

STATUS QUO ANALYSIS ON AFRICAN ENGAGEMENT AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

Xolisa Ngwadla
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Project Committee:

Anja Berretta - KAS
Mamadou Gueye - Intl. Attorney-Consultant
Chantelle Moyo - KAS
Erick Omollo - KAS
Phillip Osano - SEI
Youba Sokona - GRAIN
Marta Torres-Gunfaus - DDP/IDDRI
Henri Waisman - DDP/IDDRI

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The DDP is an initiative of IDDRI. It aims to demonstrate how countries can transform their economies by 2050 to achieve global net zero emissions and national development priorities, consistently with the Paris Agreement. Analyses are carried out at the national scale, by national research teams in a collaborative manner to facilitate engagement with sectoral experts and decision-makers.

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KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ The participation of African countries in the first GST processes can be characterised as poor, which to a large degree can be ascribed to a lack of capacity to engage, due to insufficient manpower and knowledge. Collaboration with regional and pan-African institutions has the potential to address some of these constraints.
- ▶ There is evident progress in the establishment of national institutions and the conduct of consultations on climate policy in African countries. However, the role of these national processes for the GST outcomes, notably to clarify needs in line with a country's priorities, is not always understood. This can contribute to inadequate national consultations and limited buy-in, translating to an implementation gap. The development of a 'consultation framework' to enhance national consensus is being considered under this project.
- ▶ Despite the potential of international cooperative initiatives in enhancing climate action, the level of participation by African countries is limited. One reason for this could be that such initiatives are not addressing the priorities and needs of African countries. The GST needs to address this gap in the design of international cooperative initiatives. Hence a further examination of international cooperation with recommendations on how it can contribute to enhanced action in Africa is crucial.
- ▶ African countries prioritise equitable and differentiated pathways towards the transitions to low carbon and climate resilient development, whilst emphasising the importance of climate finance and adaptation. African actors expect that the GST helps to advance and better connect climate and sustainable development goals. To do this, the technical dialogue outcomes need to be analysed as to how far they capture African development views.

Background and objectives of the study

The Global Stocktake (GST) process has attracted significant attention internationally and enabled interesting progress in the way global climate talks are conducted. For African countries, there has been a very limited number of submissions and engagement in the process.

Secondly, international cooperation, despite being a central aspect of the GST outcomes in Article 14.3 of the Paris Agreement towards enhanced action and support, has not received much attention in submissions - not just by African countries - but also in the overall GST discussions.

Addressing these two issues could be key to enhancing the outcomes of the GST, especially for African countries. This is because African countries generally face particular challenges, such as limited resources, including technical and institutional capacities to act and engage.

Structuring international collaborations that target specific transformational needs relevant to countries is an invaluable potential of the GST. Only then can GST play its role of revitalizing the collective political process on climate ambition and pave the way for significant improvement of targets for action and support required to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

This study seeks to understand and present African perspectives on the GST. This will be done with a view of enhancing the ability to engage in the process and updating commitments to enhanced action and support¹ in 2024. Perspectives on national consultation processes, as well as the necessary transition in the context of sustainable development, are also examined.

This report - the first of two - focuses on understanding the status quo of engagement in the GST by African countries. It further identifies some focus areas with respect to enhanced participation, international cooperation, domestic consultation processes towards enhanced action, and sustainable development considerations going to CoP28 and beyond.

The second report will advance the focus areas and recommendations for African country engagement in the GST, building on this status quo analysis, further consultations with African actors on climate change,

and lastly from the Factual Synthesis Report to be published by the co-facilitators of the Technical Dialogue in September 2023.

Approach to data collection

The study used a structured discussion approach, providing an opportunity for an open-ended, broad expression of views, with some questions constrained to a 10-point Likert scale to gauge the depth of opinion on a specific aspect. The interpretation of the results, where the Likert scale is used is that a score of 3 = low; 5 = fair; 7 = good.

The webinar participants were focal points to the Regional Economic Communities on environment and climate change, with most being from ministries or agencies of government. Noting the participant profile, one would expect scores of 5 and above due to the nature of their responsibilities and access to climate change information and processes.

The objective of the structured discussion was to get an Africa-wide perspective. As much as the results are for two regions, viz. ECOWAS and SADC, with a limited number of participants as shown in **Annexure 1**, the relevance and strength of the insights lies in the national role and responsibility of the participants on UNFCCC processes.

The rate of responses to questions ranged from 3 responses up to 10 responses at the ECOWAS meeting, whereas for SADC they were consistently around 4 for most of the questions, others being oral inputs. The topics covered in the structured discussion sought to get a perspective of the participant's views on:

1. awareness and capacity to engage in the GST process,
2. consultative processes to inform engagement in the GST process and responding to its outcomes,
3. perspectives on the extent of international cooperation on climate change action,
4. perspectives on the transitions and sustainable development.

Perspectives emanating from the structured discussions are contained in sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this report.

¹ Enhanced action and support are communicated through Nationally Determined Contributions, Adaptation Communications, and Biennial Communications in accordance with Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement.

Awareness and capacity to engage in the GST process

In describing the level of understanding of the objectives and the level of participation, the overall score for the two regions shows fair access to information relating to the GST and a low to fair understanding of the implications of the process for African countries. A deeper dive to assess the understanding of the implications of GST on African countries, responses to an open-ended question on “How can the global stocktake support sustainable development in African countries?”, the responses clustered around:

1. raising ambition to meet 1.5°C pathways in an equitable manner,

2. means of implementation to close the ‘implementation gap’,
3. needs of African countries being addressed in the global stocktake.

As shown in **Figure 1**, the level of participation and contributions of African countries to the global stocktake is below par, particularly in the ECOWAS region. The poor participation in the GST processes can be ascribed to a lack of capacity to engage, both in terms of manpower and knowledge for effective engagement, as shown in **Figure 2**. The average score in the ‘capacity to engage’ questions for the two regions is around 3, with ECOWAS showing a significantly low score.

Beyond the low capacity to engage, the low understanding of and appreciation of the implications of

Figure 1. Understanding and participation

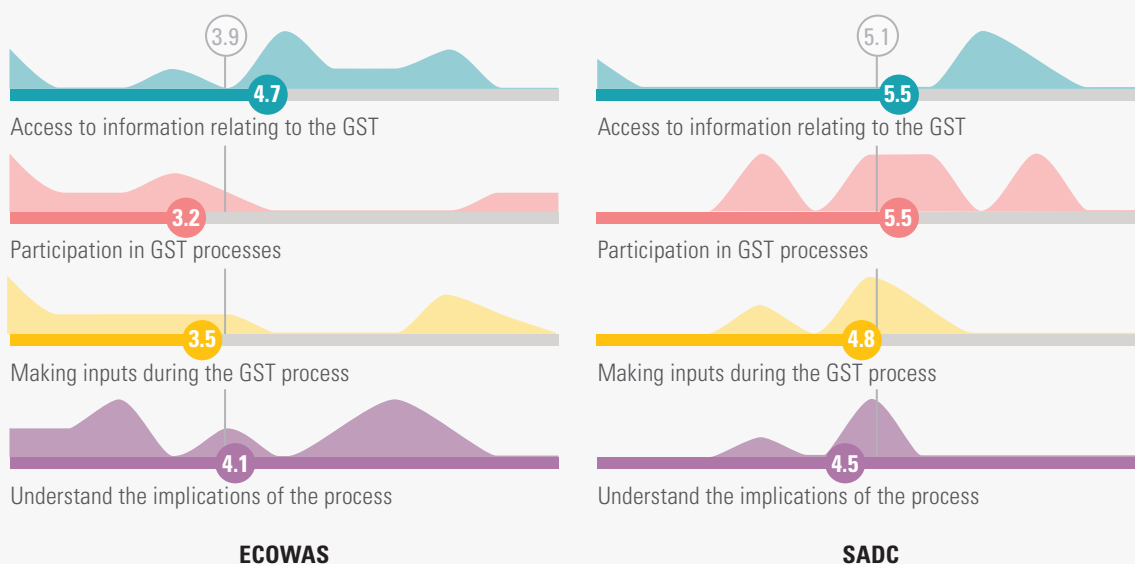
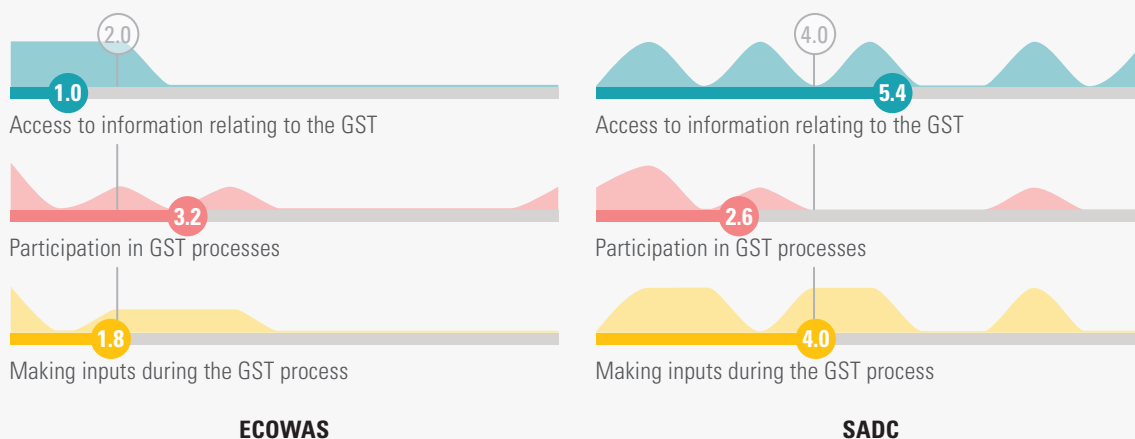


Figure 2. Capacity to engage



the GST outcomes on national development is noteworthy. The insufficient knowledge across all themes of the GST would further reinforce the limited understanding of implications.

The objective of this component of the structured discussion was to get an understanding of the reasons for the limited participation of African countries in the global stocktake processes at CoP 27 and SB58. As much as capacity - manpower and knowledge - can be regarded as key driving factors for limited participation, the negotiation as a single, unified African Group may also play a role in the lower country-level visibility.

The contribution by the African Group has been less than exemplary, as the submissions from the African Group were more process-related, rather than substantive inputs to highlight the continent's progress on climate action and the needs of African countries for enhanced action in the global stocktake.

National Consultative Processes

This component of the structured discussion focused on understanding the presence of consultation processes and how inputs from national stakeholders are reflected in the inputs to the GST.

As the GST completes its work at CoP 28, heading towards CoP 29, all countries will be required to 'communicate' further commitments in their NDCs, Adaptation Communications, and Biennial Communications under Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement. In line with the second track of the GST, there are potential announcements on enhanced international cooperation of action and support.

The communication of enhanced action and support requires comprehensive national consultations and consensus for such 'communications' to be fair, ambitious, and implementable.

This is crucial, noting that indications from the GST technical dialogue suggest that there is a gap between commitments already on the table and their implementation. The study takes the perspective that adequate consultation and clarity on needs in line with a country's vision is central to addressing the 'implementation gap'.

In an open-ended description of national consultation processes, it is evident that most African governments have established institutions and inclusive consultation processes, through inter-ministry platforms whose mandates have a bearing on climate change action.

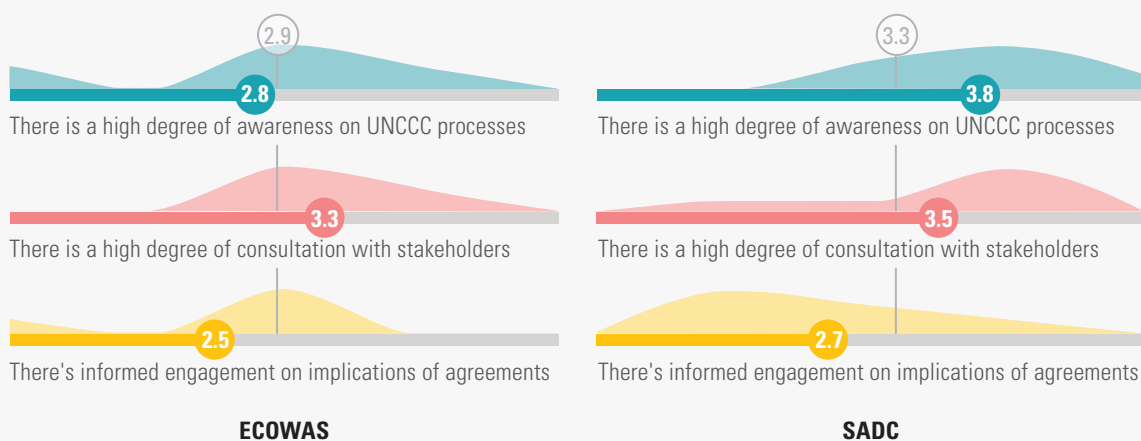
The consultations are primarily at the national/federal level, including different actors ranging from the public and private sector, civil society organisations, and academia.

However, some perspectives suggest different stakeholder interests and levels of understanding, to the extent that some participants indicated the need to have different consultations with different stakeholder groups.

The low scores on 'informed engagement by stakeholders' reinforce the assessment and suggest a broader low understanding of the implication of processes such as the global stocktake in African countries.

The Likert scale response in **Figure 3** to assess the adequacy/effectiveness of the consultations suggests that participants do not necessarily have confidence in the quality/effectiveness of consultations.

Figure 3. National consultations adequacy



Responding to the enhancement of national consultative processes, the respondents suggested a strong need for capacity building and awareness, citing the following:

1. The importance of routine consultative processes, whilst noting nuances between domestic and international policy positions;
2. The opportunity for financed regional capacity-building initiatives; and
3. The mainstreaming of climate change in the development process (sustainable development).

International co-operation

International cooperation is an essential part of the GST as outlined in Article 14.3 of the Paris Agreement where the outcomes of the global stocktake should translate to enhanced climate action and support, as well as international cooperation.

International cooperation has not featured strongly in the technical dialogue of the GST. An assessment of the inventory of international cooperative initiatives with a view of identifying themes covered, impact delivered through these initiatives, gaps, and improvement could add value to the GST process.

As much as international cooperation is broad, which includes bilateral arrangements on climate action, a significant portion is through international cooperative initiatives. The UNFCCC (2023)² defines international cooperative initiatives (ICIs) as “arrangements between non-state, subnational actors and/or national governments that collaborate across borders to achieve climate goals”. To that end, in 2021 the UNFCCC Secretariat launched a voluntary portal for ICIs with ~149 initiatives registered as of August 2023. The Global Climate Action Portal illustrates the low

participation of African country non-state actors in international cooperative initiatives. It is further noteworthy that adaptation/resilience types of projects lag behind those targeted at mitigation, whereas adaptation has been cited as a priority for global stocktake outcomes, as shown in **Figure 4**.

The key question therefore is whether international cooperative initiatives cover areas of interest and are structured in a manner that works for African countries. This study further explores the needs of African countries building on experiences in existing pan-African platforms such as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative, and the Africa Adaptation Initiative.

Expectations and views about the GST

Responding to an open-ended question of whether the GST adequately reflects sustainable development, differing views were expressed by participants. Responses from SADC suggest that the global stocktake does not take into account sustainable development, and is rather mitigation focussed with a limited consideration of development issues.

On characterising the consideration of the just transition in the global stocktake, views expressed included the need for:

1. a balanced consideration beyond mitigation to include adaptation,
2. needs to reflect equity, protect nationally defined development priorities,
3. differentiated pathways based on stages of development,
4. the issue of equitable and fair terms of financing climate action.

The responses on the just transition were primarily from the SADC region, with a general sentiment of the global stocktake not adequately reflecting just transition imperatives.

² Global Climate Action Portal. 2023. <https://climateaction.unfccc.int>

Figure 4. African participation in ICI

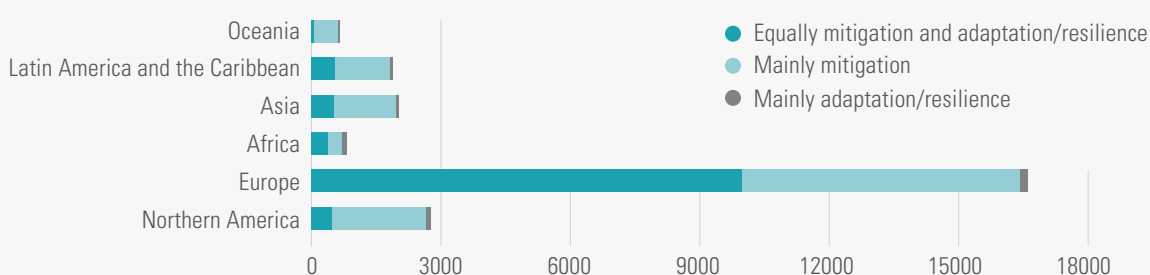


Figure 5. Expectations from the outcomes of the global stocktake



In respect of expectations from the outcomes of the global stocktake shown in **Figure 5**, the overriding priority for African countries was the outcome of the stocktake enhancing adaptation action and climate finance.

Implications of the views expressed

There are opportunities to expand the capacity of African countries to engage in GST-related processes, noting that climate change action is at the centre of a new development paradigm.

Opportunities to build the knowledge base and capacity through Regional Economic Communities, the Economic Commission for Africa, and the African Group of Negotiators through periodic working sessions could address the shortcomings. To address the manpower issue, the support of a limited number of candidates to participate in the UNFCCC negotiations can contribute to an enhanced engagement of African countries.

Regarding national consultative processes, which would outlive the GST process, there is also an opportunity for defining a good practise framework for national consultation. Such a framework would provide informed inputs by the various national stakeholders.

The precedent of the Talanoa Dialogue in the UNFCCC process could form the basis of gathering inputs at a national level, that not only informs perspectives on the stocktake but also commitments countries make under the UNFCCC in their NDCs and Adaptation Communications.

In respect of international cooperation initiatives, African countries have not been driving the agenda. Therefore, there is an opportunity to develop African perspectives on minimum standards for international cooperative initiatives concerning quantifiable targets-goals, additionality-contribution of initiatives to national commitments, financing for actions under the initiatives, and reporting taking into account principles of the Convention and existing methodologies and processes.

Annexure 1. Participation levels: Africa GST project webinars, 01-02 August 2023

