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Way Forward on L&D

While loss and damage has seemed all but forgotten at this SB, ECO expects the UNFCCC's first Pacific island Presidency to inject COP23 with a strong dose of the reality of climate impacts, thus directing some much-needed attention towards L&D. Although there is no major decision on L&D for November, Fiji's own extreme vulnerability to losses and damages should create a push for ambitious outcomes.

At least some L&D discussion will occur at COP23, when the Warsaw International Mechanism's Executive Committee reports on its efforts to flesh out its five-year work plan. So here are a few suggestions on what needs to happen before COP23 to ensure progress on L&D befitting a Fiji Presidency.

First, Parties and non-state actors should actively engage in the drafting of the WIM's five-year work plan, especially at October's ExCom meeting. Usually, work plans are negotiated in technical bodies and then reported to the COP, but are not reopened to substantial revisions. Therefore, key issues, such as institutional arrangements and additional sources to provide financial support for loss and damage, must be addressed in the ExCom's pre-COP draft. ECO will be carefully monitoring how Parties — especially wealthy countries that have resisted supporting L&D despite pledging to do so in Paris — contribute to the ExCom's work.

Second, ECO hopes to see a side event on financing L&D at COP23. Such an event was originally planned for COP22 but never happened, leaving a serious need for a dedicated event to frame and focus the L&D finance discussion. And, hey, while we're at it — why not designate a full day at COP23 as Loss and Damage Day?

Third, a decision providing the WIM ExCom itself with enough reliable funding to do its job is long overdue, and would be a valuable COP23 outcome.

Finally, ECO sees many less obvious but crucial steps on L&D that could be taken at COP23. Decisions could establish L&D finance as separate from adaptation funding; clarify pathways for provision of L&D finance; set funding targets; launch COP work on migration; expand support for vulnerable country insurance pools — and the list goes on.

Parties at COP23 have the opportunity to build an impressive legacy on L&D under the first small island Presidency, and a strong foundation for this legacy must be laid in the months leading up to the COP.

“Without Increased Climate Action, No Country Can Ever be Great Again”

ECO would like to alert you to the exceptionally exciting highlights of several statements made by the CVF leadership. Not only did they reaffirm their commitment to the Marrakech vision, they laid out concrete steps for implementation. ECO agrees that the Paris spirit is not only alive and kicking, but is also being implemented.

CVF supports the need to trigger, in 2018, the revision and enhancement of climate ambition by 2020 if the Paris Agreement's goals are to remain achievable. It is also refreshing that several CVF members have already started revising their NDCs. They highlighted that increased climate action is not only necessary but also desirable for economic growth and job

Upcoming Political Moments

It feels like only yesterday COP21 gave birth to the Paris Agreement and now it's out in the real world — making change, and delivering a low carbon resilient transition. As Bonn draws to a close, implementing Paris is set to be a hot topic during a number of upcoming star studded events: the Petersburg Dialogue, G7, the Ocean Conference, and the G20, just to name a few.

The Petersberg Dialogue is first up, and it seems that Germany is keen to focus on what really matters: climate action. After doing a stellar job this session, Fiji will be making its mark once again when Chancellor Merkel and Prime Minister Bainimarama come together during this auspicious meeting to speak about climate action.

After that, the G7 countries will meet up. This is the first Summit for four of the G7 leaders -- President Macron, President Trump, Prime Minister Gentiloni, and Prime Minister May. Each will be in the spotlight from May 26-27. ECO expects the G7 to send a strong signal of unwavering support to implementing Paris, which is good for the climate, good for the economy, and supported by citizens and voters. One country should not be allowed to spoil the party. We have so much to gain and too much to lose; and the world will certainly be watching.

The Ocean Conference will be next and bring us to June 5-9. It will be hosted by the upcoming COP Presidency, Fiji, and climate champion, Sweden. The summit will take steps towards achieving SDG 14 on oceans. When it comes to climate change, oceans are crucial to mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage. They provide a vital carbon sink, offer prosperity for many communities, and are highly vulnerable to climate change. Fiji will no doubt be connecting these dots, and will be, once again, riding the wave of climate action.

The last event before the summer break will be the G20 on July 7-8. ECO hopes countries and stakeholders will continue to bear the torch for Paris implementation at the G20. It's important to keep up the ongoing work done by the Green Finance Study Group and Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures, as well as adopting the climate and energy action plan the Sustainability Working Group has been working so hard to perfect.

creation. As H.E. Emmanuel De Guzman, the Philippines' Climate Change Commissioner said, “without increased climate action, no country can ever be great again”.

This statement comes at a crucial time as G7 and G20 countries prepare for two summits where climate change will be on the agenda, and the new American administration will be tested on the subject. As the CVF leads in climate action, and challenges others to do the same, it is up to the major economies in the G7 and G20 to prove that they stand with the most vulnerable countries and communities, not the interests of an elite few.

(Getting Over) Equity Stress Disorder

This latest round of talks has made it clear that after years in the trenches, many of our colleagues are suffering from a debilitating malady that we might call Equity Stress Disorder (ESD). The symptoms of ESD are many, but the most serious is the delusion that “equity” is the source of all our difficulties, and that, now, after the Paris breakthrough, we’ve put it behind us.

Alas, this is only denial. Equity remains fundamental to the Paris Agreement. The real question is what CBDRRRC means — and how it can be operationalized in a post-binary world. Only by facing it head on can we hope to find the path to recovery and ambition.

None of us here at ECO have a psychotherapy degree, but we can perhaps help by calmly explaining the facts of the situation. Here goes:

- The world is a complicated place, thus, we need a new approach to differentiation; a dynamic approach that’s based upon the Convention’s core equity principles. To be blunt, we need a dynamic and non-reductionist approach to CBDRRRC. Pretending otherwise is fine, but it’s not going to get us to a high-ambition world.

- There’s still some truth in the North/South “binary,” but it’s not a particularly helpful truth; not here inside the “UN bubble.” In fact, holding on to the binary just empowers the folks who want to avoid the overarching challenge of the MOI gap, a gap that we’re going to have to bridge if we really want to get onto a cooperative 1.5°C (or even 2°C) pathway.

- The best approach to dynamic differentiation will vary across the elements of the Paris Agreement, but CBDRRRC remains relevant across the board, though the details remain to be defined. For some purposes (e.g. transparency) it might be possible to live with an ambiguous notion of high and low capacity countries, but for others (e.g. the Global Stocktake) we’re going to have to be a bit more specific. Think in terms of a “development spectrum”; it can help.

The point is: we can get past Equity Stress Disorder, but we’re going to have to do it together. Which means that we’re going to have to work out what both “differentiated responsibilities” and “respective capabilities” mean in a post-binary world, and work out which one of them is most relevant where, when, and how. This challenge isn’t going to go away. Pretending otherwise is just another kind of denial.

Seeking Sustainable Guidance on the Road Towards COP23

Since the start of this session ECO has been looking for some guidance on climate finance. However, the complexities of these negotiations – debates about the Adaptation Fund serving under the guidance of the CMA or/and CMP; the technical discussions about accounting modalities; and the possibility of including finance in the Global Stocktake – have us completely lost.

It took the CVF press conference to bring things back into focus. “As long there is a chance to stop global warming at a level that lets humanity survive and thrive, we should seize it,” the climate commissioner from the Philippines said, adding, “This is why we continue to advance the call for world leaders to keep to the 1.5 goal and to recalibrate climate finance.”

Before bidding farewell to the negotiators for a little while, ECO wants to remind them that outside this bubble, speaking about finance also reaffirms the importance of urgent climate action, and brings trust into the new climate regime. Developed countries have already committed to mobilise US\$100 billion and while this commitment is welcome, let’s not forget that the costs for addressing climate change within developing countries are significantly higher.

As we move towards COP23, we want to share three priorities.

First, ECO cannot imagine that a first COP chaired by a vulnerable Pacific island in times of a well-recognized ambition gap, could conclude without a strong finance outcome. The roadmap doesn’t erase the need to scale up finance provided to poor countries. More efforts are required to raise adaptation finance, which remains a gap, and to reach the balance of mitigation and adaptation support stated in the Paris Agreement.

Delivering adequate climate finance should become a key priority for negotiators. It’s necessary to ensure that finance reaches the most vulnerable

in a transparent way and helps build more resilient societies. When ministers convene for a high-level dialogue on finance at COP24, we expect they will exhibit strong ambition, not only on mobilizing and providing finance, but also on linking support with the Facilitative Dialogue 2018 upwards (remember this when you consider the FD at COP23). And finance discussions should focus on innovative mechanisms, such as carbon levies or revenues from air or sea transport.

Second, it would be a shame if finance negotiators spend all their time in lovely Fiji (aka lovely Bonn), talking only about the Adaptation Fund serving the Paris Agreement when the AF’s financial resources are what makes the real difference for vulnerable communities affected by climate change: a testament to the good work the AF has already done.

Thirdly, coming back to finance accounting, ECO is pleased that the co-chairs’ note included aspects that are critical to avoiding overly creative accounting by the providers of finance (which means less money), and lists reporting on loss and damage as an issue to address. We trust that the L&D experts, and the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism, will have a strong say in identifying what should be counted as loss and damage finance. On that note, the ExCom side event at COP23 should consider innovative finance sources instead of looking, as previously done, just at insurance.

ECO is sure that the huge majority of Parties will warmly welcome those at COP23 who gathered at the G7 and G20 meetings and took decisions on ramping up financial support, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies and shifting investments towards 1.5C consistent and climate-resilient pathways in an equitable manner.

Delegates: while it’s impossible to count the sun’s rays, ECO expects clarity, enlightenment, and sustainable guidance from you.

Do Not Lose Sight of the Vision

The preamble of the Paris Agreement offers a vision of a world that we can all embrace. Parties outlined a joint vision of collective action addressing climate change in a manner that builds on equity; protects the integrity of ecosystems; promotes the rights of those on the front lines of climate impacts and climate responses; and empowers communities.

Now it is time to place this beautiful vision at the core of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. For the APA to best set the path toward fully implementing the Paris Agreement, Parties must consider how the principles outlined in the preamble should guide national climate action and international cooperation.

ECO is concerned that this vision is being lost in the midst of technical

negotiations. So far, those discussions taking place under APA have failed to consider how the NDCs, the adaptation communications, the transparency framework, and the global stocktake can promote sufficient climate action and ambition in a manner that recognises important linkages between these mechanisms and the principles reaffirmed in the preamble. These issues must be brought back to the table so as to maximize the benefits of climate action for all people and ecosystems.

As Parties prepare for COP-23, ECO calls on all delegates, and that requires constant attention, to linking the technical negotiations to the preamble vision, so that this process can deliver on all the promises made in Paris.