

ECO



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WHERE THE RUBBER HITS THE ROAD ON ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability and verification of progress in meeting commitments are essential to increasing transparency, and creating confidence that countries are taking actions in line with their capabilities and responsibilities.

In Cancun and Durban, Parties established the International Assessment and Review (IAR) and International Consultation and Analysis (ICA), as a two-phase verification process for developed and developing countries.

Today and tomorrow, 28 countries will be subject to multilateral scrutiny on their climate efforts — the second part of the two-phase verification process. Countries being evaluated include the US, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, France, Russia, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Thailand and Malaysia. Following a technical analysis of country reports during the first phase, this exercise allows for a more comprehensive picture of the actions taken by countries, for a better understanding of how each country gathered the information included in their reports, and for sharing best practices and lessons learned. It also provides an opportunity for other Parties to raise questions and concerns, and for the Party under review to respond and clarify its thinking, or highlight its efforts to fulfill its requirements.

Although the current process is designed to be facilitative and kind to the countries on the hot seat, it ultimately has to help answer the question: is the country in question living up to its obligations and responsibilities? If done right, the assessment should shed light on important questions, like whether countries are making serious efforts to bend their emissions curves, whether Parties that are over-complying are doing so because they made additional efforts or because they chose weak targets; and whether those failing to meet their targets are doing so because they didn't really try or because they had set challenging targets.

This process also puts the spotlight on the pre-2020 action, which is fundamental to meeting the Paris Agreement's objective of limiting warming to 1.5°C. It certainly helps to exercise pressure on countries lagging behind, and challenges them to do more as temperature and climate impacts continue to rise rapidly. The differentiated processes for developing and developed countries clearly indicates that developed countries have a larger responsibility to act. The world outside UNFCCC has performed much better in the deployment of renewable energy, making it easier for many developed countries to achieve their pre-2020 targets. Therefore, instead of getting complacent about their "overachievement", developed countries should raise their ambition in the next 3-4 years to make it possible for us to achieve the Paris Agreement's stated goal.

ECO-LATERAL ASSESSMENT

ECO is looking forward to the exchanges during the Multilateral Assessment, which will provide a great opportunity for Parties to quiz one another on the details of their progress on implementing their targets. What's not on the table, though, is a discussion on the *adequacy* of those targets itself. Which, of course, is an important concern given the substantial mitigation gap that remains relative to a 1.5°C or even 2°C trajectory.

ECO has solicited questions from civil society organisations for several of the Parties undergoing Multilateral Assessment today and tomorrow.

Belarus: Given that your renewable energy target is only 9% by 2030, do you really believe that the Ostrovetskaya Nuclear Power Plant is the best mitigation solution for the 21st century, rather than increasing your renewable energy target?

Canada: Your general statements regarding the need for a just economic transition away from fossil fuels and keeping them in the ground are well received. How do you reconcile this long-term vision, and the domestic policies you implement to achieve it with your continued domestic support of long-lived fossil infrastructure (such as new LNG, pipeline, and tanker projects) and plans to increase fossil fuel exports?

France: You committed to a 2020 target of 23% of renewable energy in final energy consumption. However, unlike most European countries, the slow deployment of renewable energy will make it difficult to reach your goal. You have also not yet started shutting down nuclear reactors, a necessary step to transition away from nuclear power. What measures do you intend to implement in order to remove barriers to the development of RE and fully meet your 2020 goals?

Kazakhstan: How do you reconcile having an Emissions Trading System, where companies can just ask for (and receive!) more allowances once they have emitted too much, with the required mitigation ambition?

Russian Federation: Why do you still put forward harmful technologies, like nuclear, natural gas and big hydro, as solutions to the climate crisis, while giving less attention to the massive wind and solar potential? Especially knowing you only have 1% of renewable power capacity in your energy balance?

United States: Given that you are currently reviewing and/or rescinding the previous administrations' climate policies, how do you intend to achieve, let alone enhance, your mitigation ambition? Further, can you confirm your understanding that a ratchet is a device that can only be turned in one direction (hint: not down)? And, the principle of "applicable to all", which you advocated for, should typically be understood to indeed include all countries?

THE PEOPLE'S PRESIDENT

This week, following the impeachment of their former president, the Republic of Korea elected a new president: Mr Moon Jae-in, a veteran politician from the centre-left Democratic Party. President Moon said he would be a “president for the people”. He emphasized his direct communication with the people, a welcome contrast to his predecessor Park Geun-hye.

President Moon also underlined that when it comes to **major** issues, he would raise media attention and open a forum at Seoul's historic Gwanghwamun Square (where the country's voices came together demanding change during the impeachment protests).

ECO hopes **climate change**, including national climate policies and international cooperation, will be among the issues President Moon will highlight in his new role if he really wants to become the “People's President”. He can walk the talk by:

- accelerating the implementation of mitigation actions and revising the NDC with enhanced transparency towards participation from the people
- drafting a long-term strategy that considers the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C, thereby sending a clear and strong signal to citizens, businesses and investors.

In addition, given the relatively recent development of its economy, South Korea should consider increasing support to vulnerable developing countries dealing with climate impacts, and loss and damage. This could, for example, be in the form of capacity building. One place to start might be its neighbours in the Pacific, such as Fiji, a vulnerable Pacific island nation and the host of COP 23.

LOSS AND DAMAGE BY STEALTH?

At these Subsidiary Bodies you could be forgiven for thinking that the issue of loss and damage was (you guessed it) living up to its name and lost irreversibly. The issue is discussed at a small, grossly underfunded body – and rarely, if ever, in an open negotiating session. The conspiracy theorists among you may indeed suspect that the aim all along was to keep it in a permanently damaged state.

Delegates: in 2013, you established the WIM with three functions: to enhance knowledge; to strengthen dialogue and coordination; and to **enhance action and support, including finance**. Yet after 3 years, vulnerable people and countries are no closer than they were in 2013 to receiving loss and damage finance.

Lucky for you, dear colleagues, ECO has been doing some thinking. Today, a side event on loss and damage finance, governance, and implementation options, promises to explore the key questions and options, and provide concrete next steps. There will be another event on the same topic next week.

ECO suggests that you attend and engage. After all, no one is going to accept the first ever Pacific COP without concrete progress on finance for loss and damage.

NOT ANOTHER TROPICAL CYCLONE

While the negotiations at the Bonn Climate Change Conference are moving at their usual pace, the upcoming UNFCCC COP 23 Presidency holder, Fiji, is about to be hit by tropical cyclone Ella. ECO notices that while the cyclone season in the Pacific ended in April, this off-season tropical cyclone is gaining momentum and likely to hit and damage the same parts of the Fiji Islands that were severely devastated by cyclone Winston in 2016. Winston is the strongest tropical cyclone ever recorded in the Southern Hemisphere, causing US\$1.4 billion in damage in Fiji. Many Fijians are still struggling to recover and rebuild their lives, and now all their efforts might be undone. This disaster is, unfortunately, the current reality of the Pacific Island Nations — and must be a stark reminder to all of us that we must act urgently.

ECO understands that addressing loss and damage is the responsibility of the Executive Committee of Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) on Loss and Damage. However, we strongly feel it is equally important to create a space in the formal negotiation process (i.e. SB sessions and the COP) in order to not lose sight of these critical, politically significant topics. Issues such as climate-induced displacement/forced migration; loss and damage finance; non-economic loss and damage; and comprehensive risk management approaches are of particular importance, and the progress on these needs political oversight. ECO hopes that the upcoming COP Presidency, representing the Pacific Island Nations which are particularly vulnerable, will consider it and put a spotlight on the issue at COP23.

Lastly, ECO expresses its solidarity with the people of Peru, Colombia, Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and other vulnerable developing countries which have experienced climate-related disasters this year. ECO also hopes that cyclone Ella will not have devastating impacts on the people and the island of Fiji.

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ECO was shocked to hear that observers were asked to leave the SBSTA informal consultations of Article 6. In the spirit of all that was achieved in Paris, being open, inclusive, and transparent is key. Observers have insights, expertise, and different perspectives that can help move discussions forward in a constructive manner.