

## **Non-paper**

### **Provisional Operational Modalities for the Climate Vulnerable Forum**

#### **Background**

The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) was founded in November 2009 as a group of nation states represented by their respective government leaders who convened in Malé from around the world to act together on the concerns each share as a result of human-induced global climate change. Since then the Forum has met at number of times in New York, USA and Tarawa, Kiribati. One of the major objectives of the Ministerial Meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum in Dhaka on 13-14 November 2011 is to enhance the ability of the vulnerable countries to address key challenges and seize all opportunities in this domain, through greater coordination and consultation between CVF member countries, as the multiple-paced climate change field of policy continues to evolve through 2011-2012.

The CVF is yet to take firm root and is poised to cross the threshold of exploratory to a consolidation phase. But, the challenges faced by its member countries are real and long-term that call for an institutional framework to respond to the imperative of its sustainability and long-term needs. Hence, there is an imperative to develop convergence of views on its objectives, characteristics, scope, extent and modalities for its engagement and operation.

#### **Objective**

Aims of the CVF include, *inter alia*, (i) agenda setting for highlighting concerns, issues and challenges faced by the climatically vulnerable countries; (ii) sharing of good practices on adaptation, mitigation, sustainable development, green economy; (iii) consensus building and position convergence; (iv) articulation of common concerns, views and position; (v) building trust among all stakeholders and breaking down divides; and (vi) contribute to a truly inclusive and responsible global climate governance regime.

#### **Characteristics of the Forum**

The CVF may be identified with the following characteristics:

- a. Flexible and open: Countries may chose to join and discontinue its participation. The platform may maintain flexible engagement with observers and non-state-stakeholders, as necessary.
- b. Inclusive: As climate change is generally non-discriminatory, the membership may not to be limited to any specific region and to countries impacted by a or a group of specified phenomenon.
- c. Semiformal platform: The Forum may be in the middle way between a formal and an informal entity. This may be understood in value-neutral terms, whereby participants may not be put in a negotiating position to defend perceived national interests. Semi-formality is to circumvent barriers of cooperation, and to allow non-members to also contribute in the process of collective examination of issues, if so required. This is not to suggest a casual approach and an absence of procedures.

- d. Modalities for efficient functioning: The CVF may agree on modalities in respect of membership and on various organisational aspects such as Chairmanship, consultation process, periodicity of meetings and events, coordination and follow-up etc.
- e. Non-binding: Member countries are not expected to negotiate binding rules and may not be obliged to implement decisions and recommendations.
- f. Focused: It may focus on adverse impacts of climate change, efforts to reduce vulnerability (including enhancing coping capacities and reducing disaster risk reduction), securing external support for effective adaptation, sustainable development without compromising on the primacy of development and poverty reduction, clean energy and technology to contribute to voluntary mitigation, adaptation-mitigation-development nexus, and other agreed priorities
- g. Forum as a process: The CVF may not conduct one-off events only It may seek to have technical meetings to identify issues and share experiences coupled with political level engagements to create greater convergence, develop ownership and to pronounce views and preferences Periodicity and level of political level engagement (Ministerial and Summit) may be flexible and may respond to the need of the time It may employ *caucusing* to reflect its concerns and views in appropriate and global decision making processes
- h. Networking: It may maintain virtual network through secure websites and assigned nodal points.

## **Membership**

Most vulnerable countries from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean which attended the CVF meetings in Male', Ambo and Dhaka will form the initial membership of the Forum. Member countries will enjoy the flexibility to discontinue participation. Each member will designate focal point(s) within its national authorities for the purpose of coordination and follow up.

New members may be added from among developing countries that are faced with high degree of risks owing to climate change and are also vulnerable due to inadequate coping capacities. The Forum may seek to maintain an appropriate number of members given the requirement of critical mass and to avoid a situation of being unwieldy<sup>1</sup>. The CVF may revisit the question of its membership at a reasonable periodicity (say every 5 years). Any new member shall be required to endorse the fundamentals of the Forum and in particular endorse recent outcome documents of the Forum. Any new proposal for inclusion and expansion of the Forum may be considered by the CVF Summit.

The CVF may engage observer countries for developing effective partnership. Likewise, it may seek to engage relevant UN agencies, international institutions and other actors. The CVF may also benefit from its engagement with select local and international experts and representatives of leading civil society organizations and private sector.

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<sup>1</sup> At present, the membership may remain within a range of 30-35.

## **Leadership issues**

- a. The CVF Chair will lead the process for a defined period (one / two years)
- b. The Chair will articulate group position and views while engaging with other forums and contribute to other discussions. In the absence of the Chair, either the past or the future Chair (if already known) may represent the Forum.
- c. On important issues, the Chair may avail the services of a troika of the past, present and future (if known). Other past Chairs may also be appropriately consulted, if it is so required.
- d. Chair will contact members through designated focal points and normal diplomatic channels.
- e. The Chair may obtain services of an appropriate arrangement and a relevant organisation to conduct studies or preparing background papers on issues of common concerns.

## **Coordination and follow-up**

The CVF may carefully examine the crucial role generally played by a coordination arrangement in supporting Chairs and following-up on decisions. This may be required for contacting stakeholders, disseminating information, facilitating follow-up of decisions and providing managerial support. Additionally, it may be assigned to conduct studies and prepare background papers. It may maintain a web-portal.

The Chair may maintain a coordination hub that may rotate Till the time the Forum decides to have a permanent secretariat, services of an interested, reputed and neutral organisation (such as DARA) may be utilised as an ad-hoc Secretariat.

## **Structuring of meetings**

The CVF may generally meet at the Ministerial level, with the provision of Summit level interactions. Ministerial meetings may be held once in 2 years, unless there are compelling reasons for additional Ministerial meeting(s) in between. Summit level Forum may be held once in 4-5 years and as agreed by the membership and necessitated by global developments.

The political engagements may be followed up with a feasible implementation mechanism at the technical level. Expert level/ senior official level meetings and interactions may be organised in between Ministerial meetings as per requirement. Technical event(s) may also be organised.

## **Financing**

The Chair may mobilise resources for events and programmes of the Forum. Beyond its own contributions, it may generate resources from voluntary contributions made by member countries, financial support from observers and any other contribution received from donor countries and organisations. The Chair may also consult interested donors and external entities to mobilise financial resources and seek to create a trust fund.

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