
Advancing Transparency and Capacity for Climate Action: Commonwealth BTR Review

Bonn Climate Change Conference (SB 62) Side Event

Friday, 20 June 2025

16:30–17:45 hrs CEST | Room: Berlin, World Conference Centre, Bonn

INTRODUCTION

The Paris Agreement established the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under Article 13 to foster mutual trust and confidence, ultimately promoting effective implementation of climate action. A central component of the ETF is the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), through which Parties are obligated to provide information on several key areas. These include mitigation actions including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removals, and adaptation actions including planning, as well as support provided and received. For Commonwealth member states, particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), robust and effective BTRs are crucial. They serve to demonstrate their climate action, facilitate access to international climate finance, and contribute meaningfully to the global stocktake process.

Recognising the importance of the ETF and BTRs, the Commonwealth Secretariat has been actively providing technical and capacity-building support to its member countries through its Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) and Commonwealth NDC Programme. This support is delivered through collaborative partnerships including with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the African Development Bank, the NDC Partnership and the United Nations Environment Programme. The Commonwealth Secretariat leverages its in-house expertise, which includes UNFCCC-certified technical expert reviewers under the ETF. The Secretariat has supported the delivery of several capacity-building and knowledge sharing initiatives. These include the Workshop on empowering Africa toward fast-tracking Biennial Transparency Reports (BTR) preparation, held in Nairobi, Kenya from 9th to 11th September, 2024 where we provided a Technical Facilitator and funding for the participation of Seychelles, Mozambique, Mauritius, Uganda, Lesotho, and Eswatini. The Secretariat also supported the International Women's Day Webinar: "Fostering Gender Data for Better Climate Reporting and Policies" organised by the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency - Global Support Programme (CBIT-GSP) and the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT), which took place on 12th March 2025 and saw the launch of working paper on "[Good Practices for Integrating Gender into Climate Transparency Frameworks](#)". Furthermore, the Secretariat supported the delivery of the 2025 Workshop of the Anglophone Network on Climate Transparency in Mahé, Seychelles, from 6th to 9th May, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) CBIT-GSP, African Union Commission (AUC), African Development Bank (AfDB), Partnership on Transparency in the Paris Agreement (PATPA), and UNFCCC.

Following the BTR submission deadline of December 31st, 2024, the Commonwealth Secretariat has undertaken a comprehensive review of the initial BTRs submitted by its member states. This review aims to identify common challenges, best practices, and specific needs related to BTR preparation across the Commonwealth. The review findings will be presented at the Side Event, and the discussion outcomes will be instrumental in tailoring targeted support and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the quality and comprehensiveness of future BTR submissions of member countries. Key issues emerging from this study include:

1. **Progress and Challenges in ETF Implementation:** The review highlights the progress Commonwealth countries have made in submitting their first BTRs under the ETF. It also identifies the challenges encountered, such as data limitations, capacity constraints, and financial barriers.
2. **The Importance of Support and Collaboration:** The review emphasises the critical role of international support, particularly climate finance and capacity building, in enabling developing countries to effectively participate in the ETF and implement climate actions. It also underscores the value of collaboration and knowledge sharing among Commonwealth member countries.
3. **Inclusivity and Future Implications:** The review analyses the inclusivity elements within the BTRs, such as the integration of gender and youth considerations, the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, and the engagement of local communities. Looking ahead, it discusses how lessons learned from the first BTRs can inform future reports, enhance transparency, and strengthen Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) implementation.

This side event organised during the June Climate Meetings is aligned with the mandate of the sixty-second session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI62), and will serve as the official stakeholder engagement for the Commonwealth Review of BTRs. It will provide a platform to discuss the key issues, crucially, address the significant challenges faced by developing countries in preparing BTRs.

In a letter outlining his vision for COP30, André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, COP30 President-Designate emphasised that *“we need to build the capacity of developing country Parties to transition from ad hoc reporting approaches to government-led, systematic, and institutionalised processes for preparing and submitting national reports under the ETF.”*

This event will focus on three key pillars for strengthening BTR processes: securing climate finance for BTR preparation, building capacity for robust transparency frameworks, and exploring available support mechanisms. A panel discussion featuring representatives from key institutions and countries will delve into these areas, aiming to identify concrete pathways to support countries in effectively participating in the ETF process and achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

OBJECTIVES

- To engage stakeholders on the **Commonwealth Review of BTRs**, highlighting key issues on the enhanced transparency framework and requesting stakeholder validation of initial findings.
- To raise awareness among Parties, particularly developing countries, about the critical importance of robust BTRs under the Enhanced Transparency Framework.
- To provide a platform for discussing challenges and opportunities related to **climate finance** for BTR preparation, including accessing and utilising resources effectively.
- To explore strategies for **capacity building** to strengthen national systems and expertise for preparing high-quality BTRs, ensuring comprehensiveness and accuracy.
- To identify and discuss available **support mechanisms** and initiatives from international organisations and development partners to assist developing countries in meeting the ETF requirements.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased understanding of the current state of BTR preparation among Commonwealth member states, as informed by the Commonwealth Review.
- Enhanced awareness of the financial and capacity needs of developing countries in preparing BTRs and participating in the ETF.
- Identification of practical recommendations and solutions to improve access to climate finance and capacity building support for BTR processes.
- Strengthened dialogue and collaboration among Parties, international organisations, and development partners on supporting enhanced transparency action.
- Built momentum and political will for increased investment in national transparency systems in developing countries to meet the ETF requirements effectively.

EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

- **National Climate Transparency Experts:** Representatives from Parties involved ETF implementation at the national level, particularly from Commonwealth member states.
- **Representatives from International Organisations:** Including UNEP, AfDB, GEF, and other relevant multilateral institutions working on transparency and climate finance.
- **Bilateral and Multilateral Donors:** Agencies and institutions providing financial and technical support for climate action and transparency.
- **Capacity Building Providers:** Institutions and organisations offering technical assistance and training on ETF and BTR preparation.
- **Researchers and Academia:** Experts in climate transparency, measurement, reporting and verification (MRV), and the ETF.
- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** Organisations working on climate policy, transparency, and accountability.

AGENDA

Event Moderator - Ms Uzoamaka Nwamarah, Adviser Climate Change, Commonwealth Secretariat

Time	Item	Speakers
16:30 - 16:35	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Mr. Suresh Yadav Senior Director, Climate Change and Oceans Directorate (CCO), Commonwealth Secretariat
16:35 - 16:50	Context Setting on ETF and Initial Findings of the Commonwealth BTR Review: Importance of BTRs and the ETF for Enhanced Climate Action and Commonwealth Review of BTRs for Stakeholder Validation	Ms. Uzoamaka Nwamarah Adviser Climate Change Commonwealth Secretariat
16:50 - 17:20	Interactive Panel Discussion: Financing, Capacity, and Support for Effective BTR Preparation under the ETF Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Thibyan Ibrahim, Director, Climate Change Department, Maldives • Mr. Wills Agricole, Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment, Seychelles • Ms. Khetsiwe Khumalo, Advisor - Climate Transparency at UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (CBIT-GSP) • Mr. Henning Wuester, Director, Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) • Ms. Davinah Milenge Uwella, Chief Programme Coordinator, Climate Change and Green Growth, African Development Bank (AfDB) Moderator: Mr. Knollis Delle , Assistant Research Officer, Climate Change, Commonwealth Secretariat	
17:20 - 17:30	Q&A Session with the Audience	
17:30 - 17:45	Reflections	Ms. Duduzile Nhlengethwa-Masina Director of Meteorology, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Eswatini Dr. Nancy Omolo Commonwealth Gender Climate Finance Adviser, Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), Commonwealth Secretariat
17:35 - 17:40	Closing Remarks	Mrs. Sarita Meeheelaul Director, Department of Climate Change Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change Mauritius
17:40 - 17:45	Closing Remarks and Way Forward	Mr. Suresh Yadav Senior Director, Climate Change and Oceans Directorate (CCO), Commonwealth Secretariat

Speaker Biographies



Mr Suresh Yadav

Senior Director, Climate Change and Oceans Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat

Suresh Yadav is the Senior Director for Climate Change and Ocean Directorate at the Commonwealth Secretariat. He previously served as Acting Senior Director for Trade, Ocean, and Natural Resources, and was Secretary of the Commonwealth AI Consortium, promoting AI development and capacity building across member countries.

Earlier, he represented India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka on the World Bank Group Board. As a member of India's Internal Revenue Service, he served as Officer on Special Duty to the President of India and Director to the finance minister. He led India's negotiations on Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA) and was a global expert in transfer pricing audits of multinational enterprises.

Yadav is also the author of a book on foreign direct investment (FDI). He is passionate about leveraging AI and transformative technologies for development and advocates for platform-based approaches to attract finance for small states.



Ms Uzoamaka Nwamarah

Adviser Climate Change, Climate Change and Oceans Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat

Uzoamaka Nwamarah is a Climate Change Adviser at the Commonwealth Secretariat, where she provides strategic and technical leadership for the implementation of the Commonwealth Climate Change Programme including key initiatives such as the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH) and the Commonwealth NDC Programme. She supports member countries in implementing their National Climate Plans, and champions gender and youth inclusion in climate action.

Prior to joining the Commonwealth Secretariat, Uzoamaka worked with the African Development Bank in Tunisia and Ivory Coast as a Senior Climate Change Specialist and held senior Climate Finance and Energy Specialist roles with Atkins Realis, Camco, and the East Midlands Regional Assembly all in the United Kingdom. Her work in the climate space spans policy, strategy, programme and project development, along with resource mobilisation and capacity building, in collaboration with governments and global institutions.

She holds a Master's degree in Environmental Science and Technology - Energy Policy from Imperial College London, and a BSc in Geology from the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. She is also a Certified Expert in Climate Adaptation Finance and a UNDP vetted Climate Resilience Expert. A finalist in the Black British Business Awards (STEM Senior Leader category), Uzoamaka serves on the Court of Imperial College London, the Board of the University of East London, and is a Visiting Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. She enjoys a fulfilling family life with her husband and three children.



Mr Knollis Delle

Assistant Research Officer, Climate Change, Climate Change and Oceans Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat

Knollis Delle is a driven and experienced clean energy and climate professional with a background in climate and energy policy, project management, sustainable finance, and international relations. Currently serving as a Young Professional at the Climate Section of the Commonwealth Secretariat, he has been instrumental in shaping sustainability-focused policies, monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector, successfully managing and executing complex infrastructure projects that reduce carbon footprints, championing sustainability initiatives, and forging strategic partnerships with a wide-reaching impact.

His expertise also extends to securing project financing and driving sustainable infrastructure development. Knollis has significantly contributed to initiatives at the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation in Ghana. His distinguished affiliations include being an Emerging Public Leaders Fellow, a YALI Fellow, and an IEC Young Professional. Knollis is a technical expert reviewer under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement. Knollis holds a Master of Engineering in Energy and Power Engineering from Tsinghua University complemented by a professional certification in Climate & Renewable Energy Finance from the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management.



Ms. Davinah Milenge Uwella

Chief Programme Coordinator, Climate Change and Green Growth, African Development Bank

Davinah Milenge is a Chief Programme Coordinator within the Climate Change and Green Growth Department of the African Development Bank (AfDB). She leads several strategic initiatives on climate change, including the coordination of the **Africa Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Hub**, a platform hosted by the Bank to support African countries in implementing their commitments under the Paris Agreement. Davinah also oversees the **Secretariat of the African Financial Alliance on Climate Change (AFAC)**, an AfDB-led initiative aimed at mobilizing, catalyzing, and leveraging domestic climate finance across the continent. In addition, she manages the **Africa Circular Economy Facility** and is responsible for **portfolio due diligence under the Bank's Green Bonds Programme**, contributing to the development of sustainable finance mechanisms aligned with Africa's green growth agenda.



Ms. Khetsiwe Khumalo

Advisor, Climate Transparency at UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre (CBIT-GSP)

Khetsiwe Khumalo is a Senior Advisor on Climate Transparency at the UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre, supporting the implementation of the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency - Global Support Programme (CBIT-GSP). With over a decade of experience in climate change policy, climate reporting and transparency, she previously served as Eswatini's Climate Change Coordinator,

where she led the development of National Communications, Biennial Update Reports, National Adaptation Plan and NDCs. At CBIT-GSP, she plays a key role in regional coordination, technical backstopping, and capacity building for developing countries. Khetsiwe also leads the programme's work on gender and transparency, contributing to knowledge products and tools that promote inclusive climate reporting under the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement.



Mr. Henning Wuester

Director, Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT)

Dr. Henning Wuester is the Director of the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT). Dr. Wuester has a rich and longstanding experience in climate change and sustainable development.

Prior to joining ICAT, he worked in the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) overseeing the Agency's work on knowledge, policy, and finance. Previously, Dr. Wuester served the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as Senior

Manager at the Interim Secretariat.

He also worked in several positions within the United Nations system, as Special Adviser to the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and at the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in several roles in the secretariat of the Convention on Transboundary Air Pollution.

Dr. Wuester holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Munich, where he started his career as assistant professor.



Mr. Thibyan Ibrahim

Director, Climate Change Department, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Republic of Maldives

Mr. Thibyan Ibrahim currently works as a Director of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment of the Republic of the Maldives. In his current role he is involved with climate finance and resource mobilisation, while also overseeing climate policy and developing climate change adaptation and mitigation projects. He undertakes negotiations in the

UNFCCC process as a coordinator for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and is the Vice Chair of the Technology Executive Committee constituted body of the UNFCCC. He has previously worked on the implementation of the Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment in the Maldives.



Mr. Wills Agricole

Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment,
Seychelles

Wills Agricole is a highly respected expert in **meteorology and climate change**, with an extensive **49-year career** dedicated to advancing climate science and policy. He holds a **Master's degree in Tropical Meteorology** from **École Nationale de la Météorologie** in Toulouse, France, equipping him with deep expertise in atmospheric sciences.

Currently serving as the **Technical Advisor for Climate Change and Energy** in the **Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, and Climate Change** of Seychelles, Agricole plays a crucial role in shaping national strategies for climate resilience and sustainable energy. He is also the **National Focal Point** for the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**, the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)**, **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** and the **Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF)**, ensuring Seychelles' active engagement in global climate discussions.

Agricole has served as **Principal Secretary for Climate Change and Energy**, where he spearheaded key initiatives to enhance Seychelles' climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Additionally, he served as **Permanent Representative of Seychelles with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** and as the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) National Focal** further solidifying his leadership in climate governance. His leadership extends beyond government roles, as he has served on **several boards of national importance**, contributing to policy development and environmental governance. As Seychelles' **lead Climate Change Negotiator**, Agricole has been instrumental in advocating for the interests of small island developing states in international climate negotiations.

His dedication to climate action has earned him global recognition, including an **international accolade** for his contributions to the **Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement**, recognizing his **global impact** in climate governance and the **Transformational Country Green Champion Award** from the Green Climate Fund. His work continues to drive Seychelles' efforts in climate resilience and energy transition, making him a respected figure in both national and international climate policy circles.



Ms. Duduzile Nhlengethwa-Masina

Director of Meteorology, Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Eswatini

Ms. Duduzile Nhlengethwa-Masina is the Director of Meteorology in the Eswatini where she also leads the technical team responsible for climate action coordination, including associated monitoring and reporting. She has also served as an expert reviewer for national communications and national inventory reports for Annex I parties and has been involved in Eswatini's reporting over the years. Ms Nhlengethwa is also a seasoned negotiator, with particular focus on the technology negotiations where she has also served as Africa's Lead Negotiator for technology during the Paris Agreement negotiations. She also served as the Technology Executive Member, where she became the first female chairman of the TEC in 2016.

Not only does she believe in the transparency framework being a vehicle for enhancing climate action, but she also believes climate action needs to be embedded to sustainable development, be locally driven and supported by means of implementation, including capacity building.



Dr. Nancy Omolo

Commonwealth Gender Climate Finance Adviser, Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub (CCFAH), Climate Change, Climate Change and Oceans Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat

Dr. Nancy Omolo is the Commonwealth Climate Finance Gender Adviser, with over 18 years of experience in gender and climate change. She holds a PhD in Food Security, specializing in gender and climate resilience, and is a leading expert in gender-responsive climate finance and locally led adaptation.

She has worked with the African Union, UN agencies, governments, and NGOs, shaping inclusive climate policies across Africa. Notably, she contributed to the Malabo Declaration, led Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion assessments for ACBF, and guided Kenya's FLLOCA program to ensure equitable climate finance.

Nancy has also supported UNICEF's youth-focused climate programs in the MENA region and represented governments in UNFCCC negotiations. A published researcher and guest lecturer, she continues to champion gender equity in global climate finance.



Mrs. Sarita Meeheelaul

Director, Department of Climate Change
Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate
Change

Sarita Meeheelaul has over 30 years of dedicated public service, she has played a central role in advancing national environmental and climate agendas since joining the Ministry in 1995.

Ms. Meeheelaul holds a Master's degree in Geography from the University of Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV) and a Master of Science in Sustainable Development, with a specialization in Environmental Management, from SOAS, University of London. Her academic background has provided a strong foundation for her work in environmental planning and management, sustainable consumption and production, and the promotion of a green economy.

Since assuming leadership of the Department of Climate Change in December 2021, she has been actively involved in the formulation and implementation of climate policies, strengthening climate governance, enhancing transparency reporting, and promoting climate literacy initiatives. Her leadership continues to shape Mauritius' response to climate change and its commitment to sustainable development.