IGES Issue briefing July 2018

IGES Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

Stocktake for raising the climate ambition

Talanoa Dialogue for Global Stocktake

Eri Ikeda

Policy researcher

1. Introduction

Stocktaking generally allows to evaluate the current state of progress towards the goals set, recall and renew the targets in line with such goals, and seek and discuss the methods and approach to reach the goals. The output of a stocktake is thus designed to inform the subsequent process to ratchet up its expected outcome, actions and support, where necessary and appropriate.

Under the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), stocktaking appears to have increasingly become one of the most widely deployed tools at present. While each stocktake has its specific purpose and format, the stocktakes that are currently implemented or already scheduled include: Talanoa Dialogue in 2018, Pre-2020 Ambitions at COP 24 and 25 (in 2018 and 2019 respectively), periodic review of the long-term goals under the Convention following the 2013-15 review in around 2020 (no schedule has been released yet), the seventh review of the Financial Mechanism by the Standing Committee on Finance at COP26 (in 2020), and the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement in 2023.

Among these, this paper particularly focuses on the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake. The reason for this is two-fold. One is that the current major negotiation under the UNFCCC is the development of so-called the Paris rulebook that provides the operational guidelines of the Paris Agreement, and the Global Stocktake is one of the key components of this rulebook. The other is that, as the Fiji COP23 Presidency has noted, the Talanoa Dialogue is regarded as "initial stocktaking exercise" before the Global Stocktake, and that there is perceived to be a continuity between these two stocktakes (UNFCCC, 2017c). Decision 1/CP.23 also reminds us of the importance of continuation from pre- to post-2020 periods, articulating that "[e]mphasizing that enhanced pre-2020 ambition can lay a solid foundation for enhanced post-2020 ambition" (UNFCCC, 2017b).

There is however hardly any literature that reviews and examines the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktaketogether and analyses their mutual implications. It is also of note that there will be no further stocktake that covers the wider scope as/beyond the Talanoa Dialogue until 2023 (as of now), i.e., the first Global Stocktake. Therefore, although the Talanoa Dialogue process is not yet complete, it could be considered useful in designing the modality of the Global Stocktake that is currently under the negotiation.

Against this background, the aim of this paper is as follows: 1) to summarise and provide an overview of the current status of the Talanoa Dialogue and Global Stocktake; 2) to examine the commonality, differences, and linkages between the stocktakes that have been perceived up to present; and 3) to provide a policy recommendation to inform the better designing of

the Global Stocktake (and implementation of the Talanoa Dialogue towards COP24 where appropriate).

The remainder of the paper follows the objectives mentioned above. Firstly, it briefly reviews the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake including the aim, nature and current status of each stocktake. Then, the following section examines these two stocktakes to see what characteristics are shared or not, and whether linkages exist or not. Based on this, the next section discusses further how the Talanoa Dialogue might (not) be able to contribute to the the Global Stocktake process. Lastly, the paper is concluded by suggesting policy recommendations derived from the review.

2. Overview of Talanoa Dialogue and Global Stocktake

This section summarises the background and current state of the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake, with particular attention to the aim, nature, and process/procedure of each stocktake.

2-1. Talanoa Dialogue

At COP21, Parties agreed to implement the Facilitative Dialogue in 2018 "to take stock of collective effort towards the long-term goal", aiming to inform the preparation of the subsequent NDCs (UNFCCC, 2015a). This 2018 Facilitative Dialogue later came to be known as the Talanoa Dialogue after COP23 where the Parties agreed to take a unique 'Talanoa' approach for this facilitative dialogue under the initiative of the Fiji COP23 Presidencies.

This Talanoa approach is seen as quite innovative and new under the UNFCCC process,whereby setting the Talanoa Dialogue is seen not as a place of negotiation but story - telling and sharing to build trust among the participants, with three key questions in mind; "where are we? where do we want to go? how do we get there?". It is often depicted using keywords such as inclusive, participatory, transparent, facilitative, no finger-pointing, and comprehensive, which reflects the Pacific Islands' spirit including Fiji. The reflection of this philosophy was particularly evident in the extensive participation of non-Party stakeholders in collecting inputs via an online Talanoa Portal,[1] also allowing them to participate in the Talanoa sessions (even though the numbers were limited), and encouraging the Talanoa events globally at different levels.

The modality of this Dialogue went through reiterated discussions and consultations at COP22 and COP23, and the Talanoa Dialogue was launched globally in January this year.

[1] Talanoa Dialogue Portal https://talanoadialogue.com/

The overall process consists of the preparatory and political phases (for more details, see Figures 1 and 2 of Decision 1/CP.23 in Annex II, UNFCCC, 2017b, pp. 9-10), while the detailed procedure of each phase has been/will be announced as the process goes on. The preparatory phase is currently underway, and is gearing up ahead of the political phase of COP24 in December at Katowice, Poland where the Dialogue culminates. In May 2018 at SB48, the preparatory meetings, including the opening and closing plenary, Sunday Talanoa (dialogue itself[2], on 6 May) and report-back session, have already been held, and overall the meetings were well-received by the participants. The output also reflected more than 700 stories shared at the May session, and this was summarised and made available to the public in June.[3] Towards COP24, further submissions by the end of October are highly encouraged from Parties and non-Party stakeholders on the three core questions mentioned above, and a synthesis report will be released before the December session.

2-2. Global Stocktake

Article 14 of the Paris Agreement clearly defines the aim and the expected outcome of the Global Stocktake. In sum, the Global Stocktake is to evaluate collective actions at the global level every five years from 2023, and to enhance ambitions, actions, and supports, respecting the nationally determined nature of the Paris Agreement (see UNFCCC, 2017b).

Global Stocktake is the mandatory process under the Paris Agreement. It is one of the key components of the "ratchet up" mechanism that the Agreement has crafted, which is designed to generate an upward spiral for raising ambition, by feeding the output of the Global Stocktake into the NDCs update cycles[4] (see more details, IGES, 2016).

Detailed implementation rules and procedure of the stocktake have been negotiated under agenda item 6 of the APA (Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement) since 2016. The outcome of negotiations will be the part of the Paris rulebook that is expected to be adopted at COP24 and implemented post-2020. The mandate given for this agenda item for negotiatations is to identify the source of input and to develop its modality including the

---

[2] There were seven Talanoa groups. Each group consisted of 35 participants (30 Party and 5 non-Party representatives), a Fijian facilitator and rapporteur. Three sessions on "where are we?", "where do we want to go?" and "how do we get there?" were organised, and each participant had an opportunity to share their positive and challanging stories.

[3] "Summary of the Talanoa Dialogue at the May sessions", 18 May 2018, https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9fc76f74-a749-4eec-9a06-5907e013dbc9/downloads/1cgc07t0q_77988.pdf

[4] Next round of submissions, either new or updated NDCs, is requested by 2020 and every five years afterwards (depending on the countries, for example 2020, 2025, and 2030).

duration, phases, and governance of the stocktake etc., for the implementation of Global Stocktake. The latest outcome of the negotiation at the APA 1-5 in Bonn, Germany in May 2018, is summarised in a document called an Informal note,[5] reflecting the reiterated discussion on the building blocks that specifies and lists possible elements and items around the mandated topics. Further negotiations will be resumed at the APA 1-6 in Bangkok, Thailand in September 2018 and are expected to make use of this note comprising potential key components so that they can be incorporated into the text of the Paris rulebook, although how the negotiation is organised also depends on the content of the tool by the APA Co-Chairs that will be released at the beginning of August.

3. Commonalities, differences and linkages between the stocktaking processes

Against the backdrop of the review for each process outlined in the previous section, this section attempts to look at the common and different aspects, as well as any linkages between the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake.

3-1. Commonalities and Differences

3.1.1 Overarching elements

What is common for the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake is, firstly, the ultimate aim of the stocktake, i.e., to take stock of existing collective progress to raise ambition, and enhance actions to achieve long-term goals. On many occasions, it has already been realised that the total sum of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the submitted NDCs falls short to achieving the goal outlined in the Paris Agreement, and there is an urgent need to make the trend of GHG emissions downward.[6,7] The other perceived common aspect is that both the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake take stock of the collective (i.e., global) progress, rather than at an individual country level, while respecting the nationally determined nature[8] in formulating domestic policies and translating the output of

[5] "Informal note by the co-facilitators – final iteration", Version of 8 May 2018, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Informal%20note_Final_Iteration_08052018_1300.pdf

[6] One of the credible key scientific evidences, for example, suggests the inaction without further ambition would result in the rise of global temperature by 3.2 degrees by 2100 with the implementation of unconditional NDCs in comparison to the pre-industrial levels (UNEP, 2017).

[7] Paris agreement, Article 2, (a). "Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels…." (UNFCCC, 2015b).

[8] It is of note that some decisions such as Doha amendament do not have the aspect of nationally detemination.

the stocktake into actions and support. This characteristic is therefore depicted as a combination of top-down (international to country levels) and bottom-up (country level to international levels) approaches.

The clear difference is seen in the period of concern and the timing of the stocktakes— the Talanoa Dialogue takes stock of the actions and support before 2020, while the Global Stocktake aims to review those post-2020. Also, the former is organised on an ad-hoc basis depending on the COP decisions at the time, while the latter is a continuous process every five years as decided.

3.1.2 Method and approach

Both the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake are to be implemented facilitatively as defined, but the approach to make the process 'facilitative' appears to differ. As is clear, the Talanoa Dialogue adopted a facilitative *Dialogue* that has been more informal and uses interactive settings, while the Global Stocktake is made up of rather structured processes under the designated Paris rules and continues for a longer period.

3.1.3 Structure and stream

For the structure of the stocktaking process, the Talanoa Dialogue consists of the technical and political phases. that the structure of the Global Stocktake is still under construction, but there is an increasing consensus among the Parties towards this structure as well. The basic idea of the technical phase is to collect information, develop a (scientific) understanding among experts (including government officers and other participants, including the non-Party stakeholders) based on the data, and to provide inputs for the political phase. The subsequent political phase is where the high-level representatives, mainly from the Parties, consider inputs from the technical phase and discuss further on the topic concerned.

What is also common is the streams and topics concerned for each stocktaking process. Primarily, mitigation was the common denominator for both the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake, but the three broad key questions of the former appeared to have opened up the possibility of expanding its scope beyond the subject of mitigation. In fact, in one of the pre-briefing sessions before May, the Presidency informally mentioned the expansion of the scope to adaptation (and there appeared to be tacit acceptance for the inclusion of the associated means of implementation and support). On the other hand, for the Global Stocktake, Article 14.1 states that adaptation, mitigation and means of implementation and support are the main considered areas.

Differences will be seen when the detailed design of the Global Stocktake becomes more concrete as negotiations progress, reflecting the nature of each stocktake.

3-2. Existing linkage

Although the Talanoa Dialogue is seen as a prelude to the Global Stocktake as mentioned above, there is no clear mandate to link the two. Thus, there are no formal grounds either to inform the development of the modality of the Global Stocktake or to receive input from the Talanoa Dialogue in implementing the Global Stocktake in 2023 onwards. A technical and practical difficulty also lies for fully incorporating the outcomes of the Talanoa Dialogue into the Global Stocktake in terms of space, time, and capacity, simply because the timing of final negotiations and adoption of the Paris rulebook is at the same time as the Talanoa Dialogue, i.e., at COP24.

Table 1: Summary of three processes

	Talanoa Dialogue	Global Stocktake
Aim	Review and evaluate the progress to further raise ambition	
Period of concern	Before 2020	After 2020
Nature	Party-driven (in principle)	
Stream/item/topic of concern	Primarily mitigation (”where are we?, where do we want to go?, how do we get there?)	Adaptation, Mitigation, Means of Implementation (etc.)
Timing of stocktake	2018 (Jan to Dec)	2023 (every five years)
Method	Facilitative dialogue, Talanoa approach	Mandated, facilitative (under consideration)
Next benchmark meeting	COP24	2023
Mandated link with other processes	(Pre-2020 Amibition and Implementation partially)	None (so far)
Current status	Preparatory phase (collecting inputs etc.)	Negotiation under APA on the Paris rulebook

4. Implications of Talanoa Dialogue for Global Stocktake

In the previous section, it was shown that the commonalities between the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake are evident, recognising the existing limitations in linking the two stocktakes. Therefore, it would be useful to seek a potential contribution or reference from the Talanoa Dialogue to the development of the modality of the Global Stocktake. For this, it is necessary to first revisit the key consideration for doing so by discussing the perceived common challenges, and then outlining the key debate of the Global Stocktake to see what

the Talanoa Dialogue stocktake processes can contribute to those debates.

4-1. Common challenges

Whether the target of the stocktake is pre- or post-2020, one major and fundamental challenge would be how to make sure the outcome of the process could be translated into raising ambition and subsequent implementation of the pledges without a compromise. Particular focus should be put on how to make the mechanism work, by seeking ways to balance between the top-down and bottom-up views and approaches, i.e., international and country levels, and *vice versa* respectively. Respecting the nationally determined nature (bottom-up) means that no legally binding rule is imposed on any country from the international level (top-down). Therefore the mechanism entirely depends on the good-will of the individual countries when updating the NDCs and implementing promises. As the Talanoa Dialogue has already proved, the stocktake is certainly useful to share the sense of urgency, and build sympathy and trust among the participants. However, in reality, the willingness to understand and act does not necessarily lead to immediate actions. This is because the capability, capacity and available resources cannot change overnight or in a short space of time, especially for Parties given the national circumstances and domestic administrative procedures. Thus, to develop a mechanism that could enforce voluntary action and raise ambition for the common good is an urgent need and challenge for both stocktakes.

4-2. Key debate of Global Stocktake and areas of potential contributions by Talanoa Dialogue

In order to apply the lessons learnt from the Talanoa Dialogue to the Global Stocktake, it is important to understand the selected key debates of the Global Stocktake to which the Talanoa Dialogue can possibly contribute. This section is divided into two sections — development of modality and source of information, following the main mandates of negotiations in the Global Stocktake.

4.1.1 Development of the modality

The above-mentioned common challenge (see section 4-1) is directly linked with the concern on the delivery format and structure of the effective outcome outlined in Article 14.3. For this, the potential area of contribution from the Talanoa Dialogue is the organisation of the process, particularly the political phase, and the output (from both the preparatory and political

phases).[9] In particular, as the process culminates, these two are considered to be important areas to ensure the expected outcome where (political) momentum could be created globally and domestically. There are still difficulties remaining to incorporate these lesson learnt from the Talnoa Dialogue. However, given the fact that the process is still not complete, there is already some information available, such as formulation of the political phase of the Talanoa Dialogue and the release of the key message, as well as reports of the preparatory phases, which could be the starting points for evaluation.

The other perceived key issues are how to operationalise the Global Stocktake 'in light of equity'. One fundamental problem lies in the interpretation of the term 'equity' itself, which can be understood differently depending on the standpoint of countryand its capacity to implement, the level of development, historical background, and political reason etc. To the author's best knowledge, Global Stocktake negotiations can be seen as the most advanced on this front, in the sense that there was open discussion exclusively on the equity issue (at APA1-4). Thus, while there has been less expectation for the Talanoa Dialogue to complement this conceptual debate, the strong point of the Talanoa Dialogue is its inclusive nature. This inclusiveness could be one way of representing the equity principle, ensuring the fairness for equal participation.

In terms of phases and streams, what one can learn from the Talanoa Dialogue is the challenge in expanding its scope and items of discussion (i.e., to discuss not only mitigation but also other topics such as adaptation etc.,) during the process. It is indeed difficult to draw a clear line between the items under consideration, especially due to the fact that there is an increasing awareness that these need to be discussed in a more integrated and comprehensive manner. However, this results in losing the focus of the discussion. While allowing to expand the scope without a major backdrop could have been possible for the Talanoa Dialogue given its spirit, the Global Stocktake needs a more structured setting that is well-thought-out in advance as the scale of the stocktake is larger and it involves many organisations under the Paris Agreement and the Convention in the process.

4.1.2 Source of information

The Global Stocktake is also implemented in light of the best available science. There is almost a consensus that it is represented by the IPCC. Following the mandate of Decision 1/CP.21, the SBSTA has already discussed and made a recommendation on how IPCC can inform the

[9] The output means something tangible that is released immediately after the stocktaking processes including report, political declaration, key messages etc., that are under negotiation, while the outcome regards the results through the implementation of the Global Stocktake articulated in Article 14 of the Paris Agreement.

Global Stocktake, but there has not been a discussion regarding this matter on the Global Stocktake side. During the Talanoa Dialogue, as the summary of the May session states, there will be a discussion at the December session regarding the IPCC special report on 1.5 degrees. This could be an important lesson on how this report is treated and incorporated into the process.

Apart from the information from the IPCC, there also exists vast and rich scientific and non-scientific information world-wide. To effectively implement the Global Stocktake with limited time, space and resources, it is crucial to select and receive correct, high-quality information. One of the problems pointed out by participants of the Talanoa Dialogue is that some information presented and quoted in the submission and shared-stories was not credible. This means that there was no process of ensuring the quality of provided data. It is assumed that this is partly because of the volume of the information submitted via the Talanoa portal, which was not manageable, and the Fiji Presidencies and the secretariats were not in a position to judge and evaluate the contents. Certainly, opening up the portal to collect broad inputs succeeded in more than 700 stories being shared during the preparatory session in May deserves recognition. However, it should be noted that digesting such a large amount of information is indeed a daunting task. It is important to learn whether this was the most effective method, and if not, which items and how much information should be prioritised, as well as looking at which organisation (apart from the IPCC) has contributed the information.

5. Conclusion and policy recommendation for the designing of Global Stocktake

This paper reviewed the structure and current progress of the Talanoa Dialogue and the Global Stocktake, their commonalities, differences and linkages, and the implication of the Talanoa Dialogue to develop the Global Stocktake modality to be included in the Paris rulebook. As a conclusion to this paper, this last section provides a policy recommendation to the Global Stocktake negotiation process towards COP24, as well as a recommendations to the remaining process of the Talanoa Dialogue.

Policy Recommendations

- ✓ Design the Global Stocktake to be able to evolve over time, which allows it to be modified and updated by incorporating the collected elements of good practices and lesson learnt. In this way, the mechanism can be adjusted according to the challenges and limitations faced by the stocktakes. As discussed, given the timing of the Talanoa Dialogue and the development of the Paris rulebook, it is difficult to incorporate all the expected lessons learnt from the Talanoa Dialogue into the Global stocktake modality. Yet, it would be useful to create a mechanism or space (e.g., placeholder etc.) in the Global Stocktake that

allows evaluation of the outcome of the Talanoa Dialogue to be reflected for better implementation of the Global Stocktake at a certain point.

- ✓ Ensure to develop an output that leads to the achievement of the expected outcome. Ultimately, if actions do not improve as a result of the stocktake, the mechanism loses its credibility. In this regard, one of the key channels to communicate from the stocktakes to the appropriate actors is an output, and the crutial elements for it is to send a clear signal and guidance during and after the processes.
- ✓ Ensure to reflect the principle of 'in light of the best available science' in the mechanism. To ensure the credibility of the stocktake, it is important to design the stocktake based on credible data. Recognising the gap in the availability of the data especially for developing countries, it is crucial to assess the collective progress objectively and with scientific basis, and for that, the process to incorporate information from the IPCC and linkages with the Transparency mechanism require further consideration.

References

Tamura, K., Suzuki, M., and Yoshino, M. (2016) "Empowering the Ratchet-up Mechanism under the Paris Agreement: Roles of Linkage between Five-year Cycle of NDCs and Long-term Strategies, Transparency Framework and Global Stocktake", November 2016, Working Paper, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies.

UNFCCC. (2015a) "Decision 1/CP.21: Adoption of Paris Agreement", English ver., Available at http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a01.pdf#page=2 [Retrieved 5 April 2018]

UNFCCC. (2015b) "Paris Agreement", English ver., Available at http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf [Retrieved 5 April 2018]

UNFCCC. (2017a) "Talanoa Dialogue Approach", Annex II to 1/CP.23, Informal note by the Presidencies of COP22 and COP23, 17 November 2017, Available at http://unfccc.int/files/bodies/cop/application/pdf/approach_to_the_talanoa_dialogue.pdf [Retrieved 5 April 2018]

UNFCCC. (2017b) "Decision 1/CP.23", FCCC/CP/2017/11/Add.1, 18 November 2017, Available at https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/cop23/eng/l13.pdf [Retrieved 5 April 2018]

UNFCCC. (2017c) "Talanoa Dialogue – Everything you need to know", 18 November 2017, Available at https://cop23.com.fj/talanoa-dialogue/ [Retrieved 5 April 2018]

UNFCCC. (2018) "Suggested approach to organizing the Talanoa Dialogue in the first half of 2018", Presidencies' Corner, 19 February 2018, Available at https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/9fc76f74-a749-4eec-9a06-5907e013dbc9/downloads/1c6ng599a_875385.pdf [Retrieved 5 April 2018]

Website

Pre-2020 Ambition http://unfccc.int/focus/pre_2020_ambition/items/8165.php

Talanoa Dialogue Portal https://talanoadialogue.com/

UNFCCC. NDC Interim Registry http://www4.unfccc.int/ndcregistry/Pages/Home.aspx

I would like to thank Mr Satoshi Tanaka, Dr Kentaro Tamura, Dr Nanda Kumar Janardhanan, Ms Madoka Yoshino and Dr Yuji Mizuno for valuable comments to improve this paper.

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)
Climate and Energy Area
2108-11 Kamiyamaguchi, Hayama, Kanagawa, 240-0115, Japan
Tel: 046-826-9592 Fax: 046-855-3809 E-mail: ce-info@iges.or.jp
www.iges.or.jp