

17/12/15

**Note to the Secretary-General
(through the Deputy Secretary-General)**

Support to the Secretary-General on climate Change in 2016

The adoption of the Paris Agreement represents a major turning point in the global effort to respond to climate change. The agreement is ambitious and balanced, and rises to the challenge of climate change. The agreement sends a clear signal that the transformation of the global economy in a low carbon climate resilient direction is already underway and accelerating. The leadership of the Secretary-General made a decisive difference in the finalisation of the Paris Agreement and in catalysing multi-stakeholder climate action. This leadership is not only welcomed by Governments, the private sector, civil society and the global public, but is now demanded.

Political leadership

The Paris Agreement will be open for signature on April 22, 2016. The next step is for countries to express their consent to be bound by the agreement through a formal process of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. COP21 has given birth to an Agreement, but like all newborns, it will require incubation and nurturing. Further work will be needed in 2016 and beyond to elaborate essential details and strengthen certain elements.

On the political front, the leadership of the Secretary-General will be required in the following areas Post-Paris:

- Communicating the significance and value of the Paris agreement as an effective tool in the fight against climate change; and as an instrument to acceleration the transformation of the global economy in a low carbon climate resilient direction.
- Planning the 22 April 2016 high-level signing ceremony of the Paris Agreement as a key milestone for maintaining and mobilising political momentum. The Secretary-General should aim to secure signatures from as many Parties as possible on that date and by all Parties before he demits office in 2016.
- Continuing to advocate for higher levels of ambition on mitigation and finance in key countries. There are likely to be major domestic and internal political challenges in key countries including US and EU (Poland), which could have negative spill over effects in the wider international community. On the positive side, a number of major economies including Canada and some EU have signalled a willingness to raise their ambition level in the context of a Paris Agreement.



- Nurturing the Paris agreement by providing high-level political oversight over the elaboration of key operational details of the outcomes in Paris.

Climate Action

The 2014 Climate Summit resulted in the mobilization of leaders from governments, the private sector and civil society around transformative climate action to reduce emissions and build resilience. In partnership with Peru, France and the UNFCCC Secretariat, the Secretary-General has advanced the climate action agenda through the Lima-Paris Action Agenda (LPAA).

Member State interest in the LPAA and the action agenda remains high. Many have voiced the view that political momentum on climate action must be maintained post-Paris. At COP21 it was decided that the future role of non-state actors and the action agenda would be strengthened through the creation of a framework through which such action can be enhanced and scaled-up. The basis has been provided for Parties and interested organizations to build a lean and efficient support structure that enable the further growth of participation and development of new initiatives.

The role of the Secretary-General and his team in cooperation with the governments was highlighted in Paris. Current, incoming as well as outgoing COP Presidencies consider it important that the Secretary-General remain engaged in the lead up to the COP22 in Marrakesh – referred to as the “implementation” COP, but understandably, in a much less “operational” role. The CCST has been invited to stay connected and participate in the first stage setting meetings in January 2016. CCST is expected to provide insight and guidance to the design of the framework, primarily in the areas of increased ambition, promoting the relevance and link to other SDGs, encouraging UN engagement with the non-state actors in the action areas, focusing on supporting accountability functions and providing occasionally the convening power of the office to support the action agenda. With regard to an active focal point and substantive engagement role, the CCST can retire from most action areas. In most action areas the focal point role will be taken up by the new framework with at least one UN organisation being actively involved in the area.

However, in a few areas transitional arrangements will be needed. This is particularly true for the resilience and cities/subnational action areas. Both areas have high political value. Important milestones for the action agenda include the Abu Dhabi Sustainability week, Davos and an event organized by the University of Maryland on climate action in May 2016.

South-South Cooperation

With the support of Government of China, the Secretary-General is advancing South-South cooperation on climate change in a few key areas linked to the action agenda – energy, resilience, cities and the use of innovative approaches including big data. These efforts have helped to diffuse tensions in the formal negotiating process around the issue of how to apply differentiation on finance in the context of the new regime. Post-Paris, the leadership of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation on climate change should aim to :

- Demonstrate the value added of south-south cooperation;
- Continue catalysing concrete action to build positive momentum in 2016; and
- Ensure that the UN system is aligned and well equipped to support the aims of SSCCC2016.

Recommendations

Given the above, it is recommended that a 10 person Team through 2016 would be the minimum needed to provide effective support the Secretary-General. This is approximately one third of the existing Team. This team would be in place by 1 April 2016.



Janos Pasztor
17 December 2015