**COP23 Negotiators—Preparation Checklist**

From *Taking the Floor: A Pacific Island Country Guide to Negotiating International Environmental Agreements*, Ian Fry with Maria Gutiérrez (2012) Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

“[The main objective of this booklet] is to address capacity building needs and issues encountered in the context of the Pacific Islands, for non-expert negotiators that are often called to participate in multilateral environmental agreements meetings, and represent their countries.

“International environmental negotiations are confusing, complex and intimidating. Negotiations are held in a language that is not your own. The context of speaking at these meetings is quite different from the cultural context of speaking at a meeting at home. Despite all these challenges, you are compelled to try to negotiate an outcome that best represents the interests of your country.

There is no magic bullet to negotiating. Mostly skills are developed by experience. *Taking the Floor* draws on the extensive experience of the authors to try to make your task a little easier.”

1. **Read the annotated Agenda**

Download the annotated Agenda for the meeting sessions that you’re following ([COP 23](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?priref=600009740), [CMP 13](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?priref=600009734), [CMA 1-2](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?priref=600009737), [SBSTA 47](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?priref=600009729), [SBI 47](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?priref=600009727), [APA 1-4](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/6911.php?priref=600009738)). The agenda outlines each topic for discussion at the meeting, and will usually hint at the likely outcome of the negotiation (i.e. what decision is likely to be taken; this is usually included in the last line of the document).

1. **Decide on the most important issues for Vanuatu**

Vanuatu’s delegation is unable to cover all the issues for negotiation at COP. It’s therefore important to prioritise the agenda items, so that Vanuatu’s delegates only focus on the most important issues.

1. **Read the background documents**

There will usually be at least one official document that has been prepared for each agenda item (these may be reports, draft decisions from a previous meeting, a set of submissions from Parties or recommendations from a Subsidiary Body). Read the background documents for each agenda item that has been selected as a key issue for Vanuatu, so you fully understand the issues for discussion.

1. **Compile past decisions**

In addition to the background documents, find the past decisions for the issues you are following. These are available on the UNFCCC website.

1. **Know what decisions will be made at the upcoming meetings**

Hints of what decisions will be made can be found in the annotated meeting agendas. Knowing what decisions are likely to be made will help you create a national position that’s based on an outcome that we want for that issue.

1. **Read the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) summary**

The ENB Summary of the last meetings (whether it’s the COP, APA, CMP, CMA, SBI or SBSTA) gives a great overview of the issues that were discussed, including what was said by which Parties. This is helpful for understanding which countries are influencing the negotiations.

1. **Read Vanuatu’s report of the last meeting** (where available)

Where available, read the reports prepared by national delegates who attended the last meetings. This will help you understand Vanuatu’s position on the issues, including our priorities and challenges.

1. **Discuss the issues with your Thematic Work Group members, colleagues and other relevant stakeholders** (including civil society, private sector and development agencies)

It is really helpful to consult with any colleagues, local experts, thematic work group members and other stakeholders whose work relates to your issue area (e.g. talking to DSPPAC about monitoring and evaluating climate adaptation policies). Find out what is important for Vanuatu at a local and national level, and see how those priorities are related to issues under the UNFCCC. The NAB Sec can also help make the connections between national and international climate issues.

1. **Prepare a draft position for the national delegation to take to the negotiations**
National positions include all the information that a delegate will need to progress the negotiations on an issue according to Vanuatu’s national interests and priorities.

Your draft position should include:

1. A copy of the meeting agenda (attached as an annex)
2. Identification of key issues in the agenda
3. A brief position statement on each issue with recommendations, with the following elements:
4. Background of the issue
5. A list of background documents on the issue
6. The position of other governments (i.e. as listed in the latest ENB Summary)
7. Recommended positions to take, including possible fall-back positions (i.e. Plan B)
8. Approval space (space at the end for the NAB to make its own statement if desired)
9. **Seek formal approval of the position**

All country positions must be approved by the National Advisory Board on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (NAB). The Secretariat of the NAB and its UNFCCC Taskforce have asked for all draft negotiating positions to be submitted for review by the NAB by **Friday 20 October**, with final approval to be given by **Friday 27 October**.