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NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

Summary of Outcomes from the NAZCA Platform Consultation Workshop Geneva | February 7, 2015

Executive Summary

As countries negotiate the next climate agreement, due in December 2015 at the Paris COP 21, there is growing attention to the actions and initiatives that non-state and sub-state actors – including cities, regions, private companies, countries, and civil society groups – play in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Their contributions have the potential to help raise national ambition; spur additional mitigation, adaptation, and finance action; and inject an emphasis on action and solutions into the public dialogue on climate change.

The creation of the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) Platform signals the solidification of the role of non-state and sub-national actors alongside nation-states. Launched jointly by the Peruvian government and the UNFCCC Secretariat at the Conference of Parties (COP) 20 in Lima, NAZCA is a tool to showcase and spur climate adaptation and mitigation activity. In the lead up to COP21 in December 2015, NAZCA raises and may help address questions about how to aggregate, catalyze, and showcase climate action.

A February 7, 2015 workshop, organized by Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions, an initiative of the Stanley Foundation, the University of Oxford Blavatnik School of Government, and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and co-sponsored by Graduate Institute Geneva, met to discuss and produce a series of recommendations on the development and guiding principles of NAZCA. Approximately 25 participants from climate initiatives, data platforms, supportive governments, the UNFCCC Secretariat, and observers and advocates of climate action met to discuss the potential of the NAZCA Platform. The following document summarizes some of the key observations and recommendations on its role in the road to Paris, as well as its evolution beyond this landmark COP.

Workshop Summary

Organizing Questions

The workshop's discussion and subsequent recommendations focused on clarifying NAZCA's communication strategy and audience, along with addressing questions surrounding seven key action areas:

1. Defining criteria for the inclusion of International Cooperative Initiatives (ICIs) from the Climate Initiatives Database into NAZCA

NAZCA imports data from several sources, including the Climate Initiatives Database, ICLEI's carbonn Climate Registry (cCR), the Climate Disclosure Project (CDP), The Climate Group, and Climate Initiatives Database. Given the particular heterogeneity of ICIs, some thought is required concerning how best to aggregate them into the NAZCA platform. What constitutes an "action" for each? How can the platform fairly and accurately highlight and compare actions across different sectors and geographies? How should they be distributed across sectors, geography, etc.? How can NAZCA prevent against "greenwashing" and set a threshold for inclusion?

2. Determining criteria for highlighting especially noteworthy actions within NAZCA

Some actions are more ambitious, innovative, or significant than others. How can NAZCA best distinguish between the various parts of the groundswell to emphasize the most noteworthy actions? What criteria should be emphasized in NAZCA, versus other platforms?

3. Enabling and showcasing data analysis on NAZCA

A key potential benefit of a centralized platform like NAZCA is that it could facilitate data analysis of sub/non-state climate action by various parties. How can the platform best promote this? What are the existing methodologies for assessing these actions and initiatives and how can NAZCA best complement and advance them?

4. How to expand NAZCA

How much of the groundswell of climate action is NAZCA actually capturing? How can it be expanded? How should its relationship to other climate action platforms develop?

5. Identifying functionalities that could be sought in the next phase of NAZCA platform

At present, NAZCA provides a searchable text list of actions and actors. What additional functionalities are the top priorities to add in advance of Paris?

Visualization? Granularity? Quantification? What are the audiences for NAZCA? How will they be linked for users to navigate between them? Can they be used together in any way for data extraction?

6. Following up on the outcomes of the initiatives and actions listed in NAZCA

What mechanisms exist for follow-up on initiatives and actions listed on NAZCA? How could these be strengthened, especially post Paris? Is there a process to remove old or inactive initiatives?

7. Refining the platform's relationship with the UNFCCC process

At COP20, the ADP text was shorn of most references to sub/non-state action. How can NAZCA best support the ADP process over the next year? Will and can NAZCA be linked to future high-level engagement on pre-2020 ambition in future ADP sessions/COP 21?

Overview of NAZCA and Perspectives from the UNFCCC Secretariat

NAZCA, which takes its name from the historic NAZCA lines in Peru, showcases and works to catalyze additional action by both non-state and state actors. The platform identifies opportunities to support and scale-up existing initiatives, as well as to identify areas where additional action is needed. Synthesizing climate actions in a comprehensive clearinghouse allows NAZCA to demonstrate the cumulative scale of the climate groundswell. Making climate actions more transparent and accessible can also enhance public confidence in the impact of these efforts.¹ The platform supports the globally negotiated goals of the UNFCCC, and may also aim at additional, longer-term goals as well.

NAZCA is composed of content drawn from ICLEI's carbonn Climate Registry (cCR), the Climate Disclosure Project (CDP), The Climate Group, and Climate Initiatives Database, and currently displays 913 actions, from 317 cities, 70 sub-national regions, and 261 companies.² The UNFCCC Secretariat, which hosts the platform, aims to create a simple, publically consumable, and visually appealing tool, that highlights climate action without replicating existing data platforms. To date, the platform's actions, commitments, and initiatives have been selected manually, rather than through an automated set of selection criteria, and do not encompass the entirety of the datasets they draw from, and represent an attempt to highlight, rather than comprehensively assess, ongoing climate action. One estimate recorded approximately 180 cooperative climate initiatives, which engaged over

¹ Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions. A Global Platform for Climate Action: Synthesis of Stakeholder Inputs.

² NAZCA. Available: <http://climateaction.unfccc.int/about.aspx> (accessed 11 February 2015).

20,000 global actors to mitigate and adapt to climate change,³ in comparison to the 913 actions displayed on the NAZCA platform. The context of the site within the UNFCCC also informs its approach to data aggregation. For instance, the Secretariat would need to consider any potential overlaps and implications for existing UNFCCC reporting agreements in attempts to calculate the emissions impacts of these actions.

While NAZCA may provide downloadable data to supplement its platform interface in the future to enable metric calculations, there are no current plans to provide specific emissions reporting and verification. The UNFCCC has not yet extensively promoted the platform post-Lima but plans to release more data throughout the year; the Secretariat is currently taking stock of the way NAZCA resonates with external stakeholders and parties. The current version of the platform is meant to represent a first step towards, rather than a final iteration of, this vision. Additional outreach and publicity may accompany the addition of more data and data providers to the site.

Communication and Audience Identification

Communication

The NAZCA platform has an opportunity to help shift the overarching message of the climate narrative from one of “burden sharing” to one of “positive action.”⁴ The workshop identified several key steps and components to facilitate this process:

1. *Clarify the ownership of the NAZCA platform and process.* At the moment, neither the government of Peru, which saw the launch of NAZCA at COP 20, or Paris, which will host COP 21, are seen to have claimed ownership of this platform. Asking them to highlight NAZCA could raise the profile and awareness of this tool, particularly in regard to its relationship with the UNFCCC.
2. *Identify key moments in 2015* that offer opportunities to highlight and promote the NAZCA platform. For instance, the one year anniversary of the 2014 Climate Summit in New York offers a chance to review some of these initiatives that grew out of this event; to determine which ones are included in NAZCA; and to examine how NAZCA can help facilitate the expansion of their progress.
3. *Emphasize the business case and the co-benefits of climate action,* to cast it as a source of opportunity, rather than a burden or obligation.

³ Galvanizing the Groundswell of Climate Actions. A Global Platform for Climate Action: Synthesis of Stakeholder Inputs.

⁴ Ibid.

4. *Paint NAZCA as a bridge to the goal of limiting global warming to 2 degrees Celsius.*⁵ Its content helps make the case that mitigation can be beneficial, and not as costly or difficult as often it is often perceived.

Audience Identification

Many of the details in communicating and tailoring NAZCA hinge on its key intended audiences. The workshop drew out several key considerations to inform the process of honing in on the platforms users in greater detail:

1. *The role of the platform's technical abilities in determining the audience.*
Participants noted the difficulty of determining if the audience should drive the technical capabilities of the platform, or if the technical capabilities should serve as a starting point for what audiences would be able to see. Is the platform meant to be a one-stop shop research tool, or a strong political tool for showcasing initiatives? Some distinctions between audiences may lead to “either/or” choices in terms of what the platform displays, while other user groups may use the platform in compatible ways.
2. *Connecting the platform's purpose and audience to the style and content of its showcasing.* Different audiences will have very different ways of interacting with database; while some will use it willingly, others may need a carrot or a push. Some types of goals and audiences may be mutually compatible, while others will require either/or decisions. *Tiering the site* to different audiences and different uses may offer one approach to engaging them in different ways.
3. *The importance of considering different audiences' current and likely state of engagement with NAZCA and climate change,* in determining how to engage them with the platform. For instance, the conversation noted that:
 - a. *Governments* are very important audience, but also a very difficult one to engage.
 - b. *The public* is not currently tapped into this issue; attempts to engage this demographic will need to consider and develop a strategy for overcoming this lack of awareness.
 - c. *Private financial institutions* are key target audience, but many seem to already have their own networks.
 - d. Gathering direct feedback from *negotiators engaged in the UNFCCC process* could help inform efforts to engage them in the platform.

⁵ Blok, K., Höhne, N., van der Leun, K., & Harrison, N. (2012). Bridging the greenhouse-gas emissions gap. *Nature Climate Change*, 2(7), 471-474; UN Environment Programme. (2014). The Emissions Gap Report 2014. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi.

Workshop Outcomes and Recommendations

Defining Criteria for the Inclusion of International Cooperative Initiatives (ICIs)

The workshop generated suggestions for the inclusion of new International Cooperative Initiatives (ICIs) from the Climate Initiatives Database and for the inclusion of new data providers into the NAZCA platform.

Regarding the inclusion of *new ICIs from the Climate Initiatives Database*, participants recommended the platform:

1. Focus on action-oriented efforts, which are verifiable and inspiring in their attempts to go beyond business as usual.
2. Measure impact in terms of tons of carbon emissions, funding, co-benefits (such as public health and job creation), and, perhaps, the number of participants.
3. Maintain a pro-development perspective that includes and recognizes efforts of developing countries.

Regarding the inclusion of *new data providers*, participants recommended the platform:

1. Develop a set of clearly defined criteria for selection.
2. Ensure the transparency of the selection of different providers.
3. Ensure that any changes or developments in the selection criteria consider and are fair to existing data providers.

Determining Criteria for Highlighting Especially Noteworthy Actions Within NAZCA

The discussion around this topic noted that developing a clearer definition and understanding of NAZCA's user groups will be key to deciding what initiatives highlight. Several potential goals of the highlighting process include influencing the UNFCCC negotiations, accessing climate finance, and encouraging the diffusion of approaches with great potential to be adopted and scaled up. With these objectives in mind, workshop participants identified three key considerations in deciding how to both select featured examples and to give certain efforts more prominence within the platform's overall structure.

1. The NAZCA platform is *highly contextual*, and different actions should be highlighted to best speak to the different audiences who interact with the platform. Strategies for accomplishing this might include:

- a. Adding different website windows to target different kinds of user (for instance, by adding links for the general public, for policy-makers, and for investors to the NAZCA homepage).
 - b. Drawing on user profiles to tailor content to user interests.
 - c. Layering different kinds of data across different kinds of platforms (for example, maintaining NAZCA as a platform for a general audience, while linking to websites that contain more information for more-technically minded audiences).
 - d. Creating additional portals, targeted towards different audiences, which link back to either NAZCA or to the original data sources.
2. *A set of criteria* can guide the highlighting of specific efforts. These criteria should be weighed equally, to ensure the work of projects in developing countries are not overshadowed or overlooked in the highlighting process. Suggestions of key criteria to consider include:
 - a. Scale.
 - b. Greenhouse gas emissions reduction.
 - c. Co-benefits, such as sustainable development, job creation, and health protection or improvement.
 3. The platform should ensure *transparency* in determining what actions are highlighted. Clarifying the process of this distillation is especially important for data providers to the NAZCA platform, and might be facilitated by automating the selection process as much as possible (currently, projects are added to the NAZCA platform manually).

Enabling and Showcasing Data Analysis on NAZCA

The workshop considered what kinds of metaphorical motors should drive the “shiny new car” of NAZCA’s interface into motion. Three central points of consensus emerged:

1. *NAZCA should be structured as a gateway as an entry point for non-expert users.* The platform provides a natural entry-point for non-expert users, offering an opportunity to draw more attention to high-level messages and narratives. Specifically, its analysis could work to showcase and facilitate a greater connection between mitigation and adaptation activities and the negotiation process, particularly in enabling the comparison of cities to government, and the relationship between NAZCA activities and countries’ Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

NAZCA is unlikely to be the source of choice for expert users, who already rely on established technical communities and data sources for their work. As a result, the platform should not strive to address questions of double counting (whether an effort's emissions impacts are counted more than once) and additionally (whether initiatives go beyond business-as-usual scenarios). The significant cost and difficulty involved in resolving these questions may not be justified by their relevance to the platform's likely users.

2. The platform should be targeted to speak to a range (or selected subset) of *use cases*. Specifically, these should serve to:
 - a. Display a broader scope of global actions, and the reach of global commitments, in a way that is inclusive of developing countries.
 - b. Showcase narratives that illustrate why some actors are taking action and why, as a way of incentivizing more actors to join.
 - c. Make the business argument for action, to draw financing to promising projects.
3. The platform has the potential to act as a *knowledge broker*, aggregating and connecting users to additional sources of more detailed or tailored information.

Expanding NAZCA

The workshop's discussion on the current and future scope of NAZCA focused on clarifying its relationship to other data providers and platforms, and to ensuring that it accurately captured the groundswell from developing, as well as developed, countries. Key overarching suggestions included the need to:

1. *Add additional content* from existing data providers.
2. *Create more transparent criteria* for data provision.
3. *Add greater emphasis to the developing countries' activities and contributions.*

Identifying Additional Functionalities for the Next Phase of NAZCA

The conversation on new functionalities for the next phase of the NAZCA platform emphasized the need to consider and tailor features to the wide range of potential site visitors. Participants also agreed that new tools should help to NAZCA become an "appetizer" for additional investment and partnerships in climate action. Specific suggested coalesced around the following tools and capabilities:

1. Adding a tool, such an interactive map, to *search for and view initiatives by country*. This option may be challenging to implement, since contributions from

companies are often spread out across multiple different locations, but was highlighted as an especially useful addition to the site. In particular, comparing aggregated non-state and sub-national actions against current national contributions would highlight stark disparities and where nation-states may be falling short.

2. *Compiling and/or hosting reports* assessing the impact and progress of different actions, commitments, and initiatives. A third party organization's website might offer the most appropriate place for these assessments, as the UNFCCC would need to be very politically sensitive to the ways any NAZCA reports might overlap or integrate with other reporting processes and concerns in UNFCCC agreements.
3. *Identifying areas where no or insufficient action is being taken*, to catalyze new attention in these arenas. This functionality may also be one that is best addressed by a third party organization. There is opportunity for it to correspond with reports on the overall scope, effectiveness, and areas of additional opportunity for non-state actions (as outlined in suggestion two).
4. *Adding options to enable quantification*. An optional field to collect quantifiable data was suggested as one way to move towards quantification without discouraging the inclusion of a broad range of initiatives.
5. *Making the organization of initiatives by themes (such as land use or renewable energy) more prominent*. Structuring the impact of NAZCA's initiatives in this way might help them resonate more strongly with users. At the moment, the platform's home page and organizing structure is based on categories of non-state actors (such as cooperative initiatives or businesses).
6. *Adding features to better showcase and facilitate projects in developing countries*. Specific suggestions included adding a tag for sustainable development, along with implementing a way of accounting for co-benefits (i.e., job creation, public health, or sustainable development).
7. Tools or information to *incorporate new actions, commitments, or initiatives into the database* (i.e., a page explaining or facilitating the process of how to get involved).
8. The ability for sub- and non-state actors to *self-contribute to the platform*. Tagging these entries, and including caveats that note the greater level of uncertainty of their information, could address concerns about the credibility of this data.

Following up on the Outcomes of the Initiatives and Actions Listed in NAZCA

The workshop determined several guiding principles and suggestions for following up on the results of the outcomes and actions listed in NAZCA:

1. The process of following up on initiatives and actions listed on NAZCA should be left to data-providers. *Quality control, in other words, should take the form of selecting reliable data providers* for the NAZCA platform.
2. *A notification of the date on which an action, initiative, or commitment was most recently updated* should be added to the website's descriptions of these efforts. Any discontinued efforts should remain on the site, along with an explanation for their change in status.
3. Questions of follow-up naturally dovetail and should be *linked with high-level meetings such as the UNFCCC's Technical Expert Meetings (TEM)*, which gather and share information on policies, practices and technologies to “unlock mitigation potential for raising pre-2020 ambition.”⁶

Refining NAZCA's Relationship with the UNFCCC Process

While non-state actors are already engaged in the UNFCCC process in a number of ways, the NAZCA platform is unique in that it actively advertises these activities. As the 2015 Paris COP approaches, the NAZCA platform has an opportunity to address issues that Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) cannot, and to act as a mechanism to help sell and promote adaptation and mitigations action to the parties. It also faces several challenges related to the uncertainty of its exact connection to INDCs; some countries claim non-state actions as part of their commitments; some actively exclude them; and many regard these as a grey area. In addition to defining its role in the path to Paris, NAZCA must also consider how it will define its connection to the UNFCCC after this event.

The workshop produced a number of suggestions for additional discussion and investigation:

1. *Determine the most appropriate ombudsman* for the NAZCA platform. Specifically, exploring whether the UNFCCC, a third party, or a partnership

⁶ UNFCCC. Available: http://unfccc.int/focus/mitigation/technical_expert_meetings/items/8179.php (accessed 11 February 2015).

between these different entities would represent the best approach to ensuring the accuracy and transparency of the platform's data.

2. Promote a *Friends of NAZCA* approach, in which national governments can voluntarily take ownership of different non-state and sub-state commitments.
3. Tap into the *momentum around the announcement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* to identify and leverage co-benefits between climate action and sustainable development, and facilitate new partnerships.
4. *Explore the ways the NAZCA Platform might influence policy* through an aggregation the impact of non- and sub-state climate actions, which could be compared with national-level commitments.
5. Introduce a mechanism, such as new tags, to connect efforts within NAZCA to the UNFCCC *Technical Expert Meetings (TEM)*. NAZCA could serve as a source of new ideas for the TEM process to focus on it its efforts to unlock pre-2020 mitigation ambition.
6. Frame and promote NAZCA a toolbox of ideas and initiatives countries can use to *ratchet up* their INDCs.
7. *Insert NAZCA into ex-ante or ex-post discussions on INDCs*. Emphasize the point that even if countries do not explicitly account for NAZCA initiatives in their crafting of INDCs, they will ultimately benefit from the their emissions reductions impact.
8. Create a *legal framework* to add a level of accountability to non- and sub-state actions, and to help clarify the relationship between them and the UNFCCC.
9. Accelerate the flexibility and establish a mechanism to facilitate feedback between NAZCA and INDCs. This may help alleviated countries' worry that engaging with non-state initiatives leads to additional commitments and a corresponding rise in the risk of non-compliance.
10. *Engage with stakeholders and support capacity building* to support the future development of the Platform.

Concluding Thoughts

NAZCA represents a key step towards the incorporation of sub- and non-state actors in the UNFCCC's political arena. Its presence legitimizes and facilitates countries' turn to this groundswell of climate action, raising ambition and offering new tools to deliver concrete action. Key questions about its functionality and intended impact remain, creating an opportunity and a mandate to shape it further.

Several key questions will drive NAZCA's bearing on the road to the Paris, as well as build the foundation for its role after the 2015 COP. The platform's ability to catalyze climate action at both the national and non-state and sub-state levels will depend on the ways it hones: its understanding of its audience; its communication strategy; its criteria for selecting and highlighting climate actions; the strategy guiding its current data analysis and future functionalities; and its relationship to and integration with the UNFCCC.