

Global Stocktake and Talanoa Dialogue at COP 24: Ambition & Dialogue

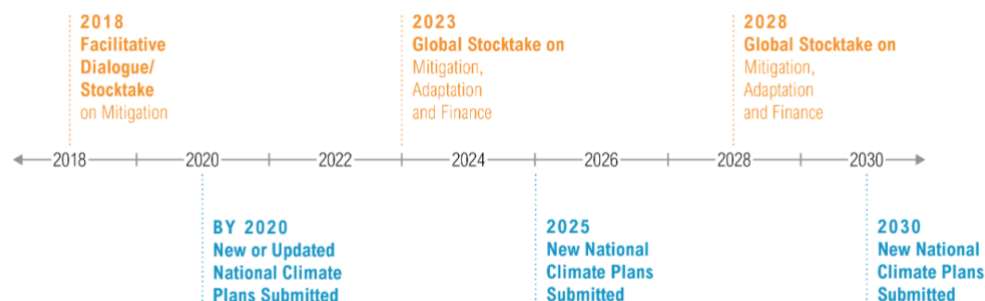
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At the UNFCCC COP24 in Katowice, Poland, representatives from 198 countries gathered to hammer out the rules of the Paris Agreement, an international climate change agreement to fully take effect in 2020. Signatories' voluntary commitments to fight climate change drive the agreement, and thus each party to the agreement is required to share their plan for action in their [Nationally Determined Contribution](#) (NDC). The [Global Stocktake](#) (GST) is key to holding the international community accountable for increasing ambition and the [Talanoa Dialogue](#) is key to enabling story sharing to inspire action.

The Paris Agreement Ambition Mechanism

Addressing climate change issues on a global scale relies on steadily increasing “ambition,” or the collective will of all parties to solve the climate change issue. The Paris Agreement calls for a cyclical “ambition mechanism” designed to assess collective progress toward meeting the goals of the Agreement. By timing the main feature of the ambition mechanism, the GST, to occur every five years in the year before parties prepare their NDCs, the GST aims to build will through positive and non-prescriptive political measures for all parties to submit more ambitious NDCs. To start the ambition mechanism, the Paris Agreement provided for a Facilitative Dialogue to be held in 2018, led by the presidency of COP23 which the Fijian Presidency of the COP23 renamed the Talanoa Dialogue. The Talanoa Dialogue served as a kick-off of the ambition mechanism to engage global actors and raise ambition. Need to reference the figure or at least include a title...

Ambition Mechanism in the Paris Agreement



<http://ow.ly/VUfYe>

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The Ambition Mechanism at COP24 and IPCC SR1.5

While the Paris Agreement laid the groundwork for global collaboration on addressing climate change, the [Paris Rulebook](#) describes and governs exactly how that work will happen, including on the GST. The Paris Agreement calls for the GST in Article 14 but it does not describe the inputs, outputs, and many other important specifics as to how the GST process should look. At the COP24, it took significant negotiating for parties to come to an agreement on the structure, thematic areas, inputs, and assessment criteria of the GST, at least in part because of the differing needs and desires of developed and developing countries.

Another theme of COP24 was the urgent need for parties to raise their ambition in light of the findings of the [IPCC Special Report](#) on the Impacts of 1.5° C of Global Warming (SR1.5), which was released in October. Requested by parties to better understand the effects of limiting warming to 0.5° C below the stated goal of 2° C, the SR1.5 urgently underscored the need to act now against climate change in order for global prosperity and sufficient natural resources to be possible for future generations. This report served as a backdrop and a primary input for the conclusion of the yearlong Talanoa Dialogue at COP24. (See here for IPCC Chair Dr. Lee's SR1.5 Findings Presentation, [start at 21:30](#)). (Drama ensued towards the end of week 1 when the US, Kuwait, Russia, and Saudi Arabia [blocked the 'welcoming'](#) of the report in the concluding decision of the COP, preferring to merely 'note' it instead, representing an indifferent acknowledgement. This SBSTA item was deferred to SB50.)

Global Stocktake

As outlined in [Article 14 of the Paris Agreement](#), the GST is a facilitative process for assessing collective progress on the Agreement, “considering mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation and support, and in the light of equity and the best available science.”. The collective nature of the GST distinguishes it from individual reports on progress from parties as outlined in [Article 13 of the Paris Agreement](#). The GST emphasizes global progress and focuses on collective and not individual progress in ambition. The only other specific detail provided about the GST in the Paris Agreement is that the COP will undertake the “first global stocktake in 2023 and every five years thereafter unless otherwise decided” ((*Paris Agreement*). Going into COP 24, much remained to be decided on what the GST would entail.

During COP 24, the parties finalized rulebook text for the GST, debating numerous issues including how equity should play a role, whether progress on compensation for loss and damage will be considered, and if and how non-party stakeholders, like NGOs, would take part in the GST. Over the course of the conference, the [text](#) progressed as parties compromised. While developed countries more often shied away from the ubiquitous use of “equity” for fear of its implied financial requirements and lack of specificity, developing countries demanded its presence and operationalization in the GST text to both comply with the Paris Agreement and recognize historical responsibility for climate change. A central challenge to incorporating and operationalizing equity is the disagreement over how to measure its inclusion and how to determine whether it is actionable. In the end the word ‘equity’ and the recognition of its overarching importance made it into the draft decision text throughout the GST portion ([p. 100-105](#)), including it as an acceptable and even encouraged input to the GST. However the text does not discuss equity in the output, and therefore equity faces an ambiguous fate on how it will be employed in the “increasing ambition” aspect of the iterative process of the GST.

The parties also struggled in approaching “[loss and damage](#)” in the GST text, removing it and reinserting it throughout the conference. At one point, the text only mentioned loss and damage in a footnote. Developing countries fought for the inclusion of loss and damage in the Paris Agreement, but there was some concern among developed countries that focus on loss and damage could lead to measures that make them liable for the damage done by climate change. The final GST text mentions three times that the GST “may, as appropriate” track efforts to “avert, minimize and address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change” (*Proposal by the President: Informal Compilation of L-documents*).

Overall, the resulting text ([p. 100-105](#)) lays the groundwork for the GST process. It provides a first step for the [Subsidiary Body for Science and Technological Advice](#) and the [Subsidiary Body for Implementation](#) issuing a call for information collection and preparation, with this input component to conclude no later than six months before the consideration of outputs. The second step is the technical assessment phase, which could overlap in timing with the information collection and preparation phase and includes a dialogue to support the GST through “expert consideration of inputs.” The third step is the output phase, which “will consist of high-level events where the findings of the technical assessment will be presented and their implications discussed and considered by Parties.” Overall, the text includes clear overarching thematic considerations, clear delineation of responsibilities for generating reports and conducting the technical assessment, and a detailed list of inputs, which explicitly includes non-Party stakeholders, to the process.

Talanoa Dialogue

The Talanoa Dialogue, the Facilitative Dialogue called for in the Paris Agreement, was envisioned as a means by which parties and non-state actors could [come together](#) within the UNFCCC process to enhance ambition and assess collective progress towards responding to climate change through the medium of storytelling. This year-long process, designed and shepherded by the Fijian COP23 Presidency, uniquely includes non-state actors and creates space for the informal sharing of experiences, challenges, and solutions to enable an [innovative approach](#) to increasing ambition. The organization around “Talanoa,” a word used in Fiji and across the Pacific to “reflect a process of inclusive, participatory, and transparent dialogue,” represents a gracious contribution to the global climate regime on the part of the Pacific (“What is Talanoa?”). Notably, since its start the Talanoa Dialogue concept has been adapted and used around the world at the [subnational](#) level as a tool for local and regional climate and resilience planning.

The Talanoa Dialogue was structured around three [guiding questions](#): Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there? Over the course of 2018, an online portal accepted answers to these questions as submissions from both parties and non-state actors like municipal governments and NGOs. Submissions to the portal and other Party meetings throughout the year constituted the Preparatory Phase, as well as inputs via the [Technical Examination Process](#). The results were synthesized by COP23 and COP24 presidencies in a 14 page [report](#), which was used as a basis for a Political Phase in which high-level ministers came together in round-table discussions to share their countries' stories about responding to climate change and discuss the results of the Preparatory Phase. The [COP24 text](#) “takes note” of the Talanoa dialogue process and its potential to generate greater ambition, and “invites” countries to incorporate the outcomes and outputs of the Talanoa Dialogue into their NDCs to enhance ambition and implementation efforts. These [outcomes and outputs](#), which include a summary of the key messages from the ministerial round tables and a Talanoa Call to Action from the COP23 and COP24 Presidencies, represent a thorough effort to provide parties with concrete results from the Dialogue which can be leveraged to ratchet up the strength of their NDCs and incorporated into their submissions.

The Talanoa Dialogue is novel in its inclusivity and trust-building focus. While the concluding COP decision lukewarmly “Takes note” of the outcomes, only time will tell if and how it shapes the way negotiations, their tone, and inter-Party relations change moving forward.

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