

Response to Champions' consultation on the future of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

Summary of responses to consultation on the future of Global Climate Action in the UNFCCC

March 2019

How should the UNFCCC process engage with the groundswell of climate action after 2020?

<u>Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions</u> has consulted individuals involved in the Marrakech Partnership and its precursors (e.g. the 2014 UNSG summit, the Lima-Paris Action Agenda) to help the climate action community organize its thinking about this important question. We asked individuals to reflect on lessons learned from past experiences, and also to think ahead for what arrangements would be most effective in the future.

The consultation was conducted in parallel to the Champions' invitation to Parties and non-Parties to reflect on the lessons learned from past experiences. However, this exercise was different and complementary in two ways. First, it was conducted anonymously, to encourage frank feedback. Second, it was sent only to individuals who have been directly involved in global climate action work, and represents their personal reflections, not organizational viewpoints.

This summary attempts to capture the range of ideas offered. It is intended in the spirit of constructive brainstorming, and will doubtless be enriched as the conversation continues.

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1. What were the biggest benefits of engagement between the UNFCCC process and the groundswell of climate action from 2014 to the present?

Narrative

- Most commonly mentioned point: Bringing the 'groundswell' into the UNFCCC changed the narrative around the global climate change negotiations from one of 'burden sharing' between countries to one of action and opportunity. This change in narrative facilitated the adoption of the Paris Agreement and has allowed for more ambitious action by countries, as well as non-Party stakeholders. A strong majority of respondents stressed the importance of this point.
- Mainstreaming the idea that achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement will require cities, business, states/regions, investors, etc., as well as national governments

Benefits for sub/non-state actors

- Gave non-party stakeholders a space to be "actors" working as partners alongside
 parties to deliver the Paris Agreement, not just "observers." Important to reinforce and
 maintain this distinction, including in future COP decisions.
- Recognition in the UNFCCC helped the many different parts of the 'groundswell' to be seen as a comprehensive whole, magnifying the perception of a large body of activity
- Several responses highlighted that the MPGCA offers non-Party stakeholders simpler and more direct way to engage with the UNFCCC process than the official constituency bodies. They cited the value of participation in High Level and Thematic days at COPs; direct contact with UNFCCC staff and national delegations; seat at the table for events / processes such as Talanoa Dialogue; regular information on negotiations, process, points of contact etc; easier access to other constituencies and climate-focused organisations
- Augmented voices of sub/non-state actors vis-à-vis national governments and in the media
- Broadened the range of actors engaging in the climate action space, both globally and in the UNFCCC specifically

• Benefits for national governments

- Focuses attention on ambitious goals in the real economy and on practical implementation, both of which help governments take more ambitious action, potentially generating a positive feedback loop
- Emphasis on ambition shows national governments that they can stretch further, and that if they do not they will look behind the curve

2. When has engagement between the UNFCCC process and the groundswell of climate actions worked best? What made it work?

Where/when has it worked best?

- When role of sub/non-state actors had clear purpose vis-à-vis larger goals (e.g. pushing for higher ambition around Paris)
- Effective for coordinating narratives
- When there has been a collaborative spirit and transparency and trust across groups and Secretariat / Champions



- Consulting with sub/non-state actors on elements of decision texts
- When the engagement was around a specific topic and outcome-oriented, and had the right decision-makers around the table
- o Placing mayors, CEOs, etc in front of ministers / other high-level government officials
- o NAZCA
- Most cited specific moments:
 - COP23 Talanoa Dialogue
 - COP21 Lima-Paris Action Agenda
 - 2014 UNSG summit

• What made it work?

- It works when engagement with the groundswell is embedded into the Presidency's strategy at the political level (e.g. COP21 and COP23). Having an institutional partnership such as the LPAA of MPGCA helped with this, but many outcomes happen outside the institutional framework
- When there is a "big" COP, the drawing power of the UNFCCC is strong and can be a powerful driver for sub/non-state action. Less so when there is not a "big" COP
- Quality of engagement between sub/non-state actors and Champions / Secretariat is critical. Frequent emails, webinars, and face-to-face meetings are key, as is bespoke outreach where appropriate.
- o Starting coordination efforts earlier in the year
- o Increased staffing at the Secretariat has made coordination much easier
- More independence between Champions and stakeholders, allowing more flexibility and complementarity

3. What were the biggest missed opportunities, frustrations, or challenges?

There was general recognition that there is a sharp learning curve to doing this in the UNFCCC process.

Champions / Presidencies

- The MPGCA is too dependent on the personality and approach of each individual Champion. More continuity is needed across time.
- Need Champions with time and capacity to galvanize action from non-Party stakeholders and effectively link to right people in national governments
- Rotation of Champions necessary, but creates significant delays as new ones learn how to operate in the position

Representativeness

- Too little representation of the Global South across the entire process
- Some of the largest and most consequential non-state actor networks have not engaged with MPGCA in a deep, substantive way because they find it too much organizational effort relative to the benefits.
- Too many of the "usual suspects"

Organizational

o Earlier planning required. Too dependent on Champions' schedules and responsiveness.



- Planning process too top-down. Not enough opportunities for sub/non-state actors to shape agenda and proactively propose ideas. Should be more of a shared project between Champions, Secretariat, and stakeholders.
- Too driven by "moments" and events. We rush from one to the next with too little continuity.
- If we get high-level people at COPs, they should be deployed more effectively (e.g. in small meetings with key decision-makers) rather than just speaking for 2-3 mins on a panel.
- The Secretariat was slow to build up effective support architecture for the action agenda. Even now this remains provisional. Uncertainty around funding hurts recruitment and retention of strong Secretariat staff, limits institutional memory
- Lack of transparency on Yearbook drafting process
- Long delay in updating NAZCA

• Engagement with Parties

- Parties have not taken full advantage of the action agenda. They could have worked more proactively to engage with global networks and "localize" them, and bring their sub/non-state actors into the system. Even supporters have not robustly supported the action agenda financially.
- Governments feel overwhelmed and confused by the wide range of information / action around non-Party stakeholders. Need targeted, useful information and interactions.
- Many Parties are not clear on the difference between "observers" of the negotiation process and "non-Party stakeholders" who are partners for working toward Paris goals
- Parties are extremely busy at COPs, perhaps the worst moment to engage with non-Parties on substance
- o Interactions among parties/non-parties have been reduced to event planning rather than the generation of partnerships and solutions, and where there is no real "pushing the envelope" of what is possible.
- Too little Party attendance at COP events, but also questions about whether COP is the right venue to engage Parties in a meaningful way.

Other

 Lack of an accountability framework threatens credibility of actions under GCA. UN Must not become a platform for greenwashing.



4. Looking at different aspects of the current/past system, what do you see as the most important strengths and weaknesses? Should these elements be kept (perhaps in modified form) after 2020?

Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Keep after 2020? Modify?
High-level Champions	 Necessary focal point for highlevel interactions between Parties, Presidency, non-Parties Gives host country ownership, opportunity to exercise leadership, complimenting more 'neutral' role of the Presidency and the Secretariat Achieved recognition in the UNFCCC system, climate community Can push others when ambitious and resourced Can engage with Parties on these issues in a way the Secretariat cannot Raises the profile of global climate action vis-à-vis Parties Key attributes: autonomy, leadership, charisma; dedicate time 	 SEE ABOVE Personality dependent Doesn't work when they are disengaged or lack capacity Rotation creates discontinuity and delays Presidencies have not used the role effectively Not recognized outside the COP system Lack of understanding of sub/nonstate actors Role unclear Too "process" driven, as opposed to reaching out beyond the COP-bubble 	 Revise selection process, consider/require Champions from outside of government De-link Champions from Presidencies, instead appoint a developed / developing country pair that rotate over time and have explicit mandate to push the envelope Longer-term, more stable agenda Needs clearer remit, e.g. on Party / non-Party interaction Focus more on regions, given that Champions rotate across regions Discard (minority): If cannot be reformed, discard, as weak Champions pose risk to broader action agenda Reassign responsibilities to GCA team May be less necessary with shift to implementation
NAZCA / Climate Action Portal	 Shows the enormous amount of climate action Important communication tool Necessary repository of 'overview' of climate action 	 Needs more structured information that tells a clearer story, beyond just recording/showcasing. Simplify content. Not enough users beyond COP bubble 	 Keep enhancing it to achieve strategic goals Include investors, as planned Automate the process so it becomes less labour-intensive Include actions from regional climate weeks Include national/regional data providers Focus more on showing progress and implementation, less on commitments/pledges



Yearbook of Climate Action	 Useful annual overview of climate action Important to have an official document as an input into formal UNFCCC processes 	 More focus on mitigation than adaptation Weak accountability Not enough data on the Global South Not very visible in the COP process, not visible at all beyond the COP bubble Hard to update every year and keep fresh Incomplete capture of action, insults many who are left out Drafting in the second year was too closed, not transparent Do Parties actually read it? Lacks resources needed for a quality product, surviving on probono contributions by the community is not sustainable 	 Increase visibility Timing, does launching just before a COP mean it gets lost? Focus more on tracking progress over time against longer-term goals Streamline content and pull from same data sources each year Distinguish more from UNEP Gap Report NSA chapter Not worth the effort; focus more on social media, videos, NAZCA Clarify role in the UNFCCC process. Needs more support from Parties, so needs to speak to their needs more directly Shift from annual report to every 2-3 years?
Global Climate Action sequence at COPs	 Important way to showcase groundswell of climate action to UNFCCC process Gives an energy boost to our work COP23 worked well Strong convening power Works best when it moves from speeches to substantive interactions MPGCA partners bring excellent expertise 	 Weak attendance by Parties Often not the right people in the room Little media coverage Objectives not always clear Competition between groups over speaking time undermines quality. 	 Make more visible, feels too much like a side event Plan earlier Increase coordination across areas (e.g. use same speakers across different themes) More substantive interactions between Parties and non-Parties, perhaps Talanoa-style Confine show-casing to single high-level event for really big new announcements Shift more action to Regional Climate Weeks, with just highlights at COPs Add language translation Need stronger communications around them



Regional climate weeks	 Large potential to deepen engagement between groundswell and national governments, and to focus on substantive interactions Raise regional awareness and engagement Good forum to focus on NDC implementation and revision 	 Timeline for engagement in planning too short Proliferation of climate action events on the calendar How to do messages / discussion flow up from regional events to global ones? Major global networks have not (yet) engaged strongly in regional climate weeks 	 Ramp up significantly as "mini implementation COPs" Make this one of the most important intersections between regional sub/non-state actors and transnational networks. Use as channel to build substantive exchanges between national governments and their own sub/non-state actors. Need better communications around them Needs to be about more than the event; should be about leveraging these moments to move things forward at the national/regional levels Ensure attendance of sectoral ministries, not negotiators Needs resourcing
Global Climate Action team in the Secretariat	 A dedicated, hard-working team that understands its mission and keeps things on track and moving. Very helpful for stakeholders to have a dedicated point of contact, accessible and responsive team Important anchor in the process Very knowledgeable and effective around UNFCCC processes 	 They seem overburdened, sometimes lack capacity ("I feel for them") Risks becoming too bogged down in UN bureauracy Sometimes too focused on the UNFCCC process as opposed to the broader world of climate action Communication sometimes comes too late to action Limited, ad hoc resources; competing for same philanthropic resources as other stakeholders 	 Need to be put on a long-term, stable contract with dedicated funding from core UNFCCC budget Need more decision-making capacity beyond Champions If the Secretariat alone is managing this, they are limited by their perception of what Parties will deem acceptable. We need some non-party staff working with the UNFCCC Secretariat (e.g. via secondment), or some other way of making this process reflective of what it is - a process for both parties and non-parties.
Climate Leadership Network	NA	 Already too many ill-defined leadership groups Same names again and again Selection criteria unclear 	 Discard (dominant view) If keep, clarify mandate, roles, and selection criteria. If it could provide more of a leadership role to non-Party stakeholders in the UNFCCC process that would be a positive thing.



Communities of	 [FEW INPUTS] Need some method/process of coordination and interaction around work of the MPGCA [FEW INPUTS] 	 Unclear mandate Another umbrella group for the same people interacting in different fora Too hard to coordinate centrally 	 Discard, replace with more ad hoc, fluid, open consultations Build stronger relationships between groups working on climate action Keep, but make it more informal and "open source" so it does not become captured by certain networks / groups Better acknowledge work of groups involved Discard
practice		,	
TEMs	 Good topics to highlight High potential Helps to syntehsize information 	 Link from TEMs to accelerated action is very unclear Poorly organized and moderated Lack of engagement from Parties, and wrong kinds of government representatives Limited delegation to NSAs in planning, depends on Champions 	 Transform into process for raising under-valued topics on the international agenda Combine with GCA events at COPs and Regional Climate Weeks More depth, less breadth UNFCCC is not the right place for these conversations Frame as: what is needed for these sectors over the next 10 years, and how do we get there?
Summary for policymakers	[FEW INPUTS]Helpful summary of key issuesImpacts may not be immediately visible	 Challenge of relating to the current moment Do Parties read it? 	,
Talanoa Dialogue	 Novel format, productive way to bring Parties and non-Parties together Promoted trust-building Brought visibility to groundswell amongst negotiators and at the political level Inclusive Showed some Parties value of NSAs in stock-taking 	 Impact/output not clear High-level components organized too late Too many "usual suspects" More showcasing than actual dialogue 	 Not sure how it can continue, but the format and "Talanoa spirit" should be drawn upon in the future, including vis-à-vis Global Stock Take Encourage more unscripted dialogue



5. What is missing from the current system that needs to be added?

- Less is more. Nothing needs to be added, but the system needs to become more cohesive and simple. Many people, even those working in the process, do not know what all of the above elements are. Need to simplify and streamline.
- We need to "slice" the ecosystem of climate action in different ways. The MPGCA is organized by thematic areas (~ economic sector) and actions in those areas, but we also need ways to organize within actor-types, regions, national-level, etc.
- Need a stronger accountability mechanism for non-state actor commitments
- A focus not only on actions but also novel ways of promoting the transition in a way that would allow us to complement incremental steps with actions of systemic repercussions (social infrastructure through novel approaches like domestic multi-stakeholder alliances; the role of public engagement and education; deliberately seeking out new voices from the social fabric youth, faith, unions, etc.).

6. What are the most important differences between the pre/post-2020 context?

- Building the 'upward spiral' of implementation and ambition
 - Key question: how to enable faster implementation of the Paris Agreement? Top priority is around enhancing and delivering NDCs
 - Sub/non-state actors need to both demonstrate implementation and push forward on ambition, helping governments achieve their goals while also enabling/pushing them to raise ambition
 - Climate Action Agenda space in the UNFCCC should be reframed for the period 2020-2030 to be the space where "we push ourselves to deliver together on Paris (in line with the 1.5 C IPCC report)." Form should follow function.
 - The UNFCCC should continue to help give governments the confidence to continue to increase their climate targets by showcasing NSA action through communications and high-level events.
 - We should also think of what needs to happen within and outside the UNFCCC, and how we can create linkages that help shift the system in the same direction
- Regional / national focus for climate action "on the ground"
 - Focus needs to be on supporting pro-climate constituencies at the domestic level.
 political support for greater ambition will be decided at the national level, we should be
 as concrete as possible (by economic sector) but we should not think just in terms of
 discrete actions (mitigation/adaptation measures); we should deliberately think about
 social infrastructure and public support for the transition as well
 - Meanwhile the Global Climate Action Agenda at UNFCCC should be maintained post-2020 but gently refocused outwards to prioritize developing states via Regional Climate Weeks.
 - Differentiation and flexibility will play a more critical role, stakeholders from the Global South are very much needed
- Accountability / delivery



- Post-2020 there should be less focus on NSA commitments and more focus on tracking progress, indicators of transformation in the real-economy, and modelling cooperation among NSA across multiple sectors rather than silos of initiatives.
- There is a big role for NSAs to play in terms of follow-up on commitments and accountability for countries and other sectors
- Prevent backsliding: role for NSA as "safeguards" of the Paris Agreement as it was seen in the US with the "We are still in" movement

7. How do you see the groundswell of climate action interacting with the post-2020 UNFCCC system?

Element	Role of the groundswell of sub/non-state climate action, if any
Long-term strategies National Adaptatio n Plans	 Biggest priority Sub/non-state actors support Parties' implementation and formulation of new NDCs Technical advice Policy suggestions Demonstration that high ambition is possible/desirable/successful Political will Vertically integrated contributions of sub-nationals Demonstration of progress in the real economy Parties must understand value of engaging with sub/non-state actors on NDC formulation Parties should share experiences with how they engage with sub/non-state actors; MPGCA can facilitate best practices Cross-pollinating best practices across NDCs through non-state actor networks Build multi-stakeholder networks at the national level Some version of national or regional Talanoa Dialogues may be a helpful mechanism Explicitly link to regional climate weeks? The same considerations listed above for NDCs largely apply The same considerations listed above for NDCs largely apply
Global Stock Take	 Katowice rulebook shows role for NSAs in GST, but this is not yet defined. Build on the experience of the Talanoa Dialogue, with similar format Also would be helpful to have such a thing at national level around NDC enhancement processes.
Review of individual countries (Art 13)	 It would be great if individual country review can include review of status of NSAs. review teams would do best to incorporate this element Independent groups (e.g. multi-stakeholder national coalitions) could conduct parallel reviews of national progress Maintain GCA sequence, focusing more on small, high-profile announcement space and more tailored and specialist exchange between sub/non-state actors and decision-makers in line ministries
COPs	 There are broader questions about the purpose of COPs post-2020 in keeping with turn to implementation. Engagement with groundswell must adapt accordingly. Important to continue to bring high energy and expectations of NSAs into the COPs



	Increase engagement of non-Party stakeholders in any implementation discussions
Post-2020	Area for growth of MPGCA
Finance	 Broadened conceptualization of finance, highlighting, e.g. alignment of all flows with Paris goals, creates important role for investors and other non-Party actors Developing investment plans for NDCs requires engagement with investors, private sector Does not need formal linkage, but as finance community is increasingly mobilized, it sends an important message about the enabling conditions for the transition which needs to be brought into the finance discussions
Capacity	Should be further explored and prioritized
building	GCA should focus more on facilitating capacity building for non-Party stakeholders, link to PCCB
	 MPGCA should help build Parties' capacity to successful engage with sub/non-state actors, link to PCCB work

8. What are the most important ways for the UNFCCC process to support / influence the groundswell?

- Maintain and strengthen the 'space' for sub/non-state actors in the UNFCCC process, continue a version of the MPGCA post 2020
- Find stable funding for the core work, and channel more resources to this space.
- Strengthen links to the political process
- Maintain open dialogue and communication
- Be flexible and adaptive to the myriad nature of sub/non-state action
- Broader integration into the Convention Bodies
- More lead-time around planning
- Less bureaucracy

9. How can the groundswell of climate action include more action in the global South?

- Many global networks and initiatives are focused on mitigation questions. Need to continue expanding adaptation- and finance-oriented initiatives, deliver on capacity-building potential of global networks.
- More financial support to sub/non-state actors in the Global South is key
- Better integrate developing countries Parties, show them the value of linking 'their' sub/non-state actors to global networks
- More regional dialogues
- More virtual meetings
- Importance of framing the conversation around low-carbon development that leaves no one behind



10. How should the UNFCCC's engagement with sub- and non-state climate action link to such activities in other multilateral fora?

- Emphasize co-benefits
- Many NSA networks work across regimes/SDGs. Need to recognize and talk about these connections, but not try to formally organize them
- CBD has just begun emulating the climate action space process with the creation of a nature action agenda process in 2018; it would be interesting how we incorporate this approach in other governance spaces without creating new siloes. Ultimately, we should think about how state and non-state actors jointly incorporate and live up to a triple bottom line of environmental, social and economic integrity by 2030 that ultimately delivers in an integrated way across the SDGs, with the climate space bringing a unique set of experiences and lessons learned, including in the state/non-state actor space

Who we are: Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions is a series of dialogues that brings together organizations supporting climate action at all levels. Its objectives include:

- 1. Bringing the groundswell of climate actions from cities, regions, companies, and other groups to a higher level of scale and ambition;
- 2. Increasing efficient coordination among cooperative initiatives and sub- and non-state networks;
- 3. Improving analysis and understanding of "bottom up" climate actions;
- 4. Building a positive narrative of pragmatic, concrete action on climate change; and
- 5. Identifying opportunities for the groundswell of climate actions and the multilateral process to support and catalyze each other.

Since 2014, Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions has brought together city and regional networks, company networks, cooperative initiatives, governments, international organizations, and researchers to discuss and advance these objectives. By convening the community of actors that make up and support the groundswell of climate actions, we seek to realize the full potential of this extraordinary innovation in global governance.