

Options paper

Options for Global Climate Action in the UNFCCC after 2020

December 2019

This paper lays out a range of options for Global Climate Action (GCA) arrangements in the UNFCCC after 2020. It is intended as an early “brainstorming” document to help Parties and non-Party actors and stakeholders concretize discussions of this issue going forward. All of the options discussed below need further elaboration and refinement.

By outlining various options, we do not in any way intend to foreclose other possibilities. The ideas suggested represent a range of different views that have emerged from discussions between Parties and non-Parties over the course of 2019. More such deliberations will be needed to create a fit-for-purpose set of Global Climate Action arrangements in the UNFCCC by COP26, when current arrangements expire, and beyond. In particular, we note that it is important not to allow the current set of GCA activities in the UNFCCC to define the boundaries of our imagination, though this is of course the starting point for many Parties and non-Parties thinking about the issue.

| | |
|--|---|
| What should Global Climate Action arrangements in the UNFCCC aim to achieve? | 2 |
| 1. GCA Relation to Nationally Determined Contributions, Long-term Strategies, and National Adaptation Plans | 2 |
| 2. Share experiences and methodologies to enhance engagement between national governments and sub- and non-state actors domestically | 3 |
| 3. High-level Champions or similar roles..... | 4 |
| 4. Climate Action events at COPs | 4 |
| 5. Regional Climate Weeks..... | 5 |
| 6. Climate Action Portal (‘NAZCA’) | 5 |
| 7. Yearbook and Summary for Policymakers, or similar summary documents | 6 |
| 8. Input to Global Stocktake | 7 |
| 9. Support unit - GCA Team in the UNFCCC Secretariat | 7 |
| 10. Organization and work plan | 8 |

What should Global Climate Action arrangements in the UNFCCC aim to achieve?

In a separate [Discussion Paper](#), we explore the broader context around climate action by cities, business, states/regions, investors, civil society, and others in the global climate regime going forward. That documents highlights several key points relevant for the options presented below:

1. First, because cities, business, and other actors deliver many of the actions and innovations needed to achieve the Paris Agreement goals, linking them to the UNFCCC process can accelerate progress.
2. Second, at the same time, the UNFCCC remains a fundamentally intergovernmental process focused on negotiation not implementation. The global climate action “space” in the UNFCCC therefore should focus on those functions for which there is unique “added value” in the UNFCCC process, as opposed to the broader set of functions in the larger context of global climate action.
3. Third, because global climate action delivers results on the ground and develops new methods and approaches, the GCA space in the UNFCCC can help countries formulate, implement, and (over)achieve their NDCs, as well as Long-term Strategies, National Adaptation Plans, etc.
4. Fourth, the breadth and legitimacy of the UNFCCC process gives it a unique ability to track climate action globally in order to make it both credible and inclusive, reflecting in particular climate action in developing countries that is often underrepresented in global networks.

Below we consider several core elements that a post-2020 GCA might contain. For each, we outline a set of “design principles” that could guide the development of institutional arrangements, as well as options for what such arrangements might look like in practice.

1. GCA Relation to Nationally Determined Contributions, Long-term Strategies, and National Adaptation Plans

Design principles

The implementation of every Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Long-Term Strategy, and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) can benefit from Parties recognizing and mobilizing the actual and potential contributions of sub/non-state actors. These actors can contribute to the implementation of NDCs directly by emissions reduction or adaptation actions, and indirectly by generating and diffusing innovative policies and business models that others can adopt.

The post-2020 GCA could capitalize on this potential by seeing itself as part of the expanding “support system” for NDCs. This system includes initiatives like the NDC Partnership, bilateral support programmes, and related activities. In some cases, these initiatives include sub- and non-state actors in various ways. For example, In Latin America: LedsLAC and Euroclima+ are playing a key role in the NDC support ecosystem. But globally the NDC support system thus far lacks a well-developed framework for sub- and non-state actors to offer their ideas and capacities. Existing meetings under ‘Technical Examination Processes’, respectively on mitigation and adaptation (TEP-M and TEP-A) have not be able to fulfill this role because they often fail to attract the relevant participants

and to engage specific issues with sufficient specificity and depth. A critical role for the post-2020 GCA could be to help fill this gap.

Potential elements

NDC Labs: Parties volunteer themselves to get input/feedback on how to deliver on and strengthen their NDC through engagement with GCA. Unlike TEP meetings, it could be “demand driven,” in that Parties (and possible non-Parties) would request engagement with non-Party actors via the GCA on specific areas of interest. Also, the initiative could work conjointly with the compliance body established by Art. 15 of the Agreement, who can recommend that countries engage with GCA as a way to build capacity.

Long-Term Strategy planning sessions: Similarly, the GCA could help Parties developing LTSs to engage with sub/non-state actors and extract the benefits thereof.

2. Share experiences and methodologies to enhance engagement between national governments and sub- and non-state actors domestically

Design principles

At the domestic level, each country has its own system and methodologies for engaging with sub- and non-state actors on climate policy. It is not the role of the UNFCCC process to influence these domestic processes. However, many countries are actively seeking better ways to engage with sub/non-state actors in the development of climate policy, and are eager to exchange views and experiences with other countries on best practices. At the same time, various technical approaches have been developed (e.g. on tracking and aggregating the contributions of sub- and non-state actors) that can help countries engage with these actors more effectively, and thereby build their capacity to implement successful climate policy. The role of the GCA could be to help exchanges between countries that seek to improve their capacity to engage effectively with sub- and non-state actors at home.

Potential elements

There are several platforms and initiatives that are focused on enhancing State capability and bringing together State-Parties and other actors. GCA could contribute by analyzing and systematizing this information to provide specific recommendations for Parties.

First, the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) has developed a methodology for accounting for sub/non-state action in NDCs. GCA can provide guidance and know-how for governments into implementing this methodology into their policies. Furthermore, it may utilize the information produced in the NAZCA portal, sending it to Parties and inviting them to encourage their sub/non-state actions to report to it.

Second, GCA could draft, publish, and regularly update a Best Practices Guide in this area. The Guide could show the Parties some successful examples of national governments working with other actors in delivering policies to achieve their NDC. Workshops and exchanges could be organized during and ahead of the COPs on this subject.

Third, GCA could help governments identify, share, and create policies that could enhance the ability of sub/non-state actors to make greater contributions to national policy goals. For example, if one country develops a

successful framework for catalyzing city-level climate action, the GCA could provide a useful platform for sharing this innovation with other countries.

3. High-level Champions or similar roles

Design principles

UNFCCC positions tasked with catalyzing climate action and aligning such action with national climate policies should focus on how to best add value to the larger universe of climate action. Unique competencies could include linking Parties and non-Parties, and making connections across different sectors and types of non-Party actors, and filling gaps in the overall landscape. To play these roles, it is important to ensure that the process for selecting and staffing Champions is appropriate for their functions. Form should follow function, meaning that a potential “Champions” role may be structured quite differently. In the past, continuity of focus and effort has been a key challenge.

Potential elements

The Champions’ mandate could include some combination of the following elements:

- Match-making and linking between Parties and non-Parties
- Seeding new initiatives on topics or in areas that are not sufficiently represented
- Supporting existing initiatives by helping them recruit new actors, expand or deepen their work
- Go “outside” the UNFCCC to represent climate action in, and build links across, other global fora (e.g. HLPF and other SDG-related processes, regional climate processes, World Economic Forum)

Currently, Champions are appointed by each Presidency for two-year, overlapping terms. This could be either maintained, or take alternative forms, for instance:

- a team of Champions could be appointed, each one focused on specific sectors or regions. This team could be the same as, or related to, a revitalized “Climate Leadership Network”
- Champion(s) could be appointed for longer terms to provide greater consistency

Related, the selection of the Champions could be further refined. Currently, each Presidency chooses its own Champion. Except for the COP25 Champion, all Champions have come from within the government, though some have advocated for looking, as a rule, beyond government. Others have suggested that Presidencies explicitly consult with other actors on the selection of Champions, including inter alia previous Champions, UNFCCC, and a revitalized version of the “Climate Leadership Network.”

4. Climate Action events at COPs

Design principles

As key “moments” for climate diplomacy, the COPs offer a critical platform to attract significant interest and attention from non-Party and Party actors. This creates an important opportunity to get high-level representatives from both Parties and non-Parties in the same place, and to bring people together across regions and sectors. At the same time, it creates limits on more in-depth, tailored, and focused conversations because of who is in the room and because of time constraints. Therefore, GCA events at COP should focus on high-level, synthetic

interactions and on showcasing particularly successful and promising climate action. To ensure robust links towards more in-depth and focused conversations, these events should be explicitly linked to more substantive, technical, and operational events and processes outside of the COP, both within and outside of the UNFCCC (e.g. in the Climate Technology Center and Network (CTCN, UNFCCC’s Technology Mechanism), and Regional Climate Weeks, see below).

Potential elements

GCA events at COPs could include the following elements:

- “Talanoa” style dialogues on core issues
- Summaries of the key outcomes of the Regional Climate Weeks on common issues
- Draw relevant inputs from non-UNFCCC events (e.g. in the realm of other SDGs, climate action events like the 2018 GCAS or 2019 UNCAS, One Planet Summit, G20, etc)
- Focus on “integrative” or cross-cutting issues such as core Marrakech Partnership themes, other SDGs, finance, innovation, security, health, etc.

5. Regional Climate Weeks

Design principles

Regional Climate Weeks (RCWs) have emerged as an effective platform to continue expanding climate action “on the ground.” These events in Latin America, Asia, and Africa have brought together policymakers and non-Party actors to discuss concrete issues of implementation. Participation in these events is on the rise and more stakeholders from different sectors, as well as policy makers e.g. from different ministries, agencies, and levels of governance, are participating. RCWs could become regular events in order to provide more follow-up to the initiatives there discussed.

Potential elements

In order to make RCWs a more regular event and expand its scope, it is necessary for it to have an explicit mandate, as well as a set of specific objectives and resources to operate properly. For example, RCWs could be explicitly targeted at issues like:

- Sharing experiences across the region, and between Parties and non-Parties on specific issues. Such conversations should be more specific, technical, and operational than analogous events at COPs
- Identifying elements of NDCs where implementation can be enhanced
- Mobilizing finance with representatives of development finance institutions and private financiers engaging with regional policymakers

In addition, RCWs could be linked with other events to create stronger hubs of actions. For instance, it may be put alongside and integrate with NDC Dialogues, the “NDC labs” proposed above, and similar elements.

6. Climate Action Portal (‘NAZCA’)

Design principles

The Climate Action Portal (NAZCA) has been an effective tool where non-state actors' climate commitments and initiatives are displayed. However, the portal currently only shows broad data from non-state actors, and misses - for instance - data on actions that are not explicitly framed as "climate", or that are not reported to international networks and platforms that track sub/non-state climate action. For the platform to become a more effective tool, it is necessary to not only include data on commitments but also evidence on progress and delivery of the various initiatives. The platform should effectively capture the full range of climate action, particularly in the Global South. Moreover, the platform needs to clearly communicate to commitments and initiatives criteria for inclusion, including data and transparency requirements.

Potential elements

- Require regular updates on not just targets and commitments, but progress made toward them
- Improve coverage by including independent data-providers at the regional and national levels, and from different sectors
- Develop more explicit and transparent selection criteria for data providers, who could be approved via an expert peer review process. Potential criteria include:
 - Possess credible data on the key metrics the platform aggregates
 - Are able to annually update data
 - Data and sources are transparently available for peer review on request

7. Yearbook and Summary for Policymakers, or similar summary documents

Design principles

Consultations on these two documents showed that many saw value in some kind of regular summary of global climate action, but also a need to make it more streamlined and useful to both Parties and non-Parties. Because of its broad scope, such a document is primarily a communications output as opposed to more detailed research reports, such as the 2018 and 2019 analyses on 'Global climate action from cities, regions and business'¹, and subsequent relevant chapters in UN Environment's Emissions *Gap Reports*². It should rely build on other analysis, as well as on existing outputs from GCA activities throughout the year, plus the GCA Portal, for its content.

Potential elements

- A single document, instead of multiple summaries and documents
- Produce as an input to each COP
- Focus more on communications aspect
- Focus on
 - Key updates in global climate action

¹ Data Driven Yale, NewClimate Institute, PBL 2018: Global climate action of regions, states and businesses. Research report published by Data Driven Yale, NewClimate Institute, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency; NewClimate Institute, Data-Driven Lab, PBL, German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. Global climate action from cities, regions and businesses: Impact of individual actors and cooperative initiatives on global and national emissions. 2019 edition

² UNEP (2017, 2018, 2019) Emissions Gap Report, UN Environment.

- What has been achieved
- What new commitments have been made
- New lessons or issues that have emerged
- Promising innovations that can be replicated or scaled-up

8. Input to Global Stock Take

Design principles

The modalities, procedure, and Guidelines for the Global Stock Take explicitly recognize non-Party stakeholders as sources of input. This contribution should aim to provide a comprehensive global “snapshot” of non-Party climate action and particularly focus on opportunities that non-Party climate action create for Parties to make greater progress toward the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Potential elements

- Summary of non-Party climate action scale and scope and change since previous stocktaking (drawing on Yearbooks / Global Climate Action Portal)
- Quantified aggregation of emissions impact of non-Party actors globally, accounting for overlaps with NDCs, potentially also aggregated at national level
- Systematic summary of non-Party actors’ contributions to adaptation and resilience
- Summary of biggest opportunities non-Party action creates for Parties to overcome implementation challenges and enhance ambition

9. Support unit - GCA Team in the UNFCCC Secretariat

Design principles

It is essential for GCA activities in the UNFCCC to be adequately supported by the UNFCCC Secretariat. At the same time, the unique nature of GCA as a multi-actor, “bottom up” sphere of activities means that it cannot be held only by the Secretariat, which core task remains supporting the intergovernmental process. Finding the right balance between support and “shared ownership” is therefore key. At the same time, stability and continuity from year to year is a key requirement, including a regular and predictable allocation of budget resources.

Potential elements

Some dedicated UNFCCC personnel will be necessary to support many of the various activities outlined above. At the same time, it may be valuable to pursue a model of secondments, in which key representatives of non-Party actors (or potentially Parties or International Organizations) work as part of the support unit for a given period of time. Secondments could be co-located in UNFCCC headquarters in Bonn, in regional UN offices, or simply in a virtual team. Such arrangements could vary in their degree of formality. Regardless of its composition, the GCA team should be on multi-year, regularly funded contracts to provide stability and continuity to the process.

10. Organization and work plan

Design principles

As the GCA becomes more and more a leader arrangement for climate actions. It is necessary that it develops a working plan linked to the 5-year Paris cycles. The plan should aim to provide regular and predictable meetings with clear inputs and outputs. It should also establish time-tables aligned with scheduled meetings and calls in advance to facilitate planning and participation. These elements should not depend on individual Champions' personal schedules. In addition, the unique nature of GCA means that non-Party actors need to have a clear role and co-ownership in the organization and direction of GCA activities in the UNFCCC.

Potential elements

Annual cycle of activity: The timetable of the organization could be constructed around a yearly cycle (assuming continuation of current COP system).

- January/Feb: Global Climate Action planning meeting
- March: Regional climate week 1
- May: SBs Bonn
- June: Regional climate week 2
- September: Regional climate week 3
- November/December: COPs

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.

Further information

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions resources: <http://www.climategroundswell.org/>