

ECO

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Dress up!

Dear Delegates,

ECO is sure over the past year of zoom sessions, delegates must also have seen some people joining videos all dressed up for the camera while still wearing their pyjama shorts. Given the time in the day these sessions take place such an outfit only seems fitting – ECO applauds all the individual efforts of hard-working delegates and observers!

And ECO has heard about scientists studying links between clothes and brain activity. They found dressing up for work can improve your productivity – hearing the discussions in some sessions like the one on reporting tables for NDCs ECO has been wondering if we are witnessing a huge virtual pyjama party where delegates are half-asleep when questioning if the summary table of NDC reporting should in fact be ...a table??!

In truth ECO couldn't care less about anyone's clothes and wants to turn to some more serious matters: The (im)balance in the wardrobe: If you have 100 shirts it does not make sense to go only one pair of underwear and a lonely sock. ECO fears it's also not convincing if you say eventually later you get some more socks. Similarly, ECO heard many parties flagging the imbalance of the agenda – in particular finance and loss and damage are sidelined at this virtual SB.

But ECO has a solution for you, delegates, and the master tailor of this session, the UK presidency: You start by recognizing the imbalance and decide on concrete ways to fix it, an additional SB session with a balanced agenda allowing proper progress across all items. ECO believes a real balance cannot be achieved with additional ministerial meetings and workshops, but with an additional SSB before COP26 that discusses items and text in a way that will actually feed into COP – and with civil society participation.

ECO has been indeed very upset with the exclusion of observers from several sessions. Civil society has a right to be in this process. It is already more challenging for civil society to follow and meaningfully engage in these virtual sessions. So ECO really wonders how parties aim to “enhance openness, transparency, and inclusiveness, effective participation and engagement of observers“ if you don't allow us to participate.

To those parties who co-announce a white west as a disguise for their dirty clothes when it comes to civil society participation and inclusivity, ECO invites them to better just stay in their pyjamas and stay in bed in the first place.

Finance

The 2021 SBs finance agenda is light on finance this year, which means that vulnerable communities are having to expect ambition on finance from other fora. The excuse of “we're in a support role as COP presidents” won't fly here!

ECO hopes that the outcomes of the G7 Finance Ministers Summit this weekend leads to more than saying “oh bless your little white socks!” G7 finance ministers now stated they do not only “intend” but “commit” to working on G7 Heads of States are not more emperors without clothes “through to 2025”. ECO can see how this is a slight improvement over the environment ministers' language but remains curious and hopes for some more ambitious and concrete steps forward.

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Article 6

Speaking of imbalance, ECO is sympathetic to the calls for more balance within article 6 discussions. Article 6.8 still holds potential to go beyond simple workshops, and could form the basis for a real mechanism, e.g. to channel climate finance. ECO is painfully aware of the number of “market” issues that still need to be resolved but wants to hear more Parties’ ideas for Article 6.8. We all want to make progress, and ignoring/blocking finalization of article 6.8 is not helping.

A CDM carryover without review of all projects under new methodologies is like the emperor having no clothes. Parties can claim that old credits from the Kyoto Protocol are somehow dressing up additional reductions, but ECO sees right through this like hot air. Parties must uphold environmental integrity of the Paris Agreement or they will be exposed for having nothing to show.

Global Stocktake (GST)

The GST is central to the ambition mechanism of the Paris Agreement and must be an important political moment for the Parties. It’s the central get-together to get rid of your old-fashioned NDCs, and wear something more innovative: NDCs which are more fashionable, take into account the latest technology and increase ambition across mitigation, climate finance, including loss and damage as well as adaptation. ECO welcomes the SBSTA and SBI Chairs’ GST non-paper for the negotiations starting today. However, it barely mentions how and when observers will be involved, including while defining the guiding questions. We need clear processes to allow the GST to properly consider observer inputs.

In other words, civil society, youth, gender groups, and Indigenous Peoples must be fully involved in the process.

Participation will also allow constructive discussions on important cross-cutting issues, such as equity, best available science, financial flows assessment, Loss and Damage, non-state actors’ climate action. Properly dealing with all these cross-cutting issues is fundamental for the success of the GST and ECO is a bit concerned whether the guiding questions sufficiently address these. Some more thinking is required there.

Transparency

ECO is glad to hear Parties express urgency in their work on the enhanced transparency framework and the methodological issues under the Paris Agreement. ECO welcomes the number of Parties who spoke about the importance of leaving this SB with an informal note capturing example tables, formats, and outlines. The SBSTA Chair and the Secretariat are certainly well placed to capture Party views and to present materials for Parties to discuss further in the next session.

But since these discussions have been closed to observers, ECO has no idea if you are taking the task seriously?! Are you discussing concrete examples? Are you testing the various ways flexibility can be operationalized? Are you examining how different tabular formats work for different types of NDCs? ECO thanks those Parties that have stood up for allowing observers in the virtual room.

Common Timeframes

During the first informal consultation, there was emerging consensus on finally concluding these negotiations this year. ECO is glad to see Parties are no longer procrastinating! During the weekend’s stocktaking plenary, ECO heard some frustration with the informal discussions. Well, ECO is frustrated Parties have negotiated this issue for six years without resolution and urges Parties to engage one another to progress discussions and work to further consolidate and streamline the options.