



# Taking stock of the global goal on adaptation

From the Paris Agreement  
to the Glasgow–Sharm el-  
Sheikh work programme

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**Working Paper**

April 2022

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**Climate change;  
Monitoring, evaluation and learning**

*Keywords:*

Climate change adaptation, Paris Agreement, climate change negotiations, monitoring and evaluation

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## Acknowledgements

The editing author is grateful to the adaptation experts who provided the insights and ideas that informed this paper.

We would like to thank the following direct contributors to the content and production of this paper: Erin Roberts, Binyam Gebreyes, Clarisse Marsac and Katherine Shepherd.

**Project funder:** the UK Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office.

## Produced by IIED's MEL team and Climate Change group

This paper was produced by IIED's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team and Climate Change group. The MEL team works with civil society, governments, and individuals to strengthen MEL systems that generate the right type of evidence, at the right time, for the right people. The Climate Change Group works with partners to help secure fair and equitable solutions to climate change by combining appropriate support for adaptation by the poor in low- and middle-income countries, with ambitious and practical mitigation targets. This collaboration focuses on achieving the following objectives:

- Supporting public planning processes in delivering climate resilient development outcomes for the poorest
- Supporting climate change negotiators from poor and vulnerable countries for equitable, balanced and multilateral solutions to climate change
- Building capacity to act on the implications of changing ecology and economics for equitable and climate resilient development in the drylands.

Published by IIED, April, 2022

Beauchamp, E & Motaroki, L (2022) Taking stock of the Global Goal on Adaptation: from the Paris Agreement to the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme. IIED, London.

<http://pubs.iied.org/20876iied>

ISBN 978-1-78431-954-0

Printed on recycled paper with vegetable-based inks.

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The global goal on adaptation (GGA) was established in the Paris Agreement in 2015 in response to calls from developing countries to scale up action on adaptation. Many Parties expected work arising from the Paris Agreement to help operationalise the GGA, but progress was slow until COP26 in 2021, when the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme (GlaSS) on the GGA was established. This paper describes what happened in the intervening years and proposes key questions for Parties to reflect on when engaging in the GlaSS to enhance adaptation action at the regional, national, sub-national and local levels.

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# Acronyms

<b>AC</b>	Adaptation Committee
<b>AdComm</b>	Adaptation Communication
<b>ADP</b>	Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action
<b>AGN</b>	African Group of Negotiators
<b>AILAC</b>	Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>BTR</b>	Biennial Transparency Report
<b>CMA</b>	Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>GGA</b>	Global goal on adaptation
<b>GlaSS</b>	Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheik work programme
<b>GST</b>	Global stocktake
<b>IIED</b>	International Institute for Environment and Development
<b>INDCs</b>	Intended nationally determined contributions
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>LEG</b>	Least Developed Countries Expert Group
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
<b>NAPs</b>	National Adaptation Plans
<b>NDCs</b>	Nationally determined contributions
<b>NWP</b>	Nairobi work programme
<b>SBI</b>	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
<b>SBSTA</b>	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice
<b>SCF</b>	Standing Committee on Finance
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

# Summary

Leading up to the establishment of the Paris Agreement, developing countries stressed the need to increase focus on enhancing adaptation actions and addressing adaptation “on parity” with mitigation, or reducing emissions. Some Parties even argued that the new agreement would not be fair without a significant focus on adaptation. As a result, the Paris Agreement established the global goal on adaptation (GGA) with the aims of enhancing adaptive capacity, building resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change.

The GGA was accompanied by several other provisions for scaling up work on adaptation and a set of tasks was given to constituted bodies under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), but there was no specific guidance for operationalising the GGA. This was partly due to the methodological and political complexities of designing a global goal that could capture the multifaceted and highly contextual realities of adaptation across the world.

## Slow progress in advancing the GGA

In the decision that established the Paris Agreement, Decision 1/CP.21, Parties gave five mandates — or tasks — to the Adaptation Committee (AC), the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) (UNFCCC, 2016a). Some Parties and groups saw a role for these mandates to operationalise the GGA, but progress on some of the mandates has been slow and the various works on adaptation under the UNFCCC, while complementary, have taken place in silos.

## The GGA under the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work programme

Six years after the GGA was set up, Parties launched the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh programme (GlaSS) to do further work on the GGA at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in 2021 (UNFCCC, 2022b). The GlaSS has eight overarching objectives towards operationalising the GGA and enhancing adaptation action at the national level, recognising country drivenness. The work programme will (at least initially) last for the next two years, starting with submissions from Parties in April 2022 on what they would like to discuss, and how, in order to make progress on the GGA.

## Developing a vision for the GlaSS and the GGA

The establishment of the GlaSS represents a successful outcome of COP26, and a significant step towards progressing the GGA from the high-level goal in the Paris Agreement into concrete actions. Though there are areas of developing consensus on the GGA, expectations for the GlaSS can vary significantly among Parties and groups.

As they reflect on the GlaSS, Parties could now start developing their own vision — and, in turn, their collective one — on what the GlaSS must deliver, along with what they want for the GGA. It is essential that Parties and groups articulate their expectations for the GlaSS, including its process, themes, priorities and how to include other bodies and actors, both inside and outside the UNFCCC. Parties will need to reflect on their needs and priorities, based on their national circumstances, and how the GlaSS could be leveraged to enhance adaptation actions in their countries, region and communities. In doing so, Parties could consider key questions on (i) ways of working and inclusion, (ii) key activities and coherence, and (iii) themes of work and priorities.

The submissions by Parties on how the GlaSS should achieve its eight objectives will guide work on the GGA for the next two years, but these are just a start. The GlaSS should be viewed as a catalyst and a space in which Parties can build momentum to address adaptation matters in their own jurisdiction. Ultimately, how countries leverage the activities and processes of the GlaSS and the support provided for adaptation to drive their own local, national and regional processes on adaptation will define the success of both the programme and the GGA.

## 1

# Introduction

The need for scaling up climate action is universally acknowledged. The climate crisis is increasingly leading to irreversible impacts on natural and human systems, with the most vulnerable countries, regions and people being disproportionately affected despite having contributed little to global emissions (IPCC, 2022). Established in 1992, the UNFCCC focused primarily on mitigation in its early years, until the demands of developing countries for more focus on and support for adapting to the impacts of climate change were answered in the early 2000s.

A critical demand of developing countries when negotiating the Paris Agreement, established at COP21 in 2015, was for Parties to address adaptation “on parity” with mitigation, and for adaptation action to be scaled up. As a result, the need to increase both the visibility of and support for adaptation was captured in the agreement. Along with the long-term goals set out in Article 2, the Paris Agreement recognises that adaptation is a global challenge, one with local, sub-national, national, regional and international dimensions. It established the GGA to “enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change” (UNFCCC, 2016a).<sup>1</sup> Parties also established the global stocktake (GST) in Article 14 of the Paris Agreement to assess collective progress towards its long-term goals, including the GGA.

Though the GGA was seen as a success for developing countries in 2015, there were no clear next steps on how it would be operationalised over the following years. This was partly due to the methodological and political complexities of designing a global goal that could capture the multifaceted and highly contextual realities of adaptation across the world. Leading up to COP25 in Madrid in late 2019, developing countries — and especially the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) — called for an agenda item on the GGA under

the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA), the body that guides the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Parties did not establish the agenda item on the GGA at COP25. The demand from developing countries reinvigorated discussions on the GGA, supporting the request for the AC to develop a technical paper (AC, 2021a) on approach(es) to reviewing the overall progress in achieving the GGA (UNFCCC, 2020).<sup>2</sup> This led to both formal and informal discussions on unpacking the GGA throughout 2020 and 2021. At COP26 in Glasgow in late 2021, the GlaSS on the GGA was established, with the aim of achieving eight overarching objectives (UNFCCC, 2022b).<sup>3</sup> The work programme will unfold over the next two years, starting with submissions by Parties in April 2022 on what they would like to discuss, and how, in order to make progress on the GGA.

In this context, this paper aims to take stock of the status and history of the GGA, providing a basis and frame of reference for discussions under the GlaSS. We review the origins and developments on the GGA since 2015, until the establishment of the GlaSS at COP26. We then provide an analytical summary of emerging points of consensus, along with remaining questions for Parties and other stakeholders to consider when preparing for and participating in the GlaSS. This work mostly targets Parties and groups under the UNFCCC, but is also suited for adaptation practitioners, researchers and decision makers not familiar with the language and processes of the UNFCCC. We believe that improving access to information on the GGA is critical for globally scaling up adaptation to achieve a successful GlaSS, and, ultimately, to meet the objectives of the GGA. This paper is informed by a literature review as well as key informant interviews with several adaptation experts who are following adaptation under the UNFCCC.

<sup>1</sup> Article 7.2 of the Paris Agreement.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 14 of Decision 1/CMA.2.

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 7 of Decision 7/CMA.3.

## 2

# Background: origins and definitions of the GGA

In the years between the establishment of the GGA in 2015 and the GlaSS programme in 2021, there was little focus on unpacking how the GGA should be pursued in practice. The reason for this gap is both political and methodological in nature, with several challenges tracing back to how the GGA was first set up as a political compromise. The following section will describe the developments that led to the GGA prior to 2015.

## Pre-2015: proposals and ideas shaping the GGA in the Paris Agreement

As described in the previous section, elevating the recognition for adaptation to be “on parity” with mitigation was a key demand of developing countries in the negotiations that led to the Paris Agreement. The emphasis on adaptation was driven by the needs on the ground in vulnerable developing countries and the projected levels of global average warming, including in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which was released in 2014 (IPCC, 2014). Without a significant focus on adaptation, some argued that the Paris Agreement would not have been seen as fair by many groups and Parties to the UNFCCC (Ngwadla et al., 2014). At COP20 in late 2014, Parties agreed to treat all elements

of the new agreement equally: a commitment to address mitigation on parity with adaptation (UNFCCC, 2015).<sup>4</sup>

Developing countries ultimately championed the GGA in the lead up to COP21 in 2015 under the umbrella of the G77 and China negotiating group, which includes 134 developing countries. Among developing countries, vocal proponents of the GGA included the AGN and the Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC) states.

The AGN was the first group to articulate an expectation for the goal on adaptation to be defined in the new agreement, through its 2013 submission (AGN, 2013) to the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), the body under which the Paris Agreement was negotiated. The AGN laid out a vision that the GGA would join the global temperature goal as a long-term objective of the new agreement. Both goals would help improve understanding of the associated objectives on finance and technology, which should also be included in the new agreement. In 2015, the AGN developed a paper that clearly laid out its proposal for a GGA with both qualitative and quantitative dimensions captured under five key workstreams (El-Bakri et al., 2015).

Pre-Paris, the AGN proposed that the GGA be composed of five dimensions or sub-goals, which

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 2 of Decision 1/CP.20.

together would give a representative picture of, first, the status of adaptation actions globally and, second, the scale of necessary actions needed to appropriately address adaptation (El-Bakri et al., 2015):

1. National adaptation planning as a collective, global objective: so that all countries take responsibility for ensuring that developing countries can develop and implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)
2. Communication of adaptation needs by developing countries and of the provision of support by developed countries
3. Recognition of the adaptation efforts of developing countries: based on information provided in intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs), which would be captured as contributions towards achieving commitments under the UNFCCC
4. Tracking of progress towards realising commitments of adaptation support and action: through both ex-ante assessments of the support committed by developed countries, and an ex-post assessment of the adequacy of adaptation action to achieve the GGA in the previous cycle
5. Ensuring of equity: by recognising that developing countries are both least responsible for and disproportionately impacted by climate change impacts, addressing their needs adequately, and building on the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

In one of its submissions to the ADP in the lead up to COP21 in 2015, AILAC, with Mexico and the Dominican Republic, also stressed the need for scaling up adaptation and ensuring balance between the treatment of mitigation and adaptation in the new agreement (AILAC et al., 2014). In their view, adaptation action required significant changes to processes and structures at the local, national and global levels; they proposed “a global adaptation goal that would provide a vision guiding the global community in a collective aim of ensuring a resilient planet” (Ibid). This would include a sense of how individual (or national) adaptation actions contributed to this collective and global goal. They also stressed that the interconnectedness and that the resilience of societies, ecosystems and economies is a “common global interest”.

Though there were nuances in the positions of developing countries, the G77 and China ultimately championed a GGA with both qualitative and quantitative elements and advocated for several other provisions on adaptation across the agreement. It is worth noting that most, if not all, other Parties and groups also supported the aim of increasing focus on adaptation in the new agreement. The submissions of several developing country Parties and groups

highlighted the need for support to scale up adaptation action. In their submission to the ADP, the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group stressed the importance of ensuring that adaptation is supported effectively given the level of emissions reduction expected to be achieved and the associated level of temperature rise projected (Nepal, 2014). Other countries, for example South Korea, supported the idea of a goal on adaptation in its submission on adaptation in the new agreement in 2014 (El-Bakri et al., 2015; Kreft and Jungans, 2015). In its submissions to the ADP, the European Union maintained that the new agreement should recognise the importance of adaptation. It should be noted that many of the original submissions to the ADP are no longer available on the UNFCCC website and that the information comes from papers summarising submissions.

In advance of COP21 in 2015, a few civil society actors also suggested a way forward for the proposed GGA. The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions developed a brief on addressing adaptation in the new agreement (Suarez and Huang, 2015). The authors proposed some key issues for Parties to consider in establishing an adaptation vision or goal in line with the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC. This includes ensuring that adaptation action and support is in line with global mitigation ambition and commensurate with the goal of limiting global average temperature increase to below 2°C.

In a brief published in mid-2015, researchers from the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations maintained that a GGA under the Paris Agreement should include a framework for monitoring progress, sharing experiences and building a collective understanding of both adaptation and the tools that can be used to capture both adaptation efforts and limitations (Magnan et al., 2015).

Researchers at the International Institute for Environment and Development proposed that a GGA should allow for and reflect different national circumstances (Craft and Fisher, 2015). The authors argued that measuring changes in vulnerability and resilience will depend on the national context and one global metric would not make sense. They emphasised that if a GGA was inscribed in the new agreement it would be essential not to burden the most vulnerable developing countries.

## The GGA in the Paris Agreement

The GGA established in the Paris Agreement presents a collective vision of a resilient planet encompassing elements of both the AILAC and AGN proposals. Decision 1/CP.21 (UNFCCC 2016a), which accompanied the Paris Agreement, included many elements relevant for the AGN's vision of the GGA as

both a qualitative and quantitative goal. Article 7 of the Paris Agreement captures many of the elements relevant to the GGA – and adaptation more broadly. More specifically, **Article 7.1 states that:**

*“Parties hereby establish the global goal on adaptation of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal referred to in Article 2.”*

A further mention of the GGA is included in **Article 7.14** as one of the four adaptation dimensions that the GST will consider:

*“The global stocktake referred to in Article 14 shall, inter alia: (a) Recognize adaptation efforts of developing country Parties; (b) Enhance the implementation of adaptation action taking into account the adaptation communication referred to in paragraph 10 of this Article; (c) Review the adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation and support provided for adaptation; and (d) Review the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article.”*

The language used in the text framing the GGA contains wording that echoes some of the original proposals. However, variations due to negotiation compromises have left the GGA open to interpretation and in need of clarification. Many questions have been left unanswered, with methodological issues tangled with political agendas and respective capacities of countries. These have included, but not been limited to, communicating and reporting information on adaptation to assess progress towards the GGA.

Other articles of the Paris Agreement contribute relevant elements and principles related to adaptation matters. For example, Article 7.2 acknowledges that adaptation is a global challenge, though one with local, sub-national, national, regional and international dimensions. The Paris Agreement also acknowledges, in Article 7.5, that adaptation action should be country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent, and should take vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems into consideration. Adaptation action should be both based on and guided by the best available science and traditional and Indigenous knowledge. Where appropriate, adaptation should be integrated into relevant policies, plans and actions. Article 7.6 recognises the importance of support for adaptation and for taking the needs of developing countries into account. Building on Article 7 (which focuses on adaptation), Parties agreed in Article 9.3 that

developed countries should continue to take the lead in mobilising climate finance, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries. Other elements of Article 9 (which focuses on finance) are also relevant to the GGA, along with Articles 2 (on the purpose), 13 (on transparency) and 14 (on the GST).

Furthermore, Decision 1/CP.21 (UNFCCC, 2016a), which established the Paris Agreement, included mandates to advance on key methodological, institutional and financial areas on adaptation towards fulfilling the agreement's long-term goals. These mandates were given to the AC (the lead adaptation body under the UNFCCC), LEG and the SCF, and included the following:

- *(1) Requests the Adaptation Committee and the LEG to jointly develop modalities to recognise the adaptation efforts of developing countries, as referred to in Article 7.3, and make recommendations for consideration and adoption by the CMA at its first session (paragraph 41);*
- *Requests the Adaptation Committee, taking into account its mandate and its second three-year workplan, and with a view to preparing recommendations for the consideration and adoption by the CMA at its first session, to:*
  - *(2) Review the work of the adaptation-related institutional arrangements under the Convention, with a view to identifying ways to enhance the coherence of their work, as appropriate, to respond adequately to the needs of Parties; and*
  - *(3) Consider methodologies for assessing adaptation needs with a view to assisting developing countries, without placing an undue burden on them (paragraph 42).*
- *Requests the Adaptation Committee and the LEG, in collaboration with the SCF and other relevant institutions, to develop methodologies and make recommendations to the CMA at its first session on:*
  - *(4) Taking the necessary steps to facilitate the mobilisation of support for adaptation in developing countries in the context of the limit to global average temperature increase referred to in Article 2 of the Agreement; and*
  - *(5) Reviewing the adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation and support referred to in Article 7, paragraph 14c of the Agreement (paragraph 45).*

## 3

# 2015–2021: slow progress on mandates relevant to the GGA

Despite the establishment of the GGA and key mandates to advance adaptation work under the UNFCCC, progress on the GGA itself was relatively slow until Parties agreed on the GlaSS at COP26. Nonetheless, the AC, LEG and SCF have made advances across several dimensions of adaptation, and there has been other adaptation work under the UNFCCC. Along with civil society research and advocacy, these bodies of work have helped shape thinking on core elements of the GGA to date.

## Work on methodologies on different dimensions of adaptation

**Recognition of the adaptation efforts of developing countries.** This work has been mandated to the AC and LEG since 2016. It entails the development of synthesis reports on specific adaptation themes every two years that aim to untangle challenges in assessing adaptation progress. The AC launched the first synthesis report in 2018, focused on how developing countries address hazards, relevant lessons learnt and good practices (AC, 2020). The second report under this mandate started in 2021 and is focused on recognising the efforts of developing countries in assessing and meeting the costs of adaptation. This report will be published in 2022.

Additionally, there was progress at COP24, in Katowice in 2018, regarding how information on the recognition of adaptation efforts can flow through each stage of the GST (UNFCCC, 2019b).<sup>5</sup> However, it is still unclear how the recognition of the adaptation efforts of developing countries will be tracked and linked to the adequacy of action and support.

**Facilitating the mobilisation of support for adaptation in developing countries in the context of the long-term temperature goal.** The AC and the LEG were asked, in collaboration with the SCF and other relevant institutions, to develop methodologies and make recommendations to the CMA on the necessary steps to facilitate the mobilisation of support for adaptation in developing countries in the context of the global goals in Article 2 of the Paris Agreement, of limiting global average temperature increase. In 2017, the AC and the LEG prepared recommendations on this mandate, along with the mandate in paragraph 45 (AC and LEG, 2017). The report included several recommendations, such as inviting developing countries to enhance their enabling environments and urging developed countries to scale up support for adaptation to assist LDCs and other developing countries.

**Reviewing adequacy and effectiveness.** Compared to the other tasks arising from Decision 1/CP.21, the mandate on reviewing the adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation and support is

<sup>5</sup> Decision 19/CMA.1

still underdeveloped. From literature reviews and submissions, the AC and LEG led a compilation of existing methodologies that can be used to assess adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation (AC and LEG, 2021). This is shared in the Adaptation Knowledge Portal<sup>6</sup>. The compilation distinguishes between adaptation and support methodologies and types of information for reviewing both effectiveness and adequacy. Methodologies to assess effectiveness are particularly relevant for countries when developing Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems, especially to assess the support that developed countries provide to meet the needs of developing countries. Methodologies for assessing adequacy are especially useful for countries during their adaptation planning and implementation.

**Assessing adaptation needs with a view to assisting developing countries.** Similar to the work on reviewing adequacy and effectiveness, the AC, the LEG and the Nairobi work programme (NWP) primarily worked on developing an inventory of relevant methodologies for assessing adaptation needs until June 2020. Parties, observers and external organisations were invited to share and contribute methodologies for assessing adaptation needs related themes across action, finance, capacity-building and technological support. These methodologies are also available on the Adaptation Knowledge Portal. As a next step, the AC in collaboration with the IPCC will be preparing a technical paper based on the methodologies, also highlighting gaps, good practices, lessons learned and guidelines. A first draft from the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) will be ready in November 2022.

The SCF has also undertaken work on similar aspects including the Needs-based Finance Project, the report on the determination of the needs of developing country Parties (SCF, 2021a) and the Fourth Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows (SCF, 2021a; SCF, 2021b). This collective work focuses on needs as well as the financial flows.

**Monitoring and evaluation systems at the national and sub-national level.** Supporting MEL systems has long been part of the AC's work including through its partnership with the NWP and its partner network. For example, the NWP prepared an inventory of ongoing monitoring and evaluation work of adaptation, which highlighted the challenges emerging in the national-level practice, including limited discussions about impact evaluation in the literature, which adds to the difficulty in using indicators in monitoring the success of adaptation actions (UNFCCC, 2016b). In its 2022–2024 workplan, the AC will be preparing a technical paper featuring case

studies on the development and application of MEL systems at the national and sub-national levels. This will include consideration of the value of monitoring and evaluation systems, existing barriers and opportunities to overcome them.

At COP24, in 2018, the outcome of the work on the five mandates was further considered in the context of implementing the Paris Agreement, under discussions on the Paris Rulebook (UNFCCC, 2019a). Despite calls from developing countries and repeated attempts to raise the profile of adaptation in the UNFCCC negotiations, progress on adaptation mandates has been slow. This is likely because the issues related to the mandates are highly political. It is also likely why the GGA as the Paris Agreement captures it is a political compromise. Many developing country groups and Parties and civil society organisations had hoped that the mandates would help operationalise the GGA (El-Bakri et al., 2015; Ngwadla and El-Bakri, 2016; Singh et al., 2016). However, as articulated above, the difficult political and methodological nature of the discussions has slowed progress.

## Work on approaches to review progress towards the GGA

At COP25, in 2019, the AC received a specific mandate from CMA to review approaches for assessing progress towards the GGA. They published their results and findings in a technical report in 2021 (UNFCCC, 2020).<sup>7</sup> This work was critical for advancing discussions on the GGA, particularly due to disagreements on the potential for aggregating information to assess progress towards the GGA in the GST (AC, 2021c). The GGA aims to drive collective action on climate adaptation, yet how to measure adaptation action has remained an area of disagreement across and within Parties. This is an area that the GlaSS can further contribute to unpacking and will be explored further below.

The resulting technical paper (UNFCCC, 2021) suggested a number of key challenges in various areas. These were:

- Methodological (such as shifting baselines and uncertainties of climate hazards and aggregation across scales and contexts)
- Empirical (in the context of the lack of data and information)
- Conceptual (in terms of lack of agreement on adaptation).

The report also found that there are trade-offs in developing criteria for assessing adaptation progress,

<sup>6</sup> <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/nwpstaging>

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 14 of Decision 1/CMA.2.

such as between aggregation and respecting national contexts, as well as between aggregation and feasibility. The approaches for assessing progress must both contribute to assessing collective progress and inform the updating and strengthening of actions at the national level (Beauchamp et al., 2021; Wilkinson et al., 2021). Striking a balance between these two aims is critical yet challenging, as is ensuring there is no additional burden

on developing countries. These are inherent challenges for both the GGA and the GST.

The technical report unpacks the challenges and methods to inform the GGA. The AC also provided key recommendations on the GGA in its 2021 report for Parties ahead of COP26 (see Box 1).

## BOX 1: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AC 2021 REPORT ON APPROACH(ES) FOR REVIEWING PROGRESS ON THE GGA

Ahead of COP26 in 2021, the AC included a set of 22 recommendations resulting from their work on considering approaches to review progress in achieving the GGA (AC, 2021c). We include below the core points:

- (a) The paper notes several methodological, empirical, conceptual and political challenges when considering approach(es) under the GGA; there is a need to increase understanding of the existing methodologies, conceptual and data gaps, and trade-offs. Progress on the GGA should be guided by the best available science and with the engagement of IPCC Working Group II and other international bodies, as appropriate.
- (b) The approach(es) chosen will have to be able to manage various trade-offs, such as between aggregability of data or metrics, and the flexibility to contextualise according to national circumstances; or between feasibility of applying the approach(es), aggregability and robustness or metrics (e.g. capacities to conduct longitudinal assessments).
- (c) The approach(es) will have to satisfy the dual purpose of informing collective progress — for example through the global stocktake — but also of informing and driving ambitions and actions nationally.
- (d) Any approach(es) will require countries to build on existing MEL systems at the subnational and/or national level, in ways that are suited to their national context.
- (e) Countries will need to strengthen their communications and reporting of adaptation actions, for global progress to capture a realistic picture of the situation. Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and Adaptation Communications (AdComms) can be used for this amongst other instruments.
- (f) Progress of the GGA can be reviewed by combining various approach(es) — this can generate a more holistic picture of adaptation progress and help balance the strengths and weaknesses of different approach(es).
- (g) Using a “basket of approaches” for the GGA could help make sense of the respective challenges, limitations and advantages of each approach.
- (h) In its synthesis report on the state of adaptation efforts, the secretariat could include experience and priorities, along with information on the efforts of Parties in achieving the GGA.

The AC report also encourages Parties to:

- Prepare and submit AdComms as a key tool for informing both the GGA and the GST (i)
- Prepare and submit NAPs, reports and communications regularly to support the GGA and the GST (j)
- Develop and implement nationally suitable MEL systems to improve planning, implementation and reporting (k).

Finally, the AC recommendations stressed that developed countries should increase their support and funding for adaptation in developing countries to realise the ambitions of the Paris Agreement.

## Work on communications and reporting for adaptation

Other relevant areas of work on adaptation under the UNFCCC concern the evolution of the communications, reporting and planning frameworks for implementing and assessing progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. These are important in the frame of the GGA because they represent the already established and agreed formats and processes under which countries can communicate and report key — or at least available — information on elements relevant to nationally prioritised aspects of adaptation; hence they can be vehicles for informing the GGA.

The Paris Agreement requires countries to prepare and submit a national climate plan — called nationally determined contributions (NDCs)<sup>8</sup> — every five years. The Paris Agreement introduced the Enhanced Transparency Framework to track progress on both mitigation and adaptation (with provisions for including information about loss and damage). Information on adaptation can be included in NDCs, but there was a need to clarify further instruments for communicating priorities on adaptation and reporting on progress, requiring new processes and formats. The Paris Agreement introduced BTRs as vehicles to report on adaptation (ie backward looking) and AdComms as vehicles to communicate information relevant for adaptation (ie forward looking) (UNFCCC, 2016a). This included information on good practices, priorities, needs and gaps to inform the GST.

**BTRs.** In the Paris Agreement, Parties determined that they would all submit a BTR on a biennial basis, including information relevant to implementing the Enhanced Transparency Framework on action and support. At COP24, in 2018, the modalities, procedures and guidelines on the BTRs were determined and the information to be provided was further elaborated (UNFCCC, 2019b). This stated that, in addition to information on mitigation, each Party should provide information on climate change impacts and adaptation under Article 7.<sup>9</sup> It also stipulated that developed countries must provide information on support provided to developing countries, and that those developing countries should provide information on support needed. All Parties should submit BTRs by 2024, with the caveat that LDCs and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) can submit BTRs at their discretion.

**AdComms.** An AdComm is a report prepared by countries that synthesises and shares their priorities, actions, needs and learning on adapting to climate change. Unlike other instruments, an AdComm can be a

separate, standalone vehicle or can be included as part of other reporting instruments such as NDCs, National Communications or NAPs (UNFCCC, 2019a). At COP24 further guidance was provided on AdComms including their purpose, potential vehicles, and elements that can be included either as part of another vehicle or in a standalone vehicle (Ibid). As such, the AC's supplementary guidance on AdComms (AC, 2021b) will provide a guide for a standalone AdComm submission, as well as guidance on where (ie under which section) different types of information on adaptation can be included. It also explains the opportunities and challenges of using specific vehicles. As an outcome of COP26, the cover decision requests all Parties to submit an AdComm ahead of COP27. This can include priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions. AdComms are forward looking, in that they communicate priorities and actions yet to take place. As of the date this paper was published, 43 countries have submitted AdComms either as a standalone submission, or as part of other communication vehicles.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of AdComms is to ensure a balance between mitigation and adaptation by increasing the visibility and profile of adaptation, strengthening adaptation actions and support in developing countries, and providing input into the GST (UNFCCC, 2019b).<sup>11</sup> In submissions before COP24, both the AGN and AILAC stressed that the purpose of the AdComms should be clearly linked with the GGA (AGN, 2016; AILAC, 2016)

## The GST as a tool for assessing progress towards the GGA

The GST was established in the Paris Agreement to take stock of progress across all spheres of its implementation and to assess collective progress towards achieving the global goals of the agreement (UNFCCC, 2016a).<sup>12</sup> The GST will cover four interrelated dimensions of adaptation, as stated under Article 7.14 of the Paris Agreement:

- Recognise adaptation efforts of developing countries
- Enhance the implementation of adaptation action
- Review the adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation and support for adaptation, and
- Review the progress towards achieving the GGA.

The aim of the GST is to assess progress and understand where ambition needs to be raised to achieve the collective goals set out in the Paris

8 <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs>

9 Decision 18/CMA.1

10 <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/adaptation-communications>

11 Decision 9/CMA.1

12 See Article 14 of the Paris Agreement

Agreement (UNFCCC, 2016b). The results of the GST will provide an evidence base to inform where international cooperation needs to be increased, such as support and finance for adaptation, to scale up global climate action (Beauchamp and Bueno, 2021). The first GST will take place in 2023 and every five years thereafter, in time to inform the next round of NDCs due to be updated in 2025 (see Box 2). A long list of information sources to input into Phase 1 has started to be collected, but not all modalities and inputs have been detailed. Given the lack of clarity on the GGA, a key question remains how the GGA and GST processes will contribute and complement each other.

A contact group has been established to help carry out the GST. This has taken place under the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the SBSTA, who will be supported through a technical dialogue to consider the inputs for the GST. The technical dialogue will begin at the first session of the UNFCCC in June 2022. It will be co-facilitated by one individual from a developed country and one individual from a developing country, who will work together to facilitate the dialogue and develop a factual synthesis report and other outputs of the technical assessment phase. The chairs of the SBI and SBSTA have already compiled a list of guiding questions for the technical assessment phase of the first GST (see Appendix 2) (UNFCCC, 2022c).

## BOX 2. THREE PHASES OF THE GST

The GST has three phases. In the initial preparatory phase, information will be collected, compiled and synthesised. For the first GST this phase is already underway, beginning in 2021. This is followed by a technical assessment phase, where the inputs are assessed; this will take place in 2022 and 2023 for the first GST. In the third phase, the outputs of the GST will be analysed to determine the extent of progress and to inform a ratcheting up of ambition if needed. The last phase — the consideration of outputs — will take place in 2023, although timelines may change depending on progress.

## 4

# The GGA under the Glasgow–Sharm el-Sheikh work programme

With the first GST already underway, the GlaSS is an opportunity to rebalance adaptation and mitigation, to look at adaptation-related work under the UNFCCC and how it contributes to the GGA, and to provide space for discussions as countries develop their AdComms, BTRs, NAPs and updated NDCs (Pringle et al., 2021).

The work on adaptation across the UNFCCC has allowed the exploration of some of the existing methodologies, processes and instruments that countries can use to plan, inform, report and facilitate adaptation actions and support. One of 2015 mandates of the AC was to review the different institutional arrangements on adaptation under the Paris Agreement to improve coherence on adaptation. However, much of the work on adaptation has been produced through siloed workstreams — both in and outside of the AC (Beauchamp and Bueno, 2021). It therefore remains difficult to follow the various adaptation matters being worked on, not only logistically during negotiations, but also conceptually. As a result, there is work on adaptation under the UNFCCC that has not yet been substantially discussed and remains hard to access for those not familiar with the UNFCCC structures.

The lack of coherence in work on adaptation under the UNFCCC should be rectified as such discussions are critical for both Parties and non-state actors to be aware

of and to understand previous work on adaptation as a basis for progressing the GGA under the GlaSS. The recommendations of the AC on the GGA as part of their 2021 annual report notably facilitate work towards a shared understanding on the way forward for the GGA (UNFCCC, 2021). It is also clear that the relevant adaptation mandates and workstreams to date help inform decisions and dimensions of the GGA.

In developing their submissions on and engaging with the GlaSS, countries will need to think about how the GGA can help them develop their own adaptation goals, plans and policies, while raising ambition globally, including on the provision of support from developed to developing countries. There are some aspects of the GGA where there is largely consensus as well as areas where views tend to diverge. Based on the examined literature and key informant interviews, we provide a short analysis below on areas under the GGA where broad shared understanding can be found.

**The GGA should include several dimensions of adaptation.** From the pre-Paris Agreement proposals from the AGN and AILAC, to recent recommendations of the AC and work from civil society, most work suggests that the GGA be composed of several “elements” or “approaches” entailing the use of multiple methods and indicators. Calls for the use of mixed

methods, a basket of approaches and flexibility of methods justify the use of several dimensions under the GGA. This means there would be several goals — or sub-goals — assessed under the GGA. As a result, it follows that countries could use both qualitative and quantitative methods to inform the GGA. There is no consensus yet on which dimensions should be included and this may evolve during multiple rounds of the GGA.

**AdComms and BTRs, as well as NAPs and NDCs, should be the main instruments to inform the GGA.** Given that AdComms can be used as standalone vehicles or can be part of other vehicles such as NDCs, NAPs and National Communications, there remains flexibility for countries to continue using existing approaches and to reduce the burden of reporting. There is existing draft guidance to support countries to prepare and submit AdComms — and other instruments — with additional guidance coming from the AC in June 2022. In fact, the draft supplementary guidance highlights a list of core dimensions on adaptation that countries can/should be communicating about (AC, 2021b). However, there is not yet guidance for the preparation of BTRs, which some decision makers have indicated would be useful. In due course, there will need to be guidance on which elements of the different vehicles for reporting and communicating information on adaptation — especially AdComms and BTRs — contribute to the GGA. Information on adaptation could also be included in long-term strategies<sup>13</sup> and guidance on communicating information on adaptation in these vehicles could be useful for Parties and groups as they contemplate their long-term goals on adaptation.

#### **Methods for the GGA must be country driven.**

Tensions between adaptation as a local and national endeavour and as a global challenge are inevitable. Yet, like other recommendations, the GlaSS decision text clarifies that the GGA should also reflect the on-the-ground realities and be both nationally determined and appropriate (Pringle et al., 2021; Wilkinson et al., 2021). Informing progress towards the GGA must also not create an additional burden on developing countries. Given the discrepancy in capacities for applying robust methods, there have been increased calls for the countries in question to be the primary decision makers about what approach(es), methods and/or indicators they will use as part of the GGA and to assess progress towards the GGA through the GST.

Some of the literature on the GGA has highlighted that implementing complex methods to assess adaptation could slow adaptation actions (Nowok et al., 2021; Adger et al., 2022). Those sources support the proposal that both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used to inform the GGA. However, this has implications

for aggregation and how collective progress is assessed (see below). Moreover, some stakeholders have raised the point that agreeing to have a set of globally agreed indicators could be useful for driving the development of appropriate MEL systems nationally (Singh et al., 2016; WWF, 2021). Whether such a decision should be taken under the GlaSS, or at a future stage of the GGA such as the second GST, has not been discussed.

#### **The GGA should contribute to enhanced adaptation planning, implementation and MEL.**

Despite the numerous technical and political discussions surrounding the GGA, all stakeholders need to remember that the GGA and the GlaSS must contribute to accelerating adaptation planning and implementation. This also includes the creation of nationally and locally appropriate MEL systems. MEL systems can help inform actions and feed into the assessment of the collective progress on adaptation. Both MEL systems and climate assessments should take into account information and actions at the national, regional, sub-national and local levels, within all relevant sectors and from multiple types of actors.

#### **There is a lack of consensus on how to assess collective progress on adaptation.**

How to get from nationally focused information outlining prioritised dimensions of adaptation for each country to a global report of adaptation progress remains unclear. Yet, there are several methodologies that could be applied to assess collective progress. This could include the aggregation of common quantitative indicators found across the reporting and communication vehicles countries choose to use. It could also include a meta-analysis of the qualitative information that countries have provided. Both aggregated quantitative and qualitative information could feature the multiple dimensions of the GGA. It is likely the dimensions selected to represent the GGA will only be partially informed — at least in the beginning — given the varying capacities and priorities of countries in this exercise. It is also expected for these dimensions to vary over time, reflecting new priorities for countries.

#### **The GGA should inform the scaling up of finance for adaptation.**

The GGA is a result of calls from developing countries to achieve parity between mitigation and adaptation. Yet, finance provided for adaptation still lags behind finance for mitigation (Oxfam, 2020; CARE, 2021; OECD, 2021). The Glasgow Climate Pact, the overarching decision setting out the ambition from COP26, recognised that finance for adaptation is inadequate to address the growing adaptation needs of developing countries and urged developed countries to at least double their contributions to adaptation finance from 2019 levels by

<sup>13</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/long-term-strategies>

2025 (UNFCCC, 2022a).<sup>14</sup> The outcomes presented under the GGA must be credible and representative of country realities, to highlight and inform which actions need support for implementation most urgently, and where. As such, information collected under national processes towards achieving the GGA should reflect local voices and priorities to better direct finance towards effective locally led adaptation that will contribute to national adaptation goals and objectives.

**The GGA is a learning and iterative process.** The GlaSS provides a two-year window for countries to have structured discussions on progressing the GGA. In order to remain relevant, ongoing discussions and revisions on the GGA will be required over time: for example, key dimensions assessed under the GGA may change as the climate crises unfolds, and new and unpredicted changes and shocks occur. The GGA must be a flexible, iterative and learning process, as should the GlaSS itself. Given the timing of the GST, the depth and extent of assessment of progress towards achieving the GGA as part of the first GST may be limited. Taking a progressive and evolving approach to refine and adapt the GGA over time will enable better results while imposing less of a burden on countries.

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<sup>14</sup> Decision 1/CMA.3.

## 5

# Reflections for Parties: towards a successful GlaSS and GGA

The establishment of the GlaSS represents a successful outcome of COP26 and is a significant step towards progressing the GGA from the high-level goal in the Paris Agreement into concrete actions. The decision shows there is an increased and common ambition to advance the GGA and fulfil its function as a “guiding star” to steer adaptation

actions and finance, echoing principles of Article 7 of the Paris Agreement (WWF, 2021). The culmination of mandates under the UNFCCC, along with calls from Parties and civil society to progress adaptation matters, contributed to increased momentum on GGA discussions in 2021, ahead of COP26. The drive by the AGN and other developing countries in the lead

## BOX 3: THE EIGHT OBJECTIVES OF THE GlaSS PROGRAMME

The GlaSS decision text from COP26 includes eight overarching objectives for the GlaSS\*:

1. Enable the full and sustained implementation of the Paris Agreement, towards achieving the GGA, with a view to enhancing adaptation action and support
2. Enhance understanding of the global goal on adaptation, including of the methodologies, indicators, data and metrics, needs and support needed for assessing progress towards it
3. Contribute to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the GGA as part of the global stocktake referred to in Article 7, paragraph 14, and Article 14 of the Paris Agreement with a view to informing the first and subsequent global stocktakes
4. Enhance national planning and implementation of adaptation actions through the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans and through nationally determined contributions and AdComms
5. Enable Parties to better communicate their adaptation priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions, including through AdComms and nationally determined contributions
6. Facilitate the establishment of robust, nationally appropriate systems for monitoring and evaluating adaptation actions
7. Strengthen implementation of adaptation actions in vulnerable developing countries
8. Enhance understanding of how communication and reporting instruments established under the Convention and the Paris Agreement related to adaptation can complement each other in order to avoid duplication of efforts

\*Decision 7/CMA.3 – GlaSS decision text

up to and after COP25 were also pivotal in increasing momentum and focus on the GGA. Several events also brought Parties together ahead of the negotiations at COP26, including a workshop by the AC, three technical workshops organised by the COP25 and COP26 presidencies at Regional Climate Weeks, and informal dialogues held by the presidencies throughout the year.

The decision establishing the GlaSS provides a framework for moving forward that includes lead actors, broad activities and convening spaces to advance the GGA. The text also outlines eight objectives the GlaSS

should work towards achieving (see Box 3). Though there are many areas of consensus, the expectations for the GlaSS could vary greatly among Parties and groups. It is also important to recognise that Parties have varying levels of capacity to navigate some of the GGA's political and methodological issues. We summarise below key elements and modalities of the GlaSS, in terms of ways of working, activities and potential themes, while outlining guiding questions that Parties could consider in their submissions and as they develop their positions throughout the GlaSS, and on the GGA.

## Ways of working and inclusion

The GlaSS mentions key actors in leading and shaping the work programme. The SBSTA and the SBI will jointly carry out the programme, with the support of the UNFCCC secretariat. Contributions from further UNFCCC actors are invited, including from the COP26 (UK) and COP27 (Egypt) presidencies, the AC, Working Group II of the IPCC, and other constituted bodies as appropriate.

The GlaSS must build on previous work on adaptation under the UNFCCC — including, but not limited to that of the AC — and must draw on a range of inputs

including NAPs and AdComms. It must also take into account traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local knowledge systems, and be gender responsive. The GlaSS acknowledges the need to respect, promote and consider human rights across marginalised and vulnerable communities.

The work programme should also reflect the country-driven nature of adaptation and avoid creating any additional burden for developing country Parties, but it should be carried out in an inclusive manner with the involvement of Parties, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, as well as observers, relevant constituted bodies, organisations, experts and practitioners, as appropriate.

## REFLECTIONS FOR PARTIES

In preparing for their submissions and engaging in the GlaSS Parties could reflect on:

- What are the roles of different local, national and international actors in the GlaSS?
- How can different actors help achieve the objectives of the GlaSS — including strengthening the implementation of adaptation action?
- When and how should other UNFCCC actors be involved: the AC, the NWP, the LEG, the SCF and others?
- Beyond the guidance provided by the decision on the GlaSS, how could the IPCC engage with the GlaSS?
- What is the role of observers and civil society under the GlaSS? When, where and how would Parties like third party contributions to occur?
- What is the role of the private sector?

Noting that the GlaSS — and the development of positions on the GGA — must be inclusive, Parties could also reflect on:

- How can the voices and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities be included in the GlaSS process?
- What does this mean for the format and timing of the GlaSS technical workshops?
- What other activities, platforms or spaces for discussion and support are needed?

Given that objectives of the GlaSS include strengthening the implementation of adaptation action:

- What does this mean for national and sub-national processes for building positions on the GlaSS and the GGA?
- How can countries facilitate the inclusion and participation of local communities, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised groups in adaptation planning at all levels?

## Activities and coherence

As the first step in the GlaSS, Parties are invited to submit their views on how to achieve its objectives, ways of working and themes to be covered, by 30 April 2022. The chairs of the subsidiary bodies will choose the themes for the workshops on the basis of the submissions.

Over the next two years, workshops will be held quarterly, with the support of the UNFCCC secretariat and the chairs of the subsidiary bodies — two in person in conjunction with the UNFCCC session, and two virtually. The secretariat will develop a synthesis of the submissions in 2022 and there will be an annual report on the workshops ahead of the sessions of COP27 and 28. The SBI and SBSTA will report to the CMA on the progress towards implementing the GlaSS, with the aim of providing recommendations for a draft decision ahead of COP28 in 2023.

The activities to advance the GlaSS could go beyond the activities included in the decision text (ie workshops

and a synthesis report), given that the GGA will be an ongoing, iterative and learning process. The GlaSS is mandated to continue through 2023 to COP28, but it could be extended to achieve new objectives or designed into a new programme if Parties request this. That said, it is critical that, over the next two years towards COP28, the GlaSS achieves the objectives Parties agreed to at COP26 in Glasgow in order to advance progress. Parties could already articulate their expectations for activities beyond those in the decision and could also set their expectations, including for what the GlaSS should achieve. It is also critical that the GlaSS continues to support work towards achieving the GGA beyond COP28. The GlaSS could also help improve coherence among the various strands of work on adaptation under the UNFCCC and potentially strengthen action on adaptation outside the UNFCCC by engaging with a broad spectrum of action.

Thus, Parties could now start developing both their own and a collective vision on what the GlaSS must deliver — and what they want for the GGA.

## REFLECTIONS FOR PARTIES

Parties could reflect on:

- What should be achieved through the GlaSS?
- What kinds of decisions and outcomes are you hoping Parties will reach by 2023?
- What could be achieved within countries by the scheduled end of the GlaSS at COP28 through the support of the GlaSS?
- How can the GlaSS process contribute to enhancing adaptation planning, implementation, communication and MEL systems?

With your national circumstances and priorities in mind:

- What format should the GlaSS workshops take? For example, how much time (e.g. several hours or several days) would be beneficial? What level of interaction would be helpful?
- What preparation is needed ahead of the workshops? How can this be facilitated prior to and after each workshop — both through the GlaSS and as part of national processes?
- At which stage of the GlaSS process should the different actors (Parties, UNFCCC, observers, constituencies and representatives of local and Indigenous voices) be brought together? How?
- How could the GlaSS help scale up support for adaptation to achieve its objectives and make progress towards the GGA?
- What activities and processes are needed as part of the GlaSS at the international level?
- What activities and processes does your country need to develop a coherent vision and strategy for adaptation nationally? How can the GlaSS support these activities and processes?
- How can the activities for progressing the GlaSS and the GGA contribute to other national processes — such as the NAPs?

Parties could also reflect on:

- What are the potential barriers to achieving a successful GlaSS and a successful GGA process — nationally? Globally?
- How can these challenges be overcome?

## Themes and priorities

The decision on the GlaSS outlines eight core objectives to be achieved by the end of the work programme. Some of these encapsulate long-term aims and ambitions rather than short-term objectives, yet this long list represents the inputs and thematic priorities from a range of Parties and groups. As such, the GlaSS must touch on all the objectives at least throughout its initial two years. This means some themes will have to be clustered and there will need to be a strategic sequencing in how the workshops — and other activities around the GlaSS — address them.

Throughout the GlaSS, Parties can reflect on what their priorities and needs are — to enhance both their

understanding and adaptation actions. This should be grounded in their local and national circumstances. Parties have already started thinking about and planning for their national adaptation journey. Further reflection on key questions could be helpful, including where are they at now, what is their starting point and what are the next steps to enhance adaptation? The GlaSS gives an opportunity to clarify the linkages between the GGA and other UNFCCC processes on adaptation, but also on mitigation, finance and loss and damage. Continuing to think through these issues conceptually at a national level and having exchanges through the GlaSS to share experiences, lessons learned and good practices could better inform international processes, and also help mobilise support for adaptation.

### REFLECTIONS FOR PARTIES

In the short-term, Parties should reflect on:

- How should the objectives of the GlaSS be clustered? What should the overarching themes be to capture all the objectives?
- What needs to be assessed to ascertain collective progress on adaptation, as informed by previous decisions on adaptation under the Paris Agreement?
- What form could guidance take in ensuring credible, adequate, useful and appropriate information to support assessment of progress towards the GGA?
- What should be the order or sequencing of the themes?
- How should the themes for the workshops be sequenced in 2022 and 2023, to ensure discussions build on one another?
- What are the potential guiding questions for each theme, to ensure discussions at each workshop are focused and have a concrete outcome?

At the same time, Parties could reflect on key issues under each of the themes to be addressed under the GlaSS. This will help countries prepare ahead of the workshops and increase the potential for the GlaSS to lead to concrete outcomes. As such, countries could consider these guiding questions to draft their national adaptation story and identify gaps where further information is needed.

Parties could consider:

#### **National circumstances and current processes**

- What are the national priorities on adaptation in countries and regions? What are the needs?
- What current processes are being used to coordinate adaptation nationally? Are there climate- and/or adaptation-specific strategies, mandates and institutions?
- How is climate adaptation integrated in national and sub-national planning documents and processes?
- Are there NAPs or other adaptation planning processes in place? If not, what do you need in order to develop and implement a NAP?
- How can these processes link and strengthen other national processes in sustainable development, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework, the Convention on Combating Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity?
- How do these and other national processes help access and direct national and local funding for adaptation? How do they help direct international funding?
- What is needed to better communicate and secure adaptation finance that will respond to national priorities?
- How could the GlaSS help address these and other needs to strengthen the implementation of adaptation?

**Metrics and MEL systems**

- What MEL systems are already in place? What do they capture?
- What capacities and support are needed to strengthen your national MEL systems?
- What approaches, metrics and indicators are being used nationally and locally? By projects?
- What is needed to draw on a set of metrics and indicators in a way that is nationally appropriate and country driven?
- What other information is needed to better understand progress on adaptation and to inform actions on adaptation?
- What increased understanding of methods, metrics and MEL is needed to improve national circumstances?
- How could the GlaSS help build capacity and provide support for MEL systems?

**Communicating and reporting**

- What are the current communication and reporting vehicles used for adaptation matters?
- Which documents encapsulate your country's adaptation story?
- Based on your country's current national systems, what information do you plan to communicate under your AdComm? What do you want to communicate in the future?
- What information do you plan to contribute under the first round of the GST?
- Which vehicle will you use?
- How are you planning to answer the guiding questions for the technical assessment phase of the first GST (see Appendix 2)?
- How could the GlaSS support you in communicating and reporting information on adaptation?

# 6

## Conclusion

The establishment of the GlaSS at COP26 was a significant step forward for developing a common understanding of the GGA and unpacking how to achieve it. In both informal and formal discussions in the lead up to COP26 it became clear that there are some areas of convergence on the GGA as well as a few of divergence. Yet, there is no common understanding of the GGA and, as such, enhancing understanding of the GGA itself is a key objective of the GlaSS.

Respecting national priorities and country drivenness are essential and inscribed in both Article 7 of the Paris Agreement and in the GlaSS. Adaptation finance continues to be a sticking point in the discussions on the GGA, but Parties and other stakeholders have recognised that current adaptation finance is insufficient to address developing country — and global — needs. As a result, developed countries have been urged to double support for adaptation in the Glasgow Climate Pact. Despite disagreements on the extent to which support, particularly finance, should be part of the GlaSS, it is clear that developing countries will need support if the objectives of the GlaSS are to be achieved.

The submissions by Parties on how the GlaSS should achieve its eight objectives will guide work on the GGA for the next two years, but these are just a start. The GlaSS is not an end in itself, but a means to the end of enhancing adaptation planning, implementation and support across countries. It should be viewed as a catalyst and a space where Parties can build momentum to address adaptation matters in their own jurisdiction. Without a strong understanding of their needs and priorities, Parties will neither be able to leverage work on the GlaSS for their own benefit, nor advise the process towards representative outcomes on the GGA. Ultimately, how countries leverage the activities and processes of the GlaSS to drive their own local, national and regional processes on adaptation will define the success of the programme and the GGA.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Recommendations of the Adaptation Committee

The AC produces an annual report, including recommendations from their mandates, ahead of the Conference of the Parties. Here we provide the full text of their recommendations related to the GGA from their 2021 report.

86. The following recommendations emerged from the work of the AC in considering approaches to reviewing overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation. The CMA may wish to:

- (a) Take note of the methodological, empirical, conceptual and political challenges identified in the technical paper of the AC on approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation and consider ways of addressing and prioritizing further understanding of the existing methodologies, conceptual and data gaps, and trade-offs to enable an overall review of progress towards achieving the global goal on adaptation, guided by the best available science and with the engagement of IPCC Working Group II and other international bodies, as appropriate;
- (b) Emphasize that the approach to reviewing overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation will manage various trade-offs between key criteria for assessing adaptation progress, such as between aggregability<sup>58</sup> and sensitivity to national context; between aggregability and coherence;<sup>59</sup> and between feasibility of reviewing overall progress on adaptation and aggregability and the ability to conduct longitudinal assessments;
- (c) Emphasize that the approach to reviewing overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation must also satisfy the dual mandate of the global stocktake of assessing collective progress on adaptation and informing the update and enhancement of national-level adaptation actions;
- (d) Recognize that understanding progress on adaptation requires functioning monitoring and evaluation systems at the subnational and/or national level, and encourage Parties to use existing monitoring and evaluation tools suited to their national context;
- (e) Recognize that, in order to understand progress on adaptation, adaptation action undertaken must be reported, and encourage Parties to use biennial transparency reports to complement the information provided in their adaptation communications;
- (f) Recognize that combining various approaches can generate a more holistic picture of adaptation progress and help to balance the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches;
- (g) Consider using a basket of approaches in the process of assessing overall progress in achieving the global goal on adaptation, informed by the relevant technical paper of the AC, taking into account the challenges, limitations and advantages of each approach;
- (h) Request the secretariat to include, in its synthesis report on the state of adaptation efforts, experience and priorities,<sup>60</sup> information on the efforts of Parties in achieving the global goal on adaptation;
- (i) Strongly encourage Parties to prepare and submit an adaptation communication as soon as possible, recognizing that adaptation communications, among other national adaptation-related documents, will serve as input to the assessment of collective progress on adaptation as part of the global stocktake and contribute to the review of overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation;<sup>61</sup>
- (j) Also strongly encourage Parties to prepare and submit NAPs, reports and communications regularly and in a timely manner for the global stocktake and to include information that can contribute to the review of overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation, as well as information on how they have considered the global goal on adaptation in their national context, consistently with existing guidance on the respective plans, reports and communications;

(k) Further strongly encourage Parties to develop and implement national monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to improve adaptation planning and implementation processes over time, and to provide robust and context-specific information in national reports and communications, recognizing the complexity and significant technical, financial and human resources and data needed to design and implement such systems and the need for support for developing country Parties to enable them to do so in a timely manner;

(l) Urge developed country Parties and invite other Parties that provide resources on a voluntary basis, as well as United Nations organizations, specialized, bilateral and multilateral agencies and other relevant organizations, to continue to mobilize technical and financial support for adaptation activities in developing country Parties, including the activities referred to in paragraphs 86 (h–k) above, with a view to making progress towards the global goal on adaptation.

58 The potential for aggregating information and/or data on adaptation.

59 The extent to which a given measure reflects a meaningful proxy for adaptation.

60 As per decision 19/CMA.1, para. 23(b).

61 As per decision 9/CMA.1, para. 14.

## Appendix 2: Guiding questions on adaptation for the technical assessment phase of the first GST

With the first GST taking place this year, this initial process towards assessing progress towards the GGA will likely be iterative, revealing gaps and providing lessons learnt to build on for subsequent stocktakes. Each country will need to develop its own “adaptation story”, its narrative on adaptation and its own aspirational goals (Beauchamp et al., 2021).

1. What is the collective progress in terms of the current implementation of, and ambition in, adaptation actions towards achieving the goals defined in Articles 2.1(b)3 and 7.14 of the Paris Agreement?
2. What efforts are being undertaken to plan, implement and accelerate adaptation action towards achieving the goals defined in Articles 2.1 (b) and 7.1 of the Paris Agreement? And, with a view to recognising the adaptation efforts of developing country Parties, what efforts have been undertaken by these Parties towards achieving these goals?
3. How adequate and effective are the current adaptation efforts and the support provided for adaptation towards achieving the goals defined in Articles 2.1(b) and 7.1 of the Paris Agreement?
4. How can the implementation of adaptation action towards achieving the goals defined in Articles 2.1(b) and 7.1 of the Paris Agreement be enhanced, taking into account the adaptation communication referred to in paragraph 10 of the Paris Agreement?
5. In order to achieve the goals defined in Articles 2.1(b) and 7.1 of the Paris Agreement:
  - a. What further action is required?
  - b. What are the barriers and challenges, and how can they be overcome at the national, regional and international levels?
  - c. What are the opportunities, good practices, lessons learnt and success stories?



The global goal on adaptation (GGA) was established in the Paris Agreement in 2015 in response to calls from developing countries to scale up action on adaptation. Many Parties expected work arising from the Paris Agreement to help operationalise the GGA, but progress was slow until COP26 in 2021, when the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheik work programme (GlaSS) on the GGA was established. This paper describes what happened in the intervening years and proposes key questions for Parties to reflect on when engaging in the GlaSS to enhance adaptation action at the regional, national, sub-national and local levels.

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