COP29 Pre-COP Begins in Azerbaijan

Today, the COP29 Presidency hosted global climate leaders, government officials, constituencies, and delegates at the opening of Pre-COP in Baku, Azerbaijan. Pre-COP provides an important platform for Parties to advance climate negotiations ahead of the 29th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), set to take place in November.

Pre-COP discussions will focus on making progress on key priorities before COP29, including climate finance, specifically the New Collective Quantified Goal, mitigation, adaptation, and supporting vulnerable communities in global climate solutions.

In an address delivered on his behalf by COP29 President-Designate Mukhtar Babayev, H.E. President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan emphasized the importance of agreeing an NCQG at COP29 that "meets the needs of the developing, least developed and small island developing states" and represents a "substantial increase" over the prior goal.

President Aliyev noted that reaching this goal will require the collaboration of the international community. "Neither Azerbaijan in its capacity of the COP29 Presidency, nor any other state, can take decisions on behalf of others. Our role is to provide the platform for facilitating negotiations, which we believe we have been fulfilling impartially," he said. "As we are entering into the final stage of preparations to the COP29, I call on you to engage constructively and in good faith for the sake of humanity. While states have common but differentiated responsibilities, they should put aside disagreements, stop blaming each other and find common ground. We cannot afford to waste time on defining who is guilty for

global warming, or who caused more environmental harm.” In his own address at the opening ceremony, President-Designate Babayev recognised the progress made, while also calling for participants to act with urgency and use the Pre-COP meeting to build the foundation for a successful outcome at COP29.

“We are building bridges and momentum, but we need much more,” said COP29 President-Designate Mukhtar Babayev. “We make progress when we come together, put differences aside, and engage in open and honest dialogue.”

He then added: “The purpose of this session is to prepare for success at COP29. Given the complexity and high stakes involved in the mandated agenda items, we cannot afford to leave too much to be decided at the summit.”

The COP29 President-Designate also set out clear goals for each priority. Speaking about the NCQG, which Azerbaijan has identified as the top negotiating priority for COP29. He noted that “we are seeing some signs of possible convergence on certain elements of the goal. We want to focus on where we can build a solid foundation to help support discussions on other elements.” He also frankly identified the need to “take seriously the responsibility for identifying a number over a timeframe and come forward with solutions. Qualitative elements of the goal such as transparency and accessibility are also essential to ensuring that the goal is both fair and ambitious.”

The President-Designate also outlined goals for each of the other top negotiating priorities, including concluding work on Article 6 as a much needed priority “crucial for directing financial and technical resources”, turning pledges into signed contributor agreements to the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage, attracting “significantly greater contributions” to all funds, including the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, and responding to the call of the UAE Consensus to transition away from fossil fuels in a just and

orderly manner.

The opening ceremony, which was livestreamed on YouTube (available here), also featured speeches from Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Amina J. Mohammed, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell, COP28 President Dr Sultan Al Jaber, and Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation Ambassador Nabeel Munir.

“COP29 must be an enabling COP, delivering concrete outcomes to start translating the pledges made in last year’s historic UAE Consensus into real-world, real-economy results,” UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell said at the Pre-COP opening. “Clearly finance is key among the concrete outcomes needed this year. An ambitious new goal is entirely in every nation’s and every economy’s interests. We can only prevent the climate crisis from decimating all economies – including the largest and wealthiest – if every country has the means to take much stronger climate actions,” Stiell added.

Pre-COP is the latest milestone in Azerbaijan’s preparations for COP29, which will be a key moment in the global effort to limit global warming to 1.5°C and build resilience to climate impacts.

In the lead up to Pre-COP, the COP29 Presidency also convened an informal Heads of Delegation meeting on October 8th in Baku, followed by the formal High-Level Ministerial Dialogue on the NCQG on October 9th. Another Heads of Delegation meeting is scheduled for October 12th.

The COP29 Azerbaijan Presidency will spare no effort to act as a bridge between developed and developing nations and steer the process to a successful outcome at COP29. “COP29 will be a defining test for both the Paris Agreement and for multilateralism,” stated President-Designate Babayev. “The world is watching, and history will judge us on the outcomes

we achieve. Success or failure at COP29 will be collective and each of us has a role to play. We must all offer the best of ourselves.”