

Abu Dhabi Climate Action Summit Preparatory Meeting (30 June – 1 July 2019)

Summary of discussions prepared by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Climate Action Summit Team

1) Leaders' Roundtables

The Leaders' Roundtables were attended by more than 60 ministers and other leaders.

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations opened the **Ambition Leaders' Roundtable**, chaired by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa and Peter Damgaard Jensen, **Chief Executive Officer** of Denmark's healthcare pension fund PKA, by recalling his objectives for the Climate Action Summit. Participants highlighted the need to raise ambition in both mitigation as well as in adaptation. In this regard, they shared their national plans for **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)** implementation as well as plans for their enhancement. Ministers also stressed the need to collaborate with the private sector to accelerate action. Concerns were raised about the access to climate finance. Many participants insisted on the need to meet the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the UNFCCC of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020. Many also referred to the importance of achieving a successful replenishment of the Green Climate Fund. Many interventions noted the need to address the most vulnerable to climate change who have the lowest GHG emissions and have contributed the least to the problem.
- These messages were reinforced in the **NDC Leaders' Roundtable** chaired by incoming UNFCCC COP25 president, Minister H.E. Carolina Schmidt of Chile and UNDP administrator Achim Steiner. Participants agreed that the Summit in September will be an opportunity to demonstrate increased ambition.
- **The Energy Transition Ministerial Roundtable** had a strong line-up with ministers and high-level government representatives from over 20 countries as well as private sector, organizations and youth. The roundtable started with opening statements from the chairs, United Arab Emirates Minister for Climate Change and Environment, H.E. Thani al-Zeyoudi and SRSG and CEO for SEforALL, Rachel Kyte, followed by an overview of the global state of the energy transition and key remarks from the co-leads of the Energy track. In the following tour de table, a range of topics were discussed, including the development of ambitious national policies to support the energy transition, taking into account securing a just transition, and how the private sector can support this, not least in hard-to-abate sectors through renewables and energy efficiency, including the role of innovation, new technologies and R&D. Securing African and developing country leadership for the Climate Action Summit and support for developing countries' pathways to the energy transition and access to energy was highlighted as well as financing mechanisms and capacity building measures to this end. The roundtable further highlighted the cost efficiency and availability of low carbon energy technologies such as wind and solar.

- Finally, **Health and Climate Change Ministerial Meeting** made clear that the 7 million deaths a year from air pollution and data that shows that over 90% of the world's population breathes unsafe air had not been ignored. Solutions exist: the same clean energy, sustainable transport systems that will reduce carbon emissions, will also reduce air pollution. Many Ministers recognized the need for stronger action in the climate-health nexus; support for work in this area came from various organizations, including the Global Covenant of Mayors, representing more than 9,000 cities and the Clean Air Fund, among others.

2) Nine Tracks/Coalitions Meetings

The nine coalitions organized nine separate open-ended meetings on 30 June.

- **The Youth Engagement and Public Mobilization coalition** had the opportunity to report on progress thus far and gather important feedback from youth and civil society leaders. The planned outcomes include the Youth Climate Summit, the establishment of the African Youth Climate Hub, the Sustainable Gaming Alliance, and a pledge by national governments to include young people in their climate change policy development and implementation, among other promising initiatives. Young people were meaningfully integrated into all aspects of the Abu Dhabi preparatory meeting, with two high profile, intergenerational plenary sessions and more than thirty young leaders from the Global South in attendance, sponsored by the government of the United Arab Emirates. At the closing of the Abu Dhabi preparatory meeting, the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General officially announced that applications are open for young leaders seeking to attend the Youth Climate Summit on Saturday, 21 September, and that the UN will award 100+ “Green Tickets” to facilitate participants’ travel to New York based on merit and need. These tickets will ensure that youth from all regions of the world will have an equitable and realistic chance to participate in the Youth Climate Summit. The 30 youth delegates participation demonstrated the essence of Intergenerational engagement for climate action as well as a core approach of the entire Climate Action Summit. The 30 Youth Delegates will now form a Youth advisory Panel for the Youth Summit, bringing their unique perspective as young Civil Society climate leaders and activists.
- **The Social and Political Drivers coalition** held several discussions. On health, an initiative geared towards national and sub-national governments to ensure safe air for their populations and the alignment of air quality and climate change policies, as well as an initiative on financing resilient health systems and actions addressing air quality, received strong support, including announcements of countries and organizations joining the initiatives. On just transition, strong support was also seen for the initiatives aimed at the development of national plans for just transition, and the private sector ensuring new jobs are decent, quality jobs. There were good discussions around gender initiatives, the coalition is now close to finalizing a proposal for gender equality and climate change, and there were useful discussions about financing to enable women-led initiatives to address climate change. We heard strong support for a gender-centered initiative

for the Summit. There was also a presentation on an initiative on heritage sites and climate change which received support and received comments and suggestions for its further development.

- Participants in the discussion of the **Mitigation Strategy coalition** highlighted the importance of presenting substantial outcomes that can demonstrate and boost political will to increase mitigation ambition. This can be achieved through updating NDCs and submitting long term decarbonization strategies compatible with the goals of the Paris Agreement and IPCC 1.5 trajectory. They also stressed the need to evidence progress and demonstrate enhanced efforts on the implementation of current NDCs. Some interventions highlighted the untapped potential of key sectors such as energy, industry or nature-based solutions to increase mitigation ambition. Participants also acknowledged the relationship between NDCs and long-term strategies. These two instruments should be complementary to present a comprehensive and concrete plan for countries to transit into a low carbon and climate resilient pathway. They also highlighted that the process of updating NDCs and preparing long-term strategies should be integrated into domestic development planning exercise.
- **The Adaptation and Resilience coalition** session in Abu Dhabi were well attended, with the presence of some Ministers. Discussions were facilitated by a number of presentations, including from the private sector, and focused on deepening understanding of initiatives in the areas of mainstreaming adaptation and resilience considerations into planning and decision making, particularly investments; disaster risk reduction; and the food, agriculture and water nexus. A few countries also presented ideas for new initiatives. A consistent theme throughout was the importance of adequate and sustainable finance to implement proposed initiatives.
- **The Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) coalition** met to discuss the value of nature for mitigation, resilience, adaptation and other social economic, environmental benefits with possible commitments on: mainstreaming NBS in the sustainable development agenda through climate policy-related instruments (such as NDCs/NAPs/business plans/long-term low emission development strategies; strengthening of finance pathways to bring investments at scale for NBS including to reduce/remove 10 Gt of GHGs per year, supported by appropriate transaction platform(s), campaigns and governance mechanisms; scaling-up of NBS to increase climate action for resilience and adaptation, ensuring people's livelihoods in the face of climate threats. Another key outcome of the meeting included an agreement by the NBS coalition members to streamline activities and join forces in the preparation of upcoming NBS-related fora (including UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD COPs, IUCN World Park Congress amongst other key political milestone events).
- In the **Energy Transition coalition** sessions, a range of concrete initiatives were socialized, discussed and further developed by a broad group of public-private stakeholders with a high level participation and engagement, including four informal ministerial level meetings (coalition members, SIDS, LDCs, LAC country group), as well as an Energy Leaders Roundtable and a coalition workshop with 80+ participants. Possible NDC enhancement initiatives were explored by SIDS, LDCs, and LAC country groups and in a high-level presentation session, coalition

members and participants were presented with five specific and ambitious initiatives on cooling, shipping, energy efficiency, batteries, and a climate investment platform as tools to enhance NDCs. The presentations were met with high interest by participants and broader participation and buy-in from Member States and non-state actors was encouraged going forward.

- The **Industry Transition coalition** hosted several very productive discussions on how to enable ambitious announcements from heavy industry (chemicals, cement, steel, trucking, etc) at the summit. The planned outcome is a commitment from a group of heavy industry CEOs to net zero emissions by 2050, with a clear plan on how this will be achieved and a clear near-term deliverable, backed up by an analytical road map and a call to action to the rest of the sector aiming to make this the start of a growing group of companies from the harder-to-abate sectors – committing to and moving towards net zero emissions by 2050. With a clear growth plan following the Climate Action Summit to COP25, 26 and beyond. Discussions also focused on a potential announcement of an industry transition leadership coalition with leading governments and companies sharing learnings and best practise on innovation, technology and policy as well as other enablers for industry transformation on national, regional and international levels.
- The **Infrastructure, Cities and Local Action coalition** hosted several productive sessions to discuss ambitious proposals related to zero carbon and resilient cities. It was made clear that cities are critical players for climate action: zero carbon cities can help achieve the Paris Agreement objectives, shape economically prosperous countries while delivering better lives for citizens across the world. The planned outcomes for the Summit include initiatives on zero net emissions buildings for all by 2050, zero emissions vehicles for transforming mobility, building the resilience of 600 million slum dwellers and an ambitious package to accelerate, upscale and leverage climate finance for cities in low- and middle-income countries. Discussions highlighted that current initiatives do not all have the same level of maturity and underlined the need to bring the different initiatives under a coherent umbrella for the Summit and raise the voice of subnational leaders. To do so, a new kind of partnership between national and local governments and deeper reflexion on spatial/urban planning would be needed to unleash the power of cities to successfully carry out the economic and social transformation.
- Discussions in **the Climate Finance and Carbon Pricing coalition** meeting were rich and diverse. A varied group of stakeholders, including delegates from Member States, private sector, think tanks and representatives of United Nations agencies addressed matters related to the necessary transition of financial flows towards a low-carbon and resilient economy, including the need to deliver on the financial commitments undertaken by developed countries under the United Nations Convention on Climate Changes (UNFCCC). Some of the issues highlighted included: the systemic issues of the financial sector at large, including regulatory, credit and debt matters; the fact that real economic opportunities (in particular for private sector actors) are still not fully visible; the need to further scale-up the provision of public finance for climate; and the challenges to channel/access climate finance effectively.

3) Synergy Sessions

Four synergy sessions were organized on 1 July.

- The synergy session on “**Transitioning away from coal towards renewable energy**” provided a platform for exchange across finance, industry, energy, social political drivers and youth coalitions and was attended by a wide range of stakeholders across the public and private space, including government, business organizations, youth and civil society representatives. The UN Secretary-General’s request to build no new coal-fired power plants by 2020 was discussed and government representatives further ahead in the transition shared best practices and challenges. Social and political drivers, including the creation of green and fair jobs, as well as gender as components of the transition were highlighted. The opportunities and business case for energy-intensive industries and hard-to-abate sectors to transition away from fossil fuels were highlighted and availability of financing for the industry transition discussed, while the need for an ambitious policy framework to ensure a timely and just transition towards renewable energy was stressed. Several existing initiatives explained pathways of energy transitions and the conversation explored how ambition and necessary action can be elevated and benefit from the summit process and beyond. Delegations were in this regard invited to join the Friends of Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform.
- The synergy session on “**Building a resilient and carbon neutral world, leaving no one behind, with a focus on islands and least developed countries**” brought together the work of six coalitions. There was a clear and strong interest in the topics covered and a clear demand for the underpinning initiatives to be taken forward. The meeting was divided into three sessions focused on living in a resilient and carbon neutral world (with an emphasis on renewable energies, cooling and food systems); ensuring sustainable livelihoods (with an emphasis on rural livelihoods, clean cooking, disaster risk reduction and conservation, management and restoration of terrestrial and marine ecosystems); and enabling action through finance, social and political drivers, and public mobilization (with an emphasis on finance and climate-resilient investment, land and resources rights, and campaigning and advocacy for climate action). A key take-away of the session was the importance of people-centered action for climate to curb emissions and build resilience in SIDS and LDCs. Actions can be further enabled by stronger governance, citizen mobilization, increased access to finance (which does not currently reach the most vulnerable communities), and increased support to SIDS and LDCs (including farmers and fishermen) to absorb more resources. Lastly, a rights-centered approach is key to ensure the rights of people affected by climate change, including local communities and indigenous peoples, are not being undermined by activities in the name of climate action.
- The synergy session on “**Decarbonized and Resilient Infrastructure, cities and Transport**” was attended by about 70 participants including governments, cities network, private sector, influential think tank etc.) Synergies were identified with the Energy coalition (on the built environment with initiatives related to energy efficiency and cooling and on carbon-free transport with initiatives related to shipping); the Industry coalition (on the built environment with initiatives related to cement and steel industry that could tackle the embedded carbon footprint of the building sector, not included in the current initiatives of the Infrastructure, Cities and Local Action

track; and on transport with initiatives related to truck); the Social and Political Drivers track on sustainable livelihoods with the initiative on air quality; the Nature-Based Solutions coalition on solutions to include more nature in urban environment.

- The synergy session on **Finance and Carbon Pricing** allowed for a more in-depth discussion on key components of this workstream. This includes following through on delivering the ***International Financial Commitments***, in particular the ambitious replenishment of the GCF replenishment and the \$100bn goal. Another focus was on ensuring that ***MDBs, and the IDFC*** implement their commitment to align their financial flows with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The other crucial component is **ensuring private finance alignment with the Paris Agreement** (an example here includes advancing the outcomes of the Task Force for Climate-related Finance Disclosure toward implementation and from voluntary to mandatory/ regulatory). All participants pointed out that that Greening the financial system was essential but will amount to very little if we do not fully account for needs and action at the country level. In this regard, a number of proposals and initiatives were mentioned as examples of how to ensure more effective **delivery of finance at the country level**. Finally, the issue of finance for adaptation and resilience was identified as crucial, given that the overall scale for adaptation remained insufficient.