come alive”.