

## Consultation

### Ways Forward for Global Climate Action

Le Meridien Hotel, Marrakech

9 November 2016

On November 9, 2016 on the margins of COP22, Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions ([www.climategroundswell.org](http://www.climategroundswell.org)), through the organization of WWF, The Stanley Foundation, and WRI, convened a consultation on ways forward for the Global Climate Action (GCA). The session provided an informal forum for participants to share thoughts and discuss priorities for GCA and its emerging architecture in light of the [High-Level Champions' reflection note](#). This short summary synthesizes the discussion, which was conducted under the Chatham House rule, from the perspective of the organizers.

#### General reflections

The session opened with a reflection on the results of the US election. Participants emphasised that a Trump presidency only increases the urgency and the importance of galvanizing bottom-up climate action. The Champions' reflection note reflects this importance and the continued acceleration of GCA, underscoring that climate action can and must move even faster.

Participants welcomed the Champions' reflections, and underscored the urgency of bringing coherence to GCA here at COP22 so that implementation can rocket ahead in 2017. To fully unleash GCA, participants agreed that it must become a continuous process. GCA should not be an event held during COP, but something that occurs from November 20 right until COP23 and beyond with additional on-going events while also connecting with other key flashpoints such as intersessionals, and in 2018 the Facilitative Dialogue and Non-State Actor Summit.

It was agreed that GCA needs to expand in a number of ways. It needs to broaden geographically, through prioritising action in Global South and fostering links with regional platforms. It also needs to promote a wider range of actions, particularly by addressing the lack of focus to date on adaptation. Furthermore, participants emphasised the need to extend the horizons of GCA to consider long-term transition pathways, emphasizing actions with the scale and innovation to achieve carbon neutrality by the second half of this century.

#### Support

An active discussion was had over the purpose and nature of the proposed Support Unit. Participants stressed that coordination involves some transaction costs, but emphasized the value of adequate staffing and funding. A "light touch" support network could provide a powerful return on investment,

though participants were in agreement that the creation of additional bureaucracy should be minimized. Support for GCA could stem from different sources, with a critical coordinating node in the UNFCCC Secretariat linked to the UN Secretary-General in New York and other networks, coalitions, and facilitators at the heart of climate action. Ways of efficiently resourcing the support unit were discussed, including the secondment of staff and the sharing of facilities already created for initiatives in different thematic areas.

Participants also agreed, however, that the scale of action that needs to occur is far beyond the capacity of even the most well-resourced support unit. Therefore, the self-organisation and internal facilitation of thematic areas will be vital. At the same time, there are times when external facilitation and taking the action agenda to sectors, such as through the Champions, will be required. Such cases would include bringing policymakers to the table with ambitious private actors and sectoral groups as well as fostering intersectoral dialogue.

The Champions can and will play a key role in facilitating GCA. It was noted, however, that they were created by Parties with a specific mandate to target gaps in ambition and within thematic areas. It was also noted that creating links between parties and non-party actors was an important function. Participants agreed that the Champions have done excellent work already this year but also emphasised the need to think strategically what to task them with given their finite capacity and mandate. Harnessing the opportunity of a new UNSG and inviting his personal involvement could provide a powerful boost for GCA given these limitations.

## Criteria

Participants agreed that fundamental criteria of relevancy, sufficient scale of impact or innovative potential, being quantifiable or specifically measurable, and transparency provide a good guideline for what should constitute GCA.<sup>1</sup> Connection to the goals of the Paris Agreement are also important, along with ensuring human rights and its other crosscutting principles.

Drilling deeper, four key areas within GCA were distilled to which criteria may apply: 1) inclusion in NAZCA, 2) inclusion in a GCA showcase, 3) for receiving Champions' involvement, and 4) for inclusion in the High-level Event (HLE). Further discussion is needed surrounding the stringency with which criteria apply to each of these specifically. Some participants emphasized that NAZCA required only minimal criteria, while participation in COP events should instead focus on those initiatives that showed a high level of

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<sup>1</sup> Two more specific changes were suggested: First, noting that the impact of initiatives may take different forms, it was suggested that "Scale" should be reworded to say: "sufficient size, impact, or innovative potential to have a significant effect on mitigation and/or adaptation." Second, it was suggested that additional elaboration be added to "Specific" to note that where targets cannot be quantified, they should specify precise and measurable indicators of progress.

achievement vis-à-vis the criteria. Furthermore, how to deal with initiatives already in these areas that do not meet the criteria remains unaddressed.

The issue of accountability also arose with regards to who will apply criteria. One suggestion was that the Secretariat, Champions, and presidencies may wish to draw on a diverse panel of experts, such as that used by the UNEP Climate Initiatives Platform, to help apply the criteria in a rational and objective fashion.. Participants also noted that while criteria are important to enhance the credibility of the GCA, it is important to avoid overly burdening individual initiatives and remain focused on the overall goal of ensuring integrity of action towards realising the Paris Agreement. A long-term focus will also assist with continuity of accountability as Champions and COP Presidencies rotate. Finally, more concentration on implementation, scale, and enhancing existing climate action rather than always creating new initiatives will reduce the burden of dealing with criteria.

### **Technical Expert Meetings (TEMs)**

Participants shared disappointment in TEMs to date and emphasised the need to improve them.

Firstly, ensuring TEMs involve the right people emerged as a priority. This includes engaging a broader range of stakeholders and ensuring a balance between Parties and non-Parties to ensure TEMs act as a bridge between GCA and on-going negotiations. To make this succeed, it is essential that Parties bring subject matter experts and operational officials to TEMs, not just negotiators. One idea to 'curate' this conversations would be for the Secretariat to engage substantively with relevant sectoral and expert-bodies in co-designing and co-facilitating the TEMs.

Secondly, TEMs could also be more targeted in focus. TEMs must live up to their name and delve deep into issues with both technical experts and relevant Party decision- or policy-makers present. Only at a sufficient level of specificity can meaningful exchanges be created that advance policy.

Thirdly, participants were strongly supportive of the idea of organizing regional TEMs. Regional events would allow for greater specificity and make it easier to spark substantive exchanges amongst the right people.

Finally, participants discussed the need to make TEMs into an on-going process, not just a one-off meeting. This should involve planning TEMs earlier, following up from previous meetings, developing one- or two-year plans for TEMs, and emphasising synergy with HLEs and other areas of the action agenda. Creating a coherent and synergistic rhythm of events is critical to ensure a unified conversation.

### **Tracking**

Sharing of opinions on tracking and aggregation unearthed a number of key issues. Tracking is important for both individual initiatives and progress

towards high-level goals within and across thematic areas. Attention must also be paid to what is actually achieved through climate action, not merely how much is taking place. Towards these ends, participants agreed that dedicating more time to structured interaction across thematic areas could facilitate the development of common approaches and metrics. The Champions' idea of producing a yearbook of climate action to compile and highlight various reporting tools, and make connections to NDCs and policy options for countries, was also strongly supported.

Participants also noted that tracking is differentiated in its difficulty. Most work so far has been on the low-hanging fruit of tracking mitigation action, but much more effort is required to develop tracking approaches for adaptation and supportive action such as finance and capacity building. Furthermore, collaborative initiatives often prove difficult to communicate with due to unclear and changing structures. The implementation of criteria, clarifying who is accountable for tracking, and developing trust among partners were recognized as important steps to facilitating the effective tracking of climate action.

### **Who we are: Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions**

Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions is a series of dialogues that brings together organizations supporting climate action at all levels. Its objectives include:

1. Bringing the groundswell of climate actions from cities, regions, companies, and other groups to a higher level of scale and ambition;
2. Increasing efficient coordination among cooperative initiatives and sub- and non-state networks;
3. Improving analysis and understanding of "bottom up" climate actions;
4. Building a positive narrative of pragmatic, concrete action on climate change; and
5. Identifying opportunities for the groundswell of climate actions and the multilateral process to support and catalyze each other.

Since 2014, Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions has brought together city and regional networks, company networks, cooperative initiatives, governments, international organizations, and researchers to discuss and advance these objectives. By convening the community of actors that make up and support the groundswell of climate actions, we seek to realize the full potential of this extraordinary innovation in global governance.

[www.climategroundswell.org](http://www.climategroundswell.org)