



**BRIEFING PAPER ON:
OPERATIONALIZING
THE GLOBAL GOAL ON
ADAPTATION (GGA) OF
THE PARIS AGREEMENT**

October 2021

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is no longer a future concern but a current reality. Global average temperatures have already risen by 1 degree centigrade and the impacts of climate change are being felt worldwide. While climate change is affecting countries around the globe, developing countries and in particular the most vulnerable communities, biodiversity, and nature are feeling the brunt of its climate impacts. **These vulnerable people are the least responsible for causing climate change but are in the frontline of its impacts.** Therefore urgently enhancing adaptation actions today is imperative.

Developing countries are already making significant investments in adaptation, which often complement but can also divert resources away from other development priorities. With climate impacts rising and set to becoming more severe in the years ahead, this means most developing countries cannot meet the growing adaptation needs without further support. The UNEP's 2016 Adaptation Gap Report found that the cost of adaptation in developing countries, as one important expression of the need, could range between USD 140 – 300 billion annually by 2030 and between USD 280 – 500 billion annually by 2050 depending on the level of mitigation ambitions.

While increasing mitigation ambition is fundamental to reduce future impacts from climate change, adaptation action must also be scaled up significantly and quickly. In Paris, governments recognized the importance of enhancing adaptation action. **The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was established as the Paris Agreement Article 7.1 with the aim of “enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view to contributing to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate response in the context of the temperature goal”.** The establishment of the GGA was widely supported as part of the strategy to increase focus on adaptation in the Paris Agreement.

The GGA could be framed as the “North Star” providing the direction of travel to unifying work on adaptation, in conjunction with mitigation ambition. It also serves the strategic purpose of increasing attention on adaptation in order to drive action in planning, concrete implementation and cooperation. It also allows us to assess and review the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Paris Agreement and its long- term goals through the global stocktake (GST) process. The assessment of collective progress towards achieving the global goal on adaptation is therefore a process of measuring the direction of travel in terms of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability. The GST will also recognize the adaptation efforts of developing country Parties, enhance the implementation of adaptation action taking into account adaptation communications, and review the adequacy and effectiveness of adaptation and support provided for adaptation.

The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) features three core components:

- 1** Enhancing adaptive capacity
- 2** Strengthening resilience
- 3** Reducing vulnerability to climate change

PROGRESS SO FAR

In 2019, the Conference of the Parties service as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) requested the Adaptation Committee “to consider approaches to reviewing the overall progress made in achieving the global goal on adaptation and to reflect the outcome of this consideration in its 2021 annual report.” This [technical paper](#) has been prepared to support this request and is intended to help inform the discussion within the AC on approaches to assessing the global goal on adaptation. Additionally, this technical paper also fulfils an activity in the Adaptation Committee’s 2019- 2021 flexible work plan. In the run-up to COP26, the UK incoming presidency had undertaken a number of consultations to get views from parties and relevant stakeholders on the global goal on adaptation.

CHALLENGES TOWARDS OPERATIONALIZING GGA

Unlike mitigation which might be quite straightforward to review overall progress in terms of tons of carbon-dioxide reductions, adaptation has multiple challenges and might be hard to quantify and qualify at a global or even across level. Some of the challenges in the operationalization of GGA could be but are not limited to:

- (i) **Methodological challenges:** It is difficult to quantify the result of the intervention, the goal post of building resilience is constantly shifting as it links with mitigation ambition, designing a system which can aggregate results across different themes vs scale, etc..
- (ii) **Adaptation Database:** National level data based on adaptation is lacking including the vulnerability assessment for different themes vs scale.
- (iii) **Definition of adaptation intervention:** There is still a lack of agreement on what activities are referred to as adaptation vs development. Adaptation activities are very locally specific.
- (iv) **Financing and Capacity constraints:** Several developing countries have inadequate capacity and finance availability for adaptation.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, there is a strong need to operationalize the global goal on adaptation especially in the light of many countries are in the process of finalizing their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Adaptation Communication (AC), which might provide some direction on various sectoral approaches that countries will adopt. Beyond this, we also need to see lessons learned from other UN processes especially the SDGs and the Sendai Framework on their collective global process, and should develop an **evolving global framework for measuring overall progress on global goal on adaptation which can be flexible and adaptive as time progresses on.**

KEY MILESTONES FOR ACHIEVING THE OVERALL PROGRESS ON GGA

The Paris Agreement made significant strides in increasing the focus on adaptation under the conventions. It could be argued that the goal of addressing adaptation on parity with mitigation was achieved at least on paper. It is now time to translate that commitment into action and to ensure that adaptation to be a priority as the Paris Agreement is implemented. However, there remains a lot of work to do to ensure that the GGA is operationalized in a way that best meets the needs of developing countries. In order to assess the progress towards the GGA, key milestones could be developed to determine the direction of travel and assess progress along the journey to achieve the goal. Below is a list of key milestones, which include but is not only limited to:

1. **Accelerate development and implementation of the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs):** All developing countries should prepare and submit NAP as soon as possible but no later than 2022, in advance of the global stocktake (GST) process, and immediately begin implementing the adaptation priorities.
2. **Advance metrics and indicators for the GGA:** Based on the work of the Adaptation Committee (AC), Parties should advance and take decisions for metrics and indicators to operationalize the GGA. The lesson learned from other international UN processes especially the SDGs and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) on their collective global process also needs to be adopted.
3. **Streamlined adaptation communication:** There needs to be appropriate guidance for a streamlined adaptation communication process to assist developing countries in effectively and efficiently managing their adaptation planning, addressing monitoring challenges, as well as meeting reporting requirements. This should take into account the different roles of NDCs, NAP, and National Communication as well as synergies with the SDGs and Sendai Framework.
4. **Assess capacity gaps:** All developing countries should have available assessments of their existing capacity and projected gaps, to develop adaptation strategies and meet adaptation needs, with a clear requirement of international support to be provided.
5. **Enhance capacity building for adaptation:** The Paris Committee on Capacity-Building (PCCB) must prioritize activities addressing capacity constraints related to adaptation planning and implementation in developing countries, including converting the adaptation elements of the NDC and Adaptation Communication into fundable projects.
6. Defining an **nature-based solutions approach for measuring progress**, considering community-based adaptation and ecosystem-based adaptation.
7. **Setting a science-based adaptation finance target:** An adaptation finance support must be based on scientific analysis, needs to adapt to global warming impact scenarios and level of realized mitigation ambitions, and should be provided by developed countries taking into account their historical responsibilities.
8. **Ensure funding for priority actions:** Developed countries should provide the developing countries with the finance needed for the preparation and implementation of the NAPs priorities and the adaptation components of their NDCs.
9. **Meeting the adaptation needs of developing countries:** SBSTA should develop various adaptation scenarios for a range of possible temperature scenarios, taking into account the IPCC reports. A mechanism should be developed to trigger support for adaptation corresponding to the most likely scenarios in light of likely emission trajectories based on existing pledges and the impacts thereof.
10. **Review of existing national adaptation institutions:** Countries must review their institutional setting with the view to addressing the existing gaps and future needs to ensure the successful operationalization of the GGA.

COP 26 DECISION LANGUAGE ON OPERATIONALIZING THE GGA

To further strengthen the GGA and to operationalize it as soon as possible towards meeting the objective as outlined in the Paris Agreement, the COP26 must take a concrete decision as a part of the CMA decision. The decision should be to operationalize the GGA with a clear road map and timeline and to provide adequate support for the implementation of the GGA objective on the ground. The following table outlines suggestions for the decision texts on the GGA as part of the CMA 3 decision at COP26.

Agenda Item	Proposed Decision Text as part of (x/CMA 3)
<p>Global Goal on Adaptation (CMA Item 16.b)</p>	<p><i>Decides</i> to operationalize the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) as part of the Paris Agreement with an aim of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change.</p> <p><i>Requests</i> the Adaptation Committee (AC) to review the existing national frameworks for monitoring and evaluation on climate adaptation where available, and to translate those elements and lessons learned from national level to consolidate further inputs to the global framework on GGA.</p> <p><i>Requests</i> the Adaptation Committee (AC), to provide a recommendation of a global framework for measuring overall progress on GGA that informs to the Global Stocktake (GST) process, which is flexible and adaptive, reflecting the adaptation priorities of the countries National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and the adaptation communication. AC in close collaboration with LEG, SCF, Paris Committee of Capacity Building, CTCN, SDG, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and other relevant Organizations, Civil Society, researchers and experts prepare the draft global framework for further consideration from parties to be adopted at COP 27.</p> <p><i>Invites</i> Parties, organizations, researchers, civil societies, and experts in providing their views on the elements, approaches, matrix, and indicators of the global framework on GGA through submission by 31st March 2022 to the UNFCCC.</p> <p><i>Requests</i> the Adaptation Committee (AC) in close consultation with COP 26 presidency to organise a workshop during 56th SBs session on GGA inviting parties, relevant organizations, civil societies and experts to consolidate further inputs on providing recommendations on the global framework on GGA .</p> <p><i>Requests</i> the developed countries to provide financial support needed by the Adaptation Committee (AC) and the UNFCCC Secretariat to undertake the work for preparing the draft global framework for further consideration from parties to be adopted at COP 27.</p>

OUR MISSION IS TO STOP THE DEGRADATION OF THE PLANET'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND TO BUILD A FUTURE IN WHICH HUMANS LIVE IN HARMONY WITH NATURE.

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