

CCIL Submission to "2018 Talanoa Dialogue", United Nations Climate Change Secretariat (March 2018)

Talanoa Submission:

Promoting and supporting action on the part of sub-national entities
Carbon Care Asia / CarbonCare Inn:Lab. Hong Kong. March 2018

By John Sayer, Research Director, CCIL

Here's a story: there was a time when around half the population of China still fell below the poverty line. The Central Government recognized that the benefits from the massive growth of the Chinese economy was concentrated in the big cities and rich provinces in the East of the country. In response, the government did not take a one-size-fits-all approach to poverty reduction. Instead, it twinned the wealthiest areas in the East with the poorest areas in the West, asking these high growth areas to devise plans for finance, investment, technology transfer and capacity building to help them to move out of poverty.

Capacity and responsibility to contribute to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement is also unevenly distributed within nations as much as between nations.

On the issue of action against climate change, the Paris Agreement recognizes the important role of sub-national entities, particularly cities, in raising the ambition level of parties, but beyond this recognition, offers little tangible advice or support.

In order to support these important agreements on the role of non-parties, the UNFCCC and Parties to the Paris Agreement should devise ways to formally recognize, measure, facilitate and reward contributions of sub-national entities in all areas of ambition within the Paris Agreement. This should include actions on mitigation, adaptation, finance, capacity building, and technology development & transfer.

This is particularly important for sub-national entities with high-degrees of autonomy which may result in separate environmental, economic or legal systems, separate legislatures, independent budgets, autonomous overseas aid programmes, or other types of special status which separate day-to-day administration from that of their central governments.

Such territories can and should be encouraged to make additional contributions to all aspects of the Paris Agreement which build on and contribute to national targets, including the NAPs and NDCs of Parties.

As C40 Cities has stated: "Without action by cities the Paris Agreement cannot realistically be

delivered. The business-as-usual path of C40 cities' emissions needs to 'bend' from an increase of 35% by 2020, to peak at only a further 5% higher than current emissions."

Recent studies by C40 Cities indicate that when we include consumption of goods from developing countries, affluent cities emit 60 percent more GHGs than current calculations indicate.

Incentives and recognition are also important for sub-national entities that have both responsibility and capacity greater than the average within their nation. Parties to the UNFCCC should be given the encouragement and the tools to apply the concept of "common but differentiated responsibility" within their territory as well as beyond it, by applying the principles of 'responsibility' and 'capacity' related to climate action as laid out in the study and methodology of "Fair Shares."

Support to sub-national efforts can also make an important contribution to the achievement of a just transition. City and local governments administer smaller populations than national governments and are frequently more responsible for front-line delivery of essential services. It is often the case, therefore, that city and regional administrations are more aware and more responsive to the immediate social impact of environmental policies in areas such as employment, equal opportunities, social protection and marginalised communities. They are therefore more mindful of the need to build in measures for a just transition with their communities. Enabling, recognising and monitoring climate action at city and local level is therefore an important contribution to promoting a just transition.

Enabling policies can provide more formal support to sub-national action on the Paris Agreement. To achieve this, UNFCCC should work with Parties to:

1. Develop metrics to measure performance of cities, provinces, states and regions against both national NDCs, as well as against the targets identified by the IPCC as necessary to achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement, most specifically limiting global average temperature rises to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to keep rises to 1.5°C.
2. As part of national plans, develop methods to monitor, report and verify the contribution of sub-national entities to action and support on climate finance, technology exchange, capacity building and other forms of assistance to other places, as set out in the Paris Agreement.
3. Adapt the principles behind of common but differentiated responsibilities to encourage, resource and enable Parties and non-parties to apply these principles to sub-national jurisdictions within each country, taking account of different levels of development and historical emissions in different geographical areas. This can assist Parties in achievement of their contributions to the Paris Agreement, more effectively deploying climate resources from one area to another within the country, and ensuring each part of any nation contributes to the best of its capacity to higher ambition levels to the nationally determined contribution.

4. Ensure transparency and accountability on the part of sub-national entities to enable and ensure their full contribution to the goals of the Paris Agreement by developing Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) mechanisms in ways which can be applied to sub-national jurisdictions.

This submission was prepared by John Sayer with Carbon Care Asia and CarbonCare InnoLab, Hong Kong. For more information, please contact: john.sayer@ccinnolab.org