

Just Transition should not have a deadline - say developing countries

Dubai, Dubai, 4 Dec (Hilary Kung) – The [first draft negotiating text](#) on the Work Programme on Just Transition Pathways saw stark differences between developed and developing countries on how they envision the work programme on Just Transition Pathways at the ongoing Dubai climate talks.

Developing countries stressed the importance of “justice” in the transition, which did not have a deadline.

India also warned against the use of the term “pathways” casually, especially when the pathways that are being referred to are the global modelled pathways of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) because “equity and justice are not considered in the global modelled pathways, as acknowledged by the IPCC.”

The current draft text also did not have any reference to the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), which were fundamental and repeatedly mentioned by developing countries, such as the **G77 and China** and its sub-groups, including **Saudi Arabia** for the **Arab Group**, **Bolivia** for the **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)**, and **Brazil** for **Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay (ABU)**.

(A new and significant outcome from the 4th Conference of Parties under the Paris Agreement [CMA4] last year, was the decision to establish a work programme on just transition on the pathways to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement [PA]. The decision also noted that the global transition to low emissions provides opportunities and challenges for sustainable economic development and poverty eradication, and emphasised that just and equitable transition encompasses pathways that include energy, socioeconomic, workforce and other dimensions, all of which must be based on nationally defined development priorities and include social protection so as to mitigate potential impacts associated with the transition).

The third informal consultation held on 3 Dec. was co-facilitated by **Selam Abeb (Ethiopia)** and **Luisa Roelke (Germany)** to hear reactions from Parties on the draft text. Parties were also encouraged to submit written inputs.

Speaking for **G77 and China, South Africa** said that in general, developing countries do not see the text reflecting its’ views; nor does it reflect the discussions and contributions from the workshop held under the programme.

The group said it will aim to send inputs or proposed text to be included in the second iteration of the text.

Developed countries however, that spoke after the G77 and China said completely the opposite. Developed countries, like the **Environmental Integrity Group** and **New Zealand**, welcomed the draft text citing that it was a good basis to work on, which they claimed reflects a lot of views in the room through the workshop, and submission process and “nothing comes as a surprise”.

Brazil for **ABU** commented that the Parties’ reactions to the draft text is a testament of how “unjust” it can be.

In terms of the timeline of the work programme, **Mexico** on behalf of **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)**, **New Zealand**, **United Kingdom (UK)**, **United States (US)** envisioned a 3-year work programme that continues until CMA6 (2026), with a view to decide whether the work programme will be continued during CMA6, alongside the mitigation work programme (MWP), given its complementarity to mitigation.

The **European Union (EU)** expected a shorter timeframe of a 2-year work programme and asked for this to be added as one of the options in the draft text. The EU said the 2-year work programme can serve as input to unlock mitigation ambition in the next round of the NDCs.

The short timeframe pushed by developed countries drew sharp reactions from developing countries who expected a longer-term work programme.

Brazil for **ABU**, said that the mandate is clear in the agreement to reflect equity and common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR). Elaborating further, Brazil said the outcome decision of the work programme will probably be the most consequential from this CMA. Acknowledging that distributive justice is not easy, it said further that we need a regime that allows us to bring attention to all the issues to guarantee that the transition is “just” and there is a space where we can openly discuss the impacts and justice. Hence, the need for a work programme that is long-term.

India said, “Justice does not have a deadline after all”, while explaining further that the development options in developing countries are constrained by the need to contribute to climate change mitigation, while also adapting to the changes that we are not responsible for. Acknowledgment of this double burden and the need for justice in the context of this, is important, not just in this critical decade, but also in the long term.

“There is really no basis to keep out these important principles of justice that are embedded in the Convention and its PA. The very potential for the exploration of just transitions within developing countries is hindered by continued global inequalities and denial of the fair share of the carbon budget to ensure poverty eradication, sustainable development, and the well-being of our peoples,” said **India**.

India also warned against the use of the term “pathways” casually, especially when the pathways that are being referred to are the global modelled pathways of the IPCC. This is because equity and justice are not considered in the global modelled pathways, as acknowledged by the IPCC.

“In fact, no IPCC pathway - 1.5°C or 2°C meets even the Sustainable Development Goals. And so, we would go further to say that they are in fact patently unjust. We must therefore clearly refer to just transitions pathways both global and national without even inadvertently dropping the term “just”, explained **India**.

The **US** spoke after India and said that the reference to the Convention in a few paragraphs is not needed as this is under the CMA5 (meaning under the PA and not under the Convention).

Japan also made similar a remark to replace “UNFCCC” with “Paris Agreement” in paragraph 6 of the draft text which currently reads as “Also requests that the work programme takes into consideration the outcomes of other relevant UNFCCC workstreams, relevant work of UNFCCC constituted bodies, the high-level ministerial round table on just transition pathways referred to in paragraph 53 of decision 1/CMA.4 and work on just transition pathways outside the UNFCCC process”.

Bolivia speaking for LMDC said that Just Transitions should reflect the principles of equity and CBDR of the Convention, and the work programme must contribute to the second global stocktake (GST) and future GST process and is therefore a permanent process with practical outcomes and milestones.

Zambia on behalf of the African Group reminded Parties that the linkages are not just to MWP but it is also important to acknowledge the linkages to adaptation and finance work streams.

Saudi Arabia for Arab Group elaborated on what is an “unjust” transition for countries and re-emphasized the need to be able to “address the full scope of the transition”.

Papua New Guinea for Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) highlighted the importance of having a long-term work programme by saying that it represents 39 member states now but “in the next 5 to 10 years, it may be speaking for 35 or 36 member states [only and] that’s how important this is to AOSIS. (AOSIS represents the interests of the 39 small island and low-lying coastal developing states which are vulnerable to the rising sea levels)

Philippines called for urgent delivery of means of implementation (capacity building, climate finance, and technology development and transfer) to facilitate just transition in developing countries, in line with the principles of equity, CBDR and leaving no one behind.

Canada suggested to include language like free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) and broader human rights considerations including labour rights and gender consideration which were supported by others like **EIG, Norway** and **Australia**.

A few developed countries like Norway and the US called for a better understanding of the cost and budget implications of the activities.

There was an overwhelming interest in the consultations resulting in the need to change to a bigger meeting space in the plenary hall.

Highlights from the high-level ministerial on just transition

CMA5 also saw the convening of the First Annual High-Level Ministerial Roundtable on Just Transition on 3 Dec 2023 which will provide a platform for a political discussion on framing and implementing just transitions and on the scope and direction of the work programme. The roundtable was co-chaired by **Roselinda Soipan Tuya**, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change of **Kenya** and **Eamon Ryan**, Minister for Climate, for **Ireland**.

Bolivia on behalf of **LMDC** said “Global just transitions require that developed countries take the lead in reducing emission rapidly and immediately, and in a sustained manner. This would provide the room to achieve sustainable development in developing countries. The first objective must therefore be operationalising the principle of equity and CBDR-RC, while ensuring energy access and sustainable development and adapting to the impact of climate change - a problem that developing countries must face but not a problem that developing countries are responsible for. Developing countries will still do their fair share to solve this problem in order to ensure a safe planet and hence means of implementation are important.” The group also said that it cannot be limited to just sharing of information and the output cannot stay in the discussion room.

Papua New Guinea on behalf of **AOSIS** raised attention to their special circumstances and vulnerability that its community faces. It said that AOSIS contributed to less than 1% of the global emissions and yet bear the burden of climate change the most. It hoped for operationalisation of the work programme would revert this reality.

Zambia for the **African Group** said that just transitions must be considered in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the system transformation requires significant financial, technology and capacity building support to developing countries.

Egypt suggested that the framing of the work programme should not be just in the forward-looking element in the GST but also in the implementation of the nationally determined

contributions (NDCs). It also pointed out that “adaptation” is equally important. Commenting on the financing for transition, Egypt said it should include grant and concessional funding, and deal with the debt crisis. Multilateral development banks (MDBs) should also play a role to do the de-risking together with a nation’s central bank. It also highlighted that just transitions cannot work with unilateral decisions from countries that would have social and economic impacts on other countries.

South Africa highlighted that the current global financial system is not designed to respond appropriately and developing countries cannot access the scale and quality of finance required to support just transitions and that technology transfer and skills development are a critical enabler of just transitions. Elaborating further, it said that access to climate mitigation and adaptation technology should not be commercially driven but rather be seen as a global public good. Further, it called on Parties to acknowledge the reality of the nexus between trade and climate change that can no longer be ignored and discussed only at the side event in UNFCCC. Trade undeniably exacerbates climate change and equally true is that climate change impacts trade. The cost of trade for developing countries could affect sustainable development and have adverse second-round effects leaving many behind.

China commented that the scope and modality of the work programme should be clarified as soon as possible as there are still major differences among Parties on the key elements of the work programme. CBDR should be our guide in the negotiation to reach consensus and finalise the work programme for the coming years, it said. Adding further, China said there should be a practical approach to remove barriers to global cooperation and do away with protectionist and unilateral measures, and instead, promote mutual

trust and solidarity.

India said that just transitions for developing countries mean low carbon development within the fair share of carbon budget; while for developed countries, this is about immediate decarbonisation and substantially reducing their unsustainable consumption, recognising their historical responsibilities and overconsumption of the carbon budget.

Said India further, most developing countries are still building their system and infrastructure to ensure reliable and affordable access to modern energy, and this fundamental development need is being constrained because developing countries must also contribute to addressing the climate change problem that they have not caused.

Elaborating further, India said this is why we need a global just transition with developed countries taking the lead and providing the means of implementation (MOI) and reiterated that every country must get a fair share of the carbon budget to operationalise just transitions.

It also commented on the unilateral coercive measures which could further hamper developing countries’ efforts to implement their NDCs and said COP28 is an important platform to address these concerns to ensure equity and provide MOI to developing countries.

Spain on behalf of the **EU** highlighted the need for a rights-based approach and sees this programme as a space to share experience, facilitate ambitious climate policy at the national level, and leaves no one behind, focussing on the just transitions for the workforce on per the preambular of the PA.

An informal note capturing the roundtable discussion will be released in the coming days.