

Statement by the Republic of Gabon on behalf of the African Group at the Joint Opening Plenary of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26), 16th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP16), 3rd session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3)

Session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA52-55), and Session Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI52-55)

31 October 2021

Mr President, Presiding Officers of the Subsidiary Bodies,

The Republic of Gabon has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 54 African countries. The African Group associates itself with the statement made by the Republic of Guinea on behalf of the Group of G77 and China.

The African Group would like to congratulate as well as express its appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing COP25 President, Ms. Carolina Schmidt, Minister of Environment of Chile. We would like to welcome Mr. Alok Sharma as the President of COP 26. We pledge our full support for your presidency and for reaching a successful and balanced outcome.

Mr President

The African Group would like to thank the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for hosting this COP during this challenging time. The reality is that the virtual setting has proven to be very difficult, not only because of the technical, time-zone and problems of connection but, more importantly, to ensure facilitated discussion. The Success of the in-person African hub hosted by Egypt in Sharm El-Sheikh in June has provided a best-practice to resuming meetings under the UNFCCC process. We recognize that some bodies are back to normal hosting in-person meeting and we look forward to all constituted bodies continuing working meeting physically from now on.

We would also thank the people of Glasgow for their welcoming and hosting us in their city.

Excellencies, Chairs

Climate change impacts are intensifying, and Africa remains the most affected continent and least responsible for the problem. The recently released scientific reports underscores the need to drastically accelerate climate action. We need greater action and ambition to come from developed countries (with greatest responsibility and capacity) if we are to stay in line with the Paris Agreement's goals and avoid the worst impacts of the climate crisis.

COP26 is a key moment for launching full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement to address the impacts of climate change. To build on previous work and achieve success we requires the negotiations to be inclusive, transparent and Party driven. The UNFCCC has guided the multilateral response that successfully strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. We therefore call on you to advance work and reach decisions under COP26, CMP16 & CMA3 for an enhanced climate implementation.

Mr President, on Africa's Special needs and Circumstances

The African Group working with you, call for consideration of Africa's special needs and circumstances under the PA in line with the science and previous decisions of the COP and CMP. This includes the Convention, the Bali Action Plan, guidance to the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund decisions 1/CP.13, 4/CP, 1/CP.16, 3/CP.17, 7/CP.20, 8/CP.20, 17/CP.22, and decision 15/CMP.7.

We as the African Group are requesting one of the mandate from the Paris Agreement to be considered under the CMA. We wish to acknowledge the work of Chilean presidency captured in COP 25 report that calls for acknowledgement of Africa's Special needs and Circumstances.

Mr. President, the proposal from African countries to consider Africa's Special needs and Circumstances is based on science. The WMO report on 'State of Climate Africa' provides climate-induced changes to physical and biological systems are being felt and exerting considerable stress on the African's vulnerable sectors. The adversely impacted sectors include agriculture, water, energy, wildlife, biodiversity, and public health, thereby significantly affecting the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of national sustainable development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the impact on the health and the economy of Africa, affecting the already highly volatile markets, contracting the GDP of the continent by up to 3.4% with an estimated loss of between \$173.1 billion and \$236.7 billion for the years 2020–2021, thereby reducing the capacity of African countries to adapt to climate change.

The African Group looks forward to working with all Parties to find a resolution and balanced outcome that recognises Africa's Special needs and Circumstances under the CMA. We will work with you Mr. President with a view of reaching a conclusion on this, and report the progress made here in the COP26 report.

Excellencies, Chairs, for ambitious outcome on mitigation

54 countries of the African continent, contributes only 4% of the total global emissions. African countries have communicated their ambitious NDCs. Developed countries Parties with higher emissions should communicate ambitious NDCs with long-term targets for reaching net-zero by 2050 in line with the principles of equity and the Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR).

We are alarmed by the 2020 UNFCCC's compilation and synthesis report of Biennial reports and National Communications of developed country Parties that confirms the total GHG emissions reductions of the Annex I Parties is less than 13% compared to 1990 levels and that Annex I Parties have not met their pre-2020 mitigation targets while some have actually increased their emissions.

We are also concerned that some developed country Parties have not communicated their national communications and BRs under the Convention. This places the implementation of the Convention, and Paris Agreement- including the Global Stocktake in 2023 at risk. This issue requires urgent resolution at this COP.

On Common time, we express our deepest concern on the delay in achieving agreement on common time frames. It has been 6 years since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, and we note with disappointment the lack of willingness among parties to reach a decision on this agenda item. The African Group views common time frames as fundamental to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding (CTU) of NDCs and this is possible only with a single common timeframe. During the June session, the African Group called for elevation of this Agenda item to the level of ministers as we consider political will to be pertinent in concluding this agenda item. We trust that an amicable and more ambitious decision will be achieved here in Glasgow.

Excellencies, Chairs, on pre-2020 mitigation gap

It is unfortunate, while the world is watching; we are still considering how to close the mitigation gap of pre-2020 by developed country Parties to UNFCCC. The African Group is of the view that COP26 should give clear guidance and road map on how and by when UNFCCC Annex I Parties must close this GHG mitigation gap.

Mr President, Presiding Officers of the Subsidiary Bodies, Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

On Adaptation ambition,

The Paris Agreement has three goals, and its effective implementation and success depends on the elaboration of all three goals. Adaptation is a core element of the Paris Agreement to strengthen and ensure an adequate global response to threat of climate change in the context of the temperature goal. More than ever, it is important to launch the work on the global goal on adaptation as agreed under the CMA agenda item. The agenda under the CMA: matter relating to adaptation, including the work on GGA should further define the modalities and procedures for the recognition of developing countries' adaptation efforts, enhancing the implementation of adaptation action and reviewing the adequacy of adaptation support. The African Group stresses that the CMA3 should launch the work on Article 2 (1) b, and Article 7.1 of the Paris Agreement, with the aim to reach an outcome as soon as possible and not later than COP27.

On NAPs, We recognise the efforts that the financial mechanisms have been making in the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans. However, we stress the need for further steps and strategies to address different aspect of implementation of the NAP.

Mr President, Presiding Officers of the Subsidiary Bodies,

On Loss and damage, while adaptation is crucial, there are limits. Many regions of the world, particularly African countries are facing the adverse impact of climate change, which translate into loss and damage. We will therefore need to have concrete and continuing discussions and deliverables on tackling this holistically including action and support for loss and damage. The operationalization of the Santiago Network should be one the key deliverable of this COP, including giving additional mandates to the network . The decision must also provide resources for the SNLD to undertake its work. For the African Group , the Santiago is not a platform, but an operation body of the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage. Given the increasing impact and loss and damage associated with climate change, the African Group proposes the adoption of a standing agenda item under the COP and CMA.

Mr President, Presiding Officers of the Subsidiary Bodies,

On climate finance ambition,

The African Group came to Glasgow to achieve an ambitious outcome on climate finance. This starts from acknowledging the gap on the USD100 billion goal and closing this gap. The African Group is concerned that Annex I Parties to the UNFCCC have not met their legally binding obligations on finance, and here we are only discussing on a road map on how to deliver an obligation of 2020 by 2023.

Mr. President,

COP26 must decide on a climate finance package under the Convention, with a continuation of long-term finance (LTF) under the Convention. The African Group requests that COP26 decides to launch work on the new global goal on climate finance, with a clear objective of concluding work by COP27 and agree on the new finance goal. The new global goal is important to provide predictability and visibility to developing countries climate actions planning and towards preparing and presenting updated NDCs by 2025.

In addition to process and timing, the new global goal on climate finance must reflect ambition and progression. It therefore needs deliberations on a quantum target that should start from a range of a minimum commitment by developed countries to mobilize and provide at least USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2030 on grant basis form, of which 50% for mitigation and 50% for adaptation.

The African Group also attaches importance to establish a global approach on Article 2.1(c) to ensure the inclusion of the just transition as part of the pathway and increasing access to mobilized and provided climate finance for all African countries. This approach must recognise national circumstances of developing countries and manage transition risks to avoid straining African financial markets further, suppress development and restrict the practical transition to climate-resilient economies.

On access to Green Climate Fund resources, the African Group places on record our deep concerns regarding the imposition of unilateral policies and other conditionalities on the access to climate finance for developing countries. These conditions undermine country-led and nationally determined actions. They contradict UNFCCC Article 4 on Annex I Parties firm commitments and Article 2.2, the principles of equity and CBDR and articles 4.1 and 4.4 of the Paris Agreement that calls for emissions peaking will take longer for developing country Parties based on equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. Such unilateral conditions place at risk hundreds of millions of dollars of multilateral financing in support of climate change and just transition projects in Africa.

On Technology

Development and transfer of climate technologies to support climate action globally and nationally is imperative for attainment of sustainable development and should be fully supported as provided for under the convention and the agreement. Africa appreciates the establishment of the regional climate technology centre for the Africa region hosted by UNEP in Nairobi. Africa calls for adequate and predictable financial support to the Climate Technology Centre and Network, which in itself continues to be a great resource to developing countries by responding to their requests on technology and related needs. We further support the strengthening of the linkages between the Technology mechanism and the operating entities of the Financial Mechanisms. African countries look forward to an enhanced CTCN support in optimally rolling out our technology enabled adaptation and mitigation actions in our NDCs and plans along a low carbon climate resilient pathway. Africa looks forward to a constructive and considerate engagement in the consideration of technology agenda items.

On Koronivia, we believe the discussions that we had for the last four years, through conducting number of workshops, should pave the way for a tangible output after the conclusion of Koronivia road map. Parties should report back to CoP26 on the final outcome, to define the way forward towards implementation focusing on enhancing adaptation and adaptation co-benefits in agriculture, while promoting sustainable development and increasing productivity of the agricultural sector to ensure food security in all countries, particularly in developing countries, to fight hunger and eradicate poverty, taking into consideration the diversity of the agricultural systems around the globe and the differences in scale.

Excellencies,

On the other remaining mandates from the Paris Agreement, the Africa Group looks forward to working with Parties on the conclusion of Article 6 negotiation. This should be in line with the spirit of the Paris Agreement and promote ambition and enhanced implementation. Article 6 market mechanisms should also contribute to raising ambition on adaptation. The share of proceeds (SoPs) from these mechanisms should finance adaptation action. The African Group has a strong position that asks for 2 to 5% of SoPs from the article 6.4 market mechanism and article 6.2 cooperative approaches that must be channelled through the Adaptation Fund. We consider that voluntary contributions to the adaptation are insufficient and very weak, putting at risk any adaptation planning or concrete action and implementation of all African countries.

Recognising the need for providing clarity for Clean Development Mechanism project, we underline that the Executive Board of the clean development mechanism requested the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to provide guidance on the functioning of the clean development mechanism beyond the end of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

Mr President, Chairs and Excellencies

COP 26 is a key moment in the implementation of the enhanced transparency system under the Paris Agreement. For the African Group, we look forward for the final elements of a rigorous, comprehensive approach to transparency across all the elements of the Paris Agreement, building on the current and existing MRV system. First, the overall package for transparency at COP 26, on SBSTA item 14, and SBI item 4, must include adequate and appropriate support measures for developing countries, to facilitate the rapid transition to the new reporting system, as well as for longer-term institutional building, as mandated by Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. These support measures should go way beyond the first Biennial Transparency Reports in 2024. Second, flexibility must be reflected fully in reporting tables for GHG inventories and for tracking progress of implementation and achievement of NDCs, and the latter tables must accommodate all NDC types. Third, the same level of robustness must be applied to the finalisation of the tables for reporting on support provided, and these should include all the methodological detail necessary for proper transparency of support. Finally, it is very important to us to ensure that reporting on adaptation is treated with the same priority as reporting on mitigation.

On transparency of support provided and mobilized, the African Group is of the view that the MPG and the submission made by the countries should inform the informal note by the co-facilitator. It is important that the new enhanced transparency framework draw from the lessons of the existing system under the Convention and to recognize that current reporting practices, show that the information being reported is still largely inconsistent as Parties are using different definitions and are reporting at different levels of granularity. Hence for the Africa Group, beyond the level detail, the comparability of the information reported by parties should be an essential parameter of the new report table to ensure that the figure can be aggregate to inform ongoing discussion, such as the new collective goal on finance or the Global stock take.

The African recognizes the proactive role the of the Consultative Group of Experts (CGE) in providing technical support for the developing countries to meet their Measurement, Reporting and Verification commitments under the Convention and will continue to provide support to enhance further reporting under the Paris Agreement. We reiterate the importance of reviewing the term of reference for the CGE, with a view to recommending a draft decision for consideration and adoption by the COP.

Mr President, Chairs and Excellencies

Finally, Africa Group acknowledges the role of different stakeholders for raising ambition and implementation. Thus, it is important to recognize that UNFCCC is a treaty for countries, and Parties should take the lead in facilitating implementation of the Convention and the Paris Agreement. While acknowledging the efforts of the Presidency, the Africa Group request the efforts should also be directed to Parties with legal responsibilities to fulfill their obligations and provide reports on implementation.

Mr President, Chairs,

We have full confidence in your leadership to lead us during COP26 and assure you of our full support for successful outcomes at COP26.