



## **Pre-COP Ministerial Meeting**

17 - 18 October 2017 | Denarau Island, Fiji

# **HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY**

## INTRODUCTION

The informal ministerial “Pre-COP” meeting was held from 17-18 October 2017 on Denarau Island in Nadi, Fiji. With less than three weeks left before the next UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) in November, the Pre-COP meeting presented Ministers with the opportunity for an honest exchange of views on key issues of the COP23 agenda before the negotiations begin in Bonn.

The meeting took place in the immediate aftermath of a number of devastating weather events in Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, North America and the Pacific. These extreme events reminded participants of the urgent need to make rapid progress in the intergovernmental negotiations and for all parties to commit to ambitious climate action in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the more ambitious target of the Paris Agreement. As the first small island state to be chosen to preside over the climate negotiations, Fiji took every opportunity to reinforce this sense of urgency.

The Pre-COP brought together Ministers, Heads of Climate Change Delegations and Chief Negotiators from 68 countries. Current COP22/CMP12/CMA1-1 President Salaheddine Mezouar, Secretary of State and Climate Minister Pawel Salek of Poland, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa and many other political leaders and ambassadors joined the meeting. Also present were the presiding officers of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) subsidiary bodies: SBI, SBSTA and APA. In total, more than 300 participants gathered in Fiji, making this gathering the largest Pre-COP in the history of the UNFCCC.

The incoming Fijian COP23/CMP13/CMA1-2 President, Frank Bainimarama, and the Fijian COP23 Presidency team were honoured by the large attendance, perceived as an expression of strong support for the Fijian Presidency and its priorities.

The Pre-COP was organised around five important themes:

1. Expectations for COP23;
2. Operationalisation of the Paris Agreement;
3. Climate finance;
4. Raising the ambition of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); and
5. Risk management and resilience.

A high-level overview of the discussions on these themes is provided below.

The Moroccan COP22 Presidency and the incoming Fijian COP23 Presidency have prepared this high-level summary, which reflects their impressions of the discussions, in order to maintain transparency, promote inclusiveness, and foster ever-rising ambition for the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and enhanced pre-2020 action.

## PARTNERSHIP DAY

One day before the Pre-COP, a Partnership day was held. The objective of the Partnership Day was to build on the outcomes of the Climate Action Pacific Partnership (CAPP) Conference, held in

This was an opportunity to highlight best practices, examine potential transformative innovations and develop productive processes – providing valuable inputs into the work of the Presidency, not just for COP23 in November, but for the rest of 2018 and beyond.

At the opening of Partnership Day, Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama announced three initiatives of the Fijian Government that highlighted how practical measures can be taken to improve the lives of people who are affected by climate change.

*"We...have some very positive developments to share with you this week, including a financing mechanism to bring renewable energy to our rural communities in Fiji; the development of a Green Bond – the first in the Pacific; and a water and sanitation improvement program to strengthen the resilience of our capital, Suva."*

He also announced the launching the Oceans Pathway Partnership, which is designed to build support for elevating the importance of oceans within the international community's climate institutions.

*"I am convinced that we cannot achieve our collective climate goals without addressing the health of our oceans. This Oceans Pathway Partnership is of particular value to Fiji because the Pacific plays a central role in our culture, economy and very survival."*

## OPENING REMARKS

The incoming Fijian COP23 President, Frank Bainimarama, the Moroccan COP22 President, Salaheddine Mezouar, and the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, delivered the opening remarks for the Pre-COP, followed by a report from the Fijian High-level Climate Champion, Inia Seruiratu, on the Partnership Days.

### Remarks by the COP23 President

The incoming Fijian COP23 President noted the devastating impacts of extreme weather events around the world in recent weeks and reasserted Fiji's commitment to bring a sense of urgency to the international negotiations. He stated that:

*"Future generations will rightly judge us on what we did about all of this. We must rise to the challenge. We must commit ourselves to solving this problem. Fortunately, there is not only hope that we can find and implement solutions to climate change but there is opportunity to create better lives for our citizens once we make the hard decisions that need to be made."*

The incoming Fijian COP23 President outlined his task as President of the negotiations - being to progress the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement in order to restate and maintain the vision of the Paris Agreement and to design the facilitative dialogue. He welcomed the fact that many participants are already calling it the "Talanoa Dialogue" and noted that the *talanoa* spirit seems to fit the needs of this process at this time.

*"[Talanoa is about] ... sharing our stories in an atmosphere of respect, without finger-pointing. Not merely focusing on what people haven't done but what they could and should do to lift ambition and reduce the risk to us all."*

## Remarks by the COP22 President

The Moroccan COP22 President, Salaheddine Mezouar, called for outcomes that are ambitious and authentic, stemming from the efforts and reflecting the needs of nations and people. He said that this challenge is too immense to be the responsibility of national governments alone. All actors must play an important role: business, cities, territories and citizen groups. He thanked small island developing states for their leadership role in raising awareness at the international level and said that Morocco and Fiji have been working together to ensure that COP23 was not just a transition COP, but an important COP at an important time.

## Remarks by the UN Deputy Secretary-General

The UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, welcomed the *talanoa* spirit and the efforts of small islands to push for more ambition. In her view, building resilience and scaling-up finance are key.

*“We want a world of peace, prosperity and opportunity - free from the fear of catastrophic events.”*

## Remarks by the COP23 High-level Climate Champion

The Fijian High-level Climate Champion, Inia Seruiratu, summarised the views expressed by non-State actors during the Partnership Days, held prior to the Pre-COP, which included a strong desire to link climate action with the Sustainable Development Goals and to focus on renewable energy. He also highlighted a number of national, regional and global initiatives prepared in collaboration with different partners, such as the Fiji Adaptation Levy, the launch of a regional NDC hub at COP23, and the Oceans Pathway Partnership.

*“We need a grand coalition of all actors - Parties and non-state actors. We need to go further, faster, together.”*

## MAKING COP23 A SUCCESS: EXPECTATIONS AND DELIVERABLES

The first formal session of the Pre-COP discussions involved a plenary discussion on the expectations and deliverables for COP23. The session was chaired by the Fijian Chief Negotiator, H.E. Ambassador Nazhat Khan and the Moroccan Chief Negotiator, H.E. Ambassador Aziz Mekouar.

The Fijian Chief Negotiator introduced the session by outlining the priorities for the incoming Fijian COP23 Presidency. She also gave an update on the consultations that had been undertaken by the COP22 and COP23 Presidencies on the facilitative dialogue and the status of the key features of the design of the Dialogue, which is increasingly being referred to as the "Talanoa Dialogue".

Heads of State, Ministers and other Heads of Delegations delivered opening statements in this session. A number of participants paid tribute to Morocco for their leadership at COP22 and throughout its Presidency. There was also an expression of strong support for the incoming Fijian COP23 Presidency and its vision and priorities for COP23.

Pacific nations were well represented by their Heads of State and Ministers who, along with other

sharing experiences and mobilising action to enhance collective ambition in the next round of NDCs, noting the importance of the Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) on 1.5°C – which will be released next year. The introduction of local knowledge and approaches into the design process through the Pacific concept of *talanoa* was warmly welcomed.

Achieving solid and balanced progress on the Paris Agreement Work Program was viewed by many as a key determinant of success at COP23. All participants expressed their desire and willingness to work cooperatively to achieve this. A number of participants noted that progress could be demonstrated by agreement being reached on the structure and textual elements for the various agenda items, in a way that captures all viewpoints and options. In addition to the Paris Agreement Work Programme, a number of participants highlighted the importance of achieving outcomes in relation to gender and indigenous and local communities. Participants commended the incoming COP23 Presidency for making the adoption of the first Gender Action Plan and the operationalization of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform a priority.

Many Ministers and other Heads of Delegations highlighted the importance of making progress at COP23 on pre-2020 action and support, noting that many positive initiatives are already underway but more could be done. Some noted the need to build a strong political momentum and partnership for the implementation of NDCs and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) so that every country can do its fair share.

The work of the Fijian and Moroccan High-Level Climate Champions was also highlighted in a number of interventions, recognising the important role of harnessing and showcasing the contributions of non-state actors in addressing climate change. Some participants specifically welcomed the announcement to pursue an Oceans Pathway and indicated their support for associated partnerships on the interlinkages between oceans and climate change.

## **Parallel Sessions**

In order to allow all participants to actively engage in discussions, the incoming Fijian COP23 Presidency chose to adopt a new, innovative methodology for this Pre-COP. By combining conventional plenary meetings with focused parallel sessions in smaller groups – chaired by prominent negotiators – participants were able to engage in open discussion and cover a wider range of topics than would have been the case with a more traditional format. This approach was well received, and attendees generally agreed that it helped them make the most efficient use of the available time.

## **REACHING A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE AT COP23: THE PARIS AGREEMENT WORK PROGRAMME (PAWP)**

This session sought feedback from participants on the following questions:

- What should COP23 deliver to ensure that Parties have a solid basis to complete the negotiations under the Paris Agreement Work Programme in 2018?
- Can the challenges in the negotiations be assisted by a clear pathway and roadmap for 2018?

Most Ministers and other Heads of Delegations expressed the need for making as much progress

These should capture all views and options to address particular issues. Many participants noted that the outcome needed to cover all mandates, be balanced, comprehensive and coherent.

Many Ministers and Heads of Delegations stated that COP23 should build on the current work being undertaken by the Chairs, Co-Chairs and co-facilitators of SBSTA, SBI and APA and seek to achieve as much progress as possible within those existing bodies tasked to develop the Paris Agreement Implementation Guidelines. A number also noted that COP23 could provide overarching and flexible guidance on the work for 2018.

Several noted that high-level oversight to manage the linkages between the different elements of the Paris Agreement Implementation Guidelines would be useful at COP23.

## **PARTNERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION: FOCUS ON FINANCE**

This session sought feedback from participants on the following questions:

- How can COP23 provide the platform for developed countries to deliver on the US\$100 billion/year target by 2020?
- How can NDCs and NAPs attract sufficient and sustainable investment for their implementation?
- How can COP23 promote better access to climate finance from public and private sector sources?

Ministers and Heads of Delegations agreed that climate finance is extremely important to accelerate climate action and NDC implementation on the ground. Many expressed their commitment to honour the delivery of the global goal to mobilise USD100 billion per year by 2020 for climate action in developing countries. Several shared their experiences in mobilising finance for both mitigation and adaptation.

Many expressed support for a robust transparency framework for reporting, noting that the issue should be seen as broader than accounting only.

A number of participants expressed the view that it is important that NDCs and NAPs should lead to investment plans that attract predictable, adequate and sufficient level of funding to support the implementation of projects and programmes that will be needed to reduce emissions and build resilience. NDCs and NAPs could become important vehicles for unlocking finance if the opportunities and needs are clearly articulated in these plans.

Many mentioned the need to enhance public finance, which can also mobilise and leverage private sector investment. Some participants noted that COP23 could provide an opportunity for better communication with the private sector and devising long-term strategies and policy signals that incentivise investment. It was suggested that governments need to send long-term policy signals on mitigation and finance in order to build more trust and confidence among investors to re-channel financial flows toward a low carbon future.

Many highlighted that carbon pricing can play a positive role in attracting investment and tapping into financial markets, including through carbon taxes and emissions trading schemes. Other innovative sources of funding should also be further explored.

Several recognised the need for further capacity building to access the existing financial

## MANAGING CLIMATE RISK AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

This session sought feedback from participants on the following questions:

- How can progress towards climate resilient development be accelerated through the UNFCCC process and cooperative action at COP23?
- How can the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) be enhanced to deliver useful tools and methods to address the needs and special circumstances of developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change?

On the first question, a number of Ministers and Heads of Delegations highlighted the impacts of recent extreme weather events and the urgency of taking action now. Some noted that mitigation action by all would reduce climate-related loss and damage and the need for adaptation later.

There was a broad recognition of the need for a holistic approach to avert, minimise and address climate risks. In this regard, the importance of coherence across the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as the Samoa Pathway were mentioned by a number of participants.

It was suggested that efforts should be made at all levels to incorporate an understanding of the long-term risks posed by climate change into the broader national development priorities. This could avoid duplication of work and unnecessary burdens on countries. It was also suggested that effective cooperation by multiple actors for dealing with climate resilience and addressing loss and damage should be coordinated, including through public-private partnerships.

Several Ministers and Heads of Delegations called for guidance at COP23 to ensure faster and easier access to financial support by those who need it most, including from the Adaptation Fund, the GEF and the GCF. Some called for similar initiatives as the NDC Partnership to support the development of national adaptation plans.

It was observed that climate change has also created a new factor of systemic risks for local economies as well as for the global economy. Some participants considered it crucial to disclose climate risks and address these risks with long-term strategies to enhance resilience. However, this is a particular challenge for small island states and least developed countries.

Despite indications that the balance between action and support for mitigation and adaptation, as aspired in the Paris Agreement, is improving, a large number of participants urged Parties to the UNFCCC to take more action and provide greater support for adaptation to the negative impacts of climate change and for building climate resilience to meet the needs of the most vulnerable nations. In this regard, some participants highlighted the role of women in responding to climate change and pursuing adaptation actions.

In response to the question about enhancing the WIM, many Ministers and other Heads of Delegations commended the establishment of the Task Force on Displacement under the WIM at COP22 and the expected launching of a Clearing-house for Risk Transfer at COP23.

Many commended the Executive Committee of the WIM for its work to date. Some raised the need for COP23 to fully support the rolling five-year work plan of the WIM Executive Committee in a manner that leads to enhanced political prominence of the WIM. These participants also called for

Some proposed that the IPCC should be asked to prepare a special report on climate-related loss and damage.

## RAISING THE AMBITION OF NDCs

This session sought feedback from participants on the following questions:

- What would be the effective way to raise ambition in your country?
- How can we ensure delivering tangible results in the pre-2020 period?
- What are the strategic approaches to accelerate the global transformation towards carbon neutrality?

Many Ministers and other Heads of Delegations strongly expressed their willingness to raise ambition to get closer to meeting the Paris Agreement goals, having regard for their national contexts. Some also expressed the need to address how the right international and domestic conditions can be created to provide an enabling environment for raising ambition.

Many interventions noted the importance of addressing both short-term and long-term objectives, including the need to implement and ratify existing commitments; putting in place various policy measures to help design and implement NDCs; and working towards long-term strategies for low carbon development pathways by 2050. Pre-2020 action was considered essential for implementing the full potential of existing NDCs and to prepare the right policy and regulatory environments to design new NDCs by 2020.

The Transparency Framework, Global Stocktake, Global Climate Action Agenda and the work of the High-level Climate Champions, the Technical Examination Process on Mitigation and Adaptation, and the Talanoa Dialogue were some of the processes and tools suggested to help reaching the Paris Agreement goals.

Some participants noted that the Talanoa Dialogue in 2018 was a critical process to drive increased ambition. Many called on the incoming Fijian COP23 Presidency to continue to play a strong leadership role in the Talanoa Dialogue throughout 2018, as well as in the Global Action Agenda through its High-level Climate Champion.

Some noted that climate change also needs to be mainstreamed into other policy areas and planning processes to build upon the mutual benefits of action including for health and development. The importance of finance, innovation and technology were mentioned by many as key enabling factors to raise ambition. In this regard, some participants noted that national Finance Ministries need to be fully involved.

It was suggested that the transformation towards a resilient and low carbon economy can be done through a just transition and should involve all sectors and stakeholders at different levels, including the most vulnerable.

Many expressed their willingness to lead this transformation as much as possible by maximising the opportunities created by NDCs submitted when the Paris Agreement was adopted, and to go further in the future.

## REPORTING BACK AND NEXT STEPS

All Heads of State, Ministers and Heads of Delegations reconvened following the parallel sessions for reports back from the co-facilitators of the sessions.

The Fijian Chief Negotiator, Nazhat Khan, thanked the co-facilitators for their work and noted that the discussions had been helpful and constructive and provided the incoming Fijian COP23 Presidency with important insights on the key possible outcomes and solutions for COP23. She noted that the Fijian COP23 Presidency will continue to engage with all countries before and during COP23 and collaborate with the Moroccan and Polish Presidencies to accelerate global climate action.

## CLOSING PLENARY

At the Closing Session, the UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa, congratulated Fiji for its constructive discussion at the Pre-COP meeting and looked forward to working closely with the incoming Fijian COP23 Presidency to deliver a successful COP in Bonn.

On behalf of the COP24 Presidency, Poland's Secretary of State and Climate Minister, Pawel Salek, thanked Fiji for an excellent Pre-COP. He noted that whilst there was a lot of work to do, Poland was committed to a process that is balanced, inclusive and transparent, and to delivering on the Talanoa Dialogue and the Paris Agreement Work Programme in Bonn and Poland.

The incoming Fijian COP23 President, Frank Bainimarama, concluded the Pre-COP by emphasising the need to make a genuine connection between what has happened in the formal climate change negotiations and the lives of the people around the world. He said, "only then can we claim real success."

*So while this is a warm-up for Bonn, it turns out that we have done much more together to bring to life the commitments made in Paris two years ago. Bringing the Pre-COP to Fiji and widening its scope has also had a very beneficial impact on the understanding of Fijians and Pacific Islanders generally about this process and its relevance to their lives.*

*I wondered whether COP would really fire the imaginations of my own people. Whether this would be seen as just another conference in Fiji in a great location that had little relevance to ordinary people. But one of the best things about the Fijian presidency in my mind so far is that we are already making a difference at home. Imaginations have been fired. We are bringing the Paris Agreement to life.*

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