

Oxford Climate Policy Blog

Initiating debates on international climate policy

The Common Time Frame has landed!

But the Ambition Cycle is still in need of completion



At the arrival gate in Glasgow. Photo credit: Kiara Worth/UNFCCC

In December last year, following the *Technical Climate Dialogue on Common Time Frames* convened by the Chair of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI), an OCP blog announced: '[Ambition Cycle on course to land in Glasgow](#)' and I'm pleased to be able to confirm that (at least part of) it has landed.

Common time frames for nationally determined contributions referred to in Article 4, paragraph 10, of the Paris Agreement

The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement,

Recalling Article 4 of the Paris Agreement,

Also recalling decision 6/CMA.1, paragraph 2,

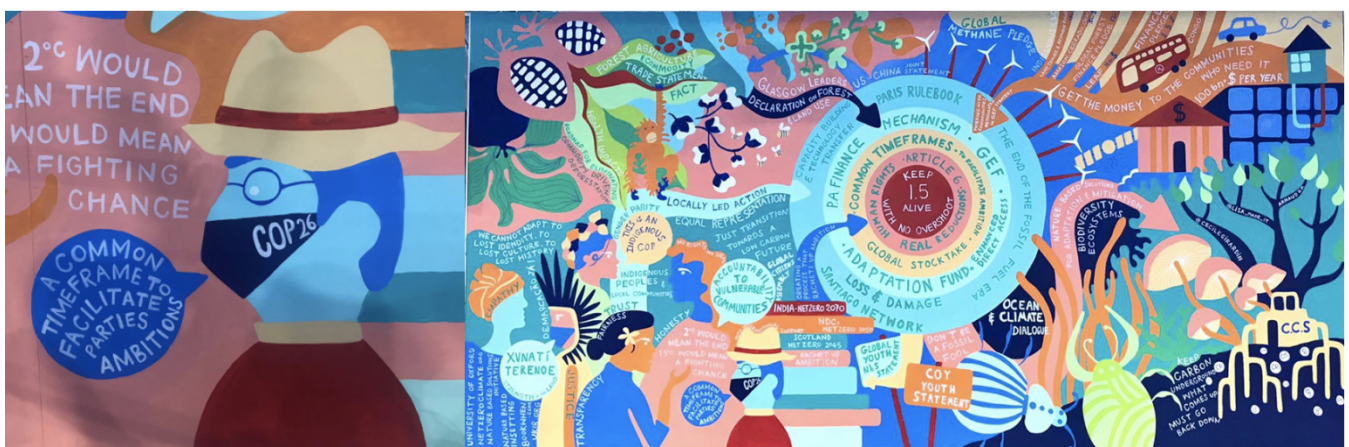
1. *Reaffirms* the nationally determined nature of nationally determined contributions;
2. *Encourages* Parties to communicate in 2025 a nationally determined contribution with an end date of 2035, in 2030 a nationally determined contribution with an end date of 2040, and so forth every five years thereafter.

The Glasgow CTF Decision

I have had the honour of being part of a group of stakeholders that has been working tirelessly and doggedly over the past seven years to bring about this outcome, even though the odds were 4:1 stacked against us: We were advocating 5-yearly synchronised NDC end-years – para. 1 of the Glasgow Ambition Cycle (GAC.1), see Box – while almost 80 percent of the first NDCs communicated by 2020 had a 10-year time frame (ending in 2030).

It is difficult to say when the balance tipped towards the five-year frequency of NDC end-years but it was an uphill struggle – clearly the preference expressed by the [EU Environment Council](#) at the beginning of October “for a common time frame of five years for all Parties’ NDCs” did accelerate the acceptance of the five-year frequency.

Having dwelled over and over on why this particular common time frame is absolutely key in completing the Paris Ambition Mechanism – see, for example, Müller and Kumarsingh (2020) or Müller (2021c) – I do not wish to go into any details but simply stress that the Glasgow CTF decision is a significant step towards a fully functioning and ambition facilitating rule book of the Paris Agreement.



COP 26 Mural by Cécile Girardin

However, there is still something missing. The Glasgow CTF decision corresponds to GAC.1, but it does not include the request for regular (5-yearly) synchronised ambition updating, referred to GAC.2.

As Matt McGrath, BBC environment correspondent commented in his [initial analysis of the draft Glasgow cover decision](#): *The document may be just seven pages long but it attempts to steer COP26 towards a series of significant steps that will prevent global temperature rises going above 1.5C this century. Perhaps the most important part of that is getting countries to improve their carbon cutting plans. To that end this draft decision urges parties to “revisit and strengthen the 2030 targets in their nationally-determined contributions, as necessary to align with the Paris Agreement temperature goal by the end of 2022”*

Revisiting and strengthening the ambition of NDCs that have been communicated earlier is indeed key to harnessing much needed additional overall ambition; but to maximise the additional ambition, the process needs a time table for regular (5-yearly) synchronised updating, as stipulated in GAC.2

What to do? Fortunately, GAC.2 can easily be interpreted as the sort of guidance referred to in Art. 4.11: “A Party may at any time adjust its existing nationally determined contribution with a view to enhancing its level of ambition, in accordance with guidance adopted by the [CMA]”.

So, let's all try and land this guidance in Sharm el Sheik at COP 27 next year!

Box: The Glasgow Ambition Cycle (GAC)

The Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement:

- (GAC.1) *request* Parties to communicate (i) by 2025... a nationally determined contribution with a time frame up to 2035, (ii) by 2030 ... a nationally determined contribution with a time frame up to 2040, and to do so every five years thereafter, [...](#);
- (GAC.2) *also request* Parties to consider in 2025 updating/adjusting their existing nationally determined contributions with a view to enhancing levels of ambition in line with Art. 4.11, ..., and to do so every five years thereafter.

Source: Müller (2020d)

The long journey: October 2014 to November 2021

- Müller, B. (2021f), [Rolling Time Frames ... the Article 4.10 landing zone in Glasgow](#), OCP Blog Post, September 2021
- Müller, B. (2021e), [What do you mean: ‘Common Time Frame’?](#) OCP Blog Post, September 2021
- Müller, B. (2021d), [Completing the Paris Ambition Mechanism in Glasgow](#): Key Messages for Policy Makers, OCP Blog Post, July 2021
- Müller, B. (2021c), [Common Time Frames: Reducing the Options for a Decision in Glasgow](#), Technical Paper produced by OCP/ecbi for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), July 2021
- Müller, B. (2021b), [2 ‘update’ or not 2 ‘update’ every 5 years, that is the Q4](#), OCP Blog Post, June 2021

- Müller, B. (2021a), [Common Time Frames — Synthesising the Options for a Decision in Glasgow](#), OCP Blog Post, May 2021
- Kumarsingh, K, B. Müller, and A. Sharma (2020), [AMBITION CYCLE ON COURSE TO LAND IN GLASGOW: Outcomes of the 2020 Technical Climate Dialogue on Common Time Frame\(s\)](#), December 2020
- Müller, B. and K. Kumarsingh (2020) [The risks of not adopting a Paris Agreement Ambition Cycle at COP 26 in Glasgow](#), August 2020
- Müller, B. (2020d), [A “Glasgow Ambition Cycle”?](#) OCP Blog Post, original posting April 2020
- Müller, B. (2020c), [Here’s looking at EU again! The European Climate Law](#), OCP Blog Post, March 2020
- Müller, B. (2020b), [Leipzig in September: Birth of a new G2?](#), OCP Blog Post, February 2020
- Müller, B. (2020a), [Enhance Climate Ambition in 2020: Here’s looking at EU, kid!](#), OCP Blog Post, January 2020
- Dagnet, Y., and N. Cogswell (2019), [“Setting a Common Time Frame for NDCs.”](#) Working Paper. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, November 2019.
- Müller, B., A. Sharma, Y. Dagnet, N. Cogswell (2019), [The Dynamic Contribution Cycle: Enhancing Ambition on the Basis of Equity](#), OCP/WRI In Brief, August 2019
- Müller, B. (2018b), [Common Time Frames: Creating Space for Ambition in the Paris Agreement Rulebook](#). ecbi. October 2018
- Müller, B. (2018a), [‘Common Time Frames’: What & Why?: A Contribution to the Debate on Article 4.10 of the Paris Agreement](#). OCP/ecbi Discussion Note, 2nd Ed., June 2018.
- LDC Group, [Submission by Ethiopia on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group on common timeframes for nationally determined contributions](#); April 2018.
- [Submission on Common Timeframes for NDCs_TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO_BELIZE](#); April 2018.
- OECD/IEA, [Common time frames: Summary of discussions at the March 2018 Climate Change Expert Group Global Forum](#), March 2018
- Sharma, A. (2016), [Justice is still critical in the post-Paris world of “nationally determined” climate action](#), OCP blog post, October 2016
- Müller, B., and C. Shakya (2016), [Why an effective Ambition Mechanism is vital to deliver the Paris Agreement](#), OCP blog post, October 2016
- Müller, B., and X. Ngwadla (2016), [The Paris Ambition Mechanism: Review and Communication Cycles](#), OCP/ecbi Options Note, October 2016
- Müller, B. (2016c), [From Contribution Framework to Ambition Mechanism: How to enhance mitigation ambition under the Paris Agreement](#), April 2016
- Müller, B. (2016b), [‘Maillot Jaune’ for the Dynamic Contribution Cycle](#), OCP Blog post, February 2016
- Müller, B., (2016a), [A Dynamic Ambition Mechanism for the Paris Agreement](#), OCP/ecbi Discussion Note, March 2016
- Brazil (2014), [Views of Brazil on the elements of the new Agreement under the Convention applicable to all Parties](#), November 2014
- Müller, B., X. Ngwadla, and J. Miguez (2014), [A Dynamic Contribution Cycle: Sequencing Contributions in the 2015 Paris Agreement](#), October 2014

This entry was posted in Uncategorized on 13 November 2021 [<http://blog.oxfordclimatepolicy.org/the-common-time-frame-has-landed/>] by Benito Muller.