Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance
Note for circulation to all Steering Committee members

FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE (28 JULY 2021) – MEETING SUMMARY

Short summary

The Steering Committee of the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance met for the first time on Wednesday 28 July 2021. The first meeting served as an introduction to the Taskforce for members of the Steering Committee and gave everyone the opportunity to discuss and agree a pathway to COP26. At the meeting, members agreed first and foremost that the Taskforce must be responsive to the needs of the most climate vulnerable countries. They noted the growing similarity in the aims of both finance for climate and international development; the importance of addressing access to finance for climate adaptation and mitigation as part of the Taskforce’s work; and the need to consider improving access to private finance enabling environments, although the Taskforce’s primary focus in its initial phase will be on public climate finance. Members agreed that the UK and Fiji would lead the Taskforce, with support from experts and a wider group of interested countries and partners. The Steering Committee will meet monthly in the lead up to COP26, in order to make the urgent progress on this critical issue by COP26 and to lay the foundations for the work beyond COP26.
Full summary

Vel Gnanendran (UK) and Vineil Narayan (FJ) opened the meeting as co-chairs. COP26 President Delegate Rt. Hon. Alok Sharma provided a recorded welcoming address which highlighted the importance and urgency of the Taskforce and its deliverables. The 12 Steering Committee members introduced themselves.

Scope of the Taskforce

Vel Gnanendran set out the proposed scope of the Taskforce, including the key objectives, deliverables and the process of updating the draft Concept Note. In discussion, the Steering Committee members gave broad support for these items.

Participants supported the idea that the Taskforce addresses access to public climate finance firstly, whilst keeping in scope the use of public finance to improve the enabling environment for private finance flows. Participants agreed the Taskforce should consider issues of private finance as well as public finance in later stages, recognising that without leveraging private financing countries, climate plans will not be fully implemented. The timing of this workstream, to go beyond COP26, should be clear in the Taskforce workplan.

The Steering Committee discussed how the Concept Note and scope of the Taskforce should not be explicit on what will be financed e.g. different types of sectoral support. Instead, the Taskforce should focus on where in the climate space it should try to influence the biggest change. For example, some members emphasised the need for the Taskforce to focus on access to finance for adaptation as well as for mitigation, noting that some climate finance recipient countries have found it easier to access funds for mitigation projects. Participants agreed that the Taskforce must consider international benchmarking and be informed by best practice. There was also a discussion on the need to align efforts with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and opportunity to be guided by existing development effectiveness frameworks.

The co-chairs outlined the proposed deliverables, including the announcement of the five pioneer country trials at COP26. These trials are intended to gather experiences and lessons on what works and what does not work. The Steering Committee discussed whether five was the correct number and agreed there could be some flexibility on this, but highlighted the importance of being realistic on what can be achieved in such a short timeline.

Members highlighted the importance of balanced, fair and transparent pioneer country selection criteria. Participants agreed that communications surrounding the trials should make clear that the work of the Taskforce is intended to benefit all
climate finance recipient countries and influence the behaviours of all providers to shift the climate finance system overall. The trials are to inform this work, build an evidence base and support urgent climate action. It was agreed that the approach the Taskforce takes to the issues of scale and urgency should be set out in the Principles clearly.

Participants also highlighted how the work of the Taskforce needs to support country systems, plans and have local ownership, and should prioritise the needs of the most climate vulnerable countries. This intent should be clear in the Taskforce communications. It was agreed that the Taskforce would not be able to offer direct capacity building support. However, the streamlining and facilitation of access to finance would reduce the capacity burden climate finance recipient countries are facing and the Taskforce will endeavour to link in with existing initiatives.

Regarding the proposed ways of working, the Committee agreed that the Taskforce’s work is distinct from the climate negotiations process, and its focus should be on practical implementation and resolving climate finance access problems in the most vulnerable communities in real world terms. The Taskforce will engage and bring different perspectives together to achieve this, including sharing international best practices on increasing access to climate finance. A ministerial meeting of the Taskforce will be held before or at COP26 and a Taskforce representative will participate in a session at COP26.

**Governance, Workplan and Engagement**

Vineil Narayan presented the proposed interim governance structure, workplan and means of engaging with wider constituents and stakeholders. The Steering Committee endorsed this approach. Participants identified the importance of consulting vulnerable groups and civil society effectively and the need for any Taskforce recommendations to be gender responsive. Referring back to the previous agenda point, participants discussed how outreach and consultation with a wide range of countries will be crucial to getting good engagement and input from a variety of stakeholders and countries.

Participants considered how to progress with work between the Steering Committee meetings. For example, members put forward suggestions that the technical working group meetings should be organised prior to each Steering Committee meeting. Clarification was also requested regarding the number of hours of engagement and technical input colleagues would be expected to provide. The Secretariat will come back to participants on this point.

**Conclusions**

The co-chairs thanked participants and gave a brief summary of the meeting. They concluded that the main challenge will be to determine how we solve the problems identified. They explained how they believed that rapid progress on this important issue will be made possible by drawing on the best practices, experiences, tools and strategies of members and the Taskforce’s wider constituency.