

From: Cara Foley <cara.foley@teneo.com>
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Subject: RE: Invitation to COP29 Media Briefing

Hi,

I can't share a recording but attaching a transcript from today, and you should have also received a press release around 5PM Baku/9AM ET from media@COP29.az.

Hope this is helpful – let me know any questions.

Thanks,

Cara

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Cara Foley
Senior Vice President

Teneo
280 Park Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10017
E: cara.foley@teneo.com



teneo.com

Press Briefing 10.14

Nigar Arpadarai: COP29, president designate Mukhtar Babayev and our lead negotiator Yalcin Rafiyev. We have lost a couple of weeks and months, have been quite busy and we are here today to give you information about our next milestones. We have pre-COP, we had head of delegations meeting and we will be sharing our key developments with you there, ladies and gentlemen. And at our last meeting, we have been here, the same people informing you about our action agenda items. And we would like to say that it was very well received and we had lots of feedback, positive responses to, to many of the things that we announced. And it is already four weeks to COP. And I'm happy to announce that so far, over 100 heads of states and governments confirmed that they are planning to attend COP29, and we also will have many discussions and meetings. We will also have our Business Investment and Philanthropy Forum at COP29 on the Finance, Investment and Trade Day. So now I would like to hand over to Mukhtar Babaev, COP29 President-Designate who will set out key developments since we last met.

Mukhtar Babayev: Thank you. Thank you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Dear friends. Good morning. Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to join you again, almost one month after our last conversation. As far as you may know, the COP29 Presidency is committed to running an open and transparent process. We would therefore like to update you on the latest developments in this critical final phase before COP29. Since we last met, we have intensified the Presidency's engagements. We hosted the third meeting of the Board of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, during which we reached historic milestones to help get it up and running. On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, we convened high level dialogues to build common understanding and strengthen international commitment. We conducted technical work on Article 6 in Baku to produce guidelines and recommendations to be adopted at COP29. We then welcomed parties for an intensive five days of diplomacy, where we hosted two heads of delegation sessions, one high level ministerial dialogue and two days of breakout discussions. Since we have series of already tradition of such meetings with you, allow me to share several objectives over the course of the month...

Nigar Arpadarai: I think all muted. Can you please mute your microphones dear friends because there is a noise. Okay. We can continue. We can continue. Okay.

Mukhtar Babayev: Several objectives over the course of the month. Bringing the political and technical tracks together to work in harmony, then engaging senior political leaders in the process, then helping the parties better understand each other, identifying outstanding issues, requiring focused engagement and using every opportunity for early progress so that we can reduce the number of issues to be addressed at COP29 and build a solid foundation for success. At the closing sessions last week, we heard from parties themselves that we are indeed developing momentum in this direction. COP29 Lead Negotiator Mr. Yalcin Rafiyev will discuss some of the specific areas where we made the progress. To summarise what we heard from parties, a balanced package at COP29 that fulfils the presidency's vision -- already clear to all of you -- which is to enhance ambition and enable action, must include key components, a fair and ambitious NCQG, delivering on all other mandates, and clear next steps to follow up the Global Stocktake outcomes, which includes transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner. We heard many common messages on the air when we are seeing some signs of a possible convergence on certain elements of the goal.

Nigar Arpadarai: Dear friends, can you please mute your microphone? Dear friends, I will ask you to mute your microphones until the question and answer session. Thank you.

Mukhtar Babayev: Thank you. I have to let you know that there are still different perspectives on how to get the trillions, the different elements of the structure of the goal, and how to approach the contributors. For the next steps, we are shortly expecting the substantive framework for the draft negotiating text on the NCQG from the ad hoc work program. This is an important step, since we have narrowed down the options and can clearly see the gaps we need to close. We are calling on all parties to spend the next months ensuring that they arrive at COP29, with clear political support to deliver the breakdowns that we need. This will require all leaders to be fully engaged and committed to the process. We need to turn this draft into a deal. Outside the formal process, we have also made significant progress on the COP29 Action Agenda. As already mentioned, we hosted the first ever Baku Climate Action Week to engage with non-state actors. And I thank my colleague, the High Level Champion Nigar Arpadarai, and other colleagues for this work. We are shortly publishing the final text of the COP29 declarations and pledges, and we call on all stakeholders to commit to enhancing ambition in multiple areas.

Mukhtar Babayev: We will also provide more details of the programme for thematic days during COP29. The COP29 Presidency will then join the annual meeting of the World Bank to discuss the role that multilateral development banks can play to enable action. We have heard from various parties, in particular from LDCs and SIDS, that there is a need to provide a simplified access to climate finance and ongoing discussions among parties as well as MDB reforms should address this matter. And we will also attend COP 16 on Biodiversity in Colombia to build partnership and mutually reinforcing action between the COPs. Dear friends, Before finishing, I want to repeat the words that the President of Azerbaijan said to the pre-COP opening. He said while states have common but differentiated responsibilities, they should set aside disagreements, stop blaming each other and find common ground. We cannot afford to waste time. And now we look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you, Minister. Dear friends, I would like to remind that this is on the record and we will have Q&A session and we have around 30 minutes. And now I would like to invite our Lead Negotiator, Yalchin Rafiyev, to share the latest developments with you.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Thank you. Dear friends, thank you for joining us today. The President-Designate already mentioned the main progresses that we have achieved in the last week in a couple of places. But, very shortly, on the negotiation track, what has been achieved in the last days. So, we have created a space for all parties to come together in the Pre-COP, created an enabling environment for everybody to speak freely, openly, with each other, by sometimes having by triggering their reactions through a guiding question that could provoke their ideas and thoughts, which I think really yielded a result. And all parties when they left, assessed the pre-COP as a successful one, which really helped us to pave the way for a successful outcome at COP29. So, in terms of the balanced package, we already with all parties at the end of the pre-COP, had a common understanding on three major elements. First and foremost, we have come to a conclusion that the balanced package needs a fair and ambitious NCQG. The second, we have realized, and we have come to a conclusion, that we need to deliver on other mandates at the COP29, which includes conclusion of Article Six, progress on the global goal on adaptation complementing COP 29 high level ministerial addressing the urgent, urgent need to scale up adaptation finance, operationalization of Loss and Damage Fund and the Santiago Network, the Lima Work Program and its Gender Action Plan, and the Technology Implementation Programme.

Yalchin Rafiyev: And the third element of the balanced package, we agreed that we need to clear next steps following the GST outcome. On this front, many have emphasized the need to

use GST to show the world progress on mitigation, especially on energy transition, as per paragraph 28 of the Global Stocktake. Several have focused on the form of the follow up, including calls for a comprehensive dialogue with a few parties calling for a cover decision at COP 29 to provide a home for these next steps. But some also have raised the opportunity COP 29 could provide to advance international cooperation, to take forward the next steps required from the GST outcome. For the NCQG, we have heard common messages by the parties and we have already started to build convergences on the following -- that it needs to be ambitious and that needs are in the space of trillions, with a realistic provision and mobilisation needing to be in the hundreds of billions. Second, it needs to respond to its purpose of addressing the needs and priorities of developing country parties, including SIDs and LDCs.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Third, it must support the implementation of current and future NDCs and NAPs. Fourth, it must have a time frame of ten years. Fifth, it has a key role in helping to keep 1.5 within reach and contribute to transformational change. And the sixth, for many, it needs to include detailed access features and robust transparency arrangements, with the use of enhanced transparency framework as a basis. And crucially, we have all agreed, and it has been emphasized by almost all parties that the NCQG with all its elements needs to be agreed in Baku. So, dear friends, as you see, we already made a step forward and progress across several fronts within the NCQG decision. On some elements, we already started to build the convergence, which in our view can be then transformed to consensus in the coming days at the COP. And on Article Six as the second biggest deliverable. We already also made a big success in Baku throughout the workshops that we have hosted, but also pre-COP was an additional opportunity for the parties to cement what has been agreed in the technical process, and that could also pave the way for its successful conclusion at COP29. And I'm looking forward to your questions. Thank you.

Nigar Arpadarai: Well, thank you, Mr. Rafiyev. Dear friends, we are opening the Q&A session and the first hand. I see, Mr. Seth Borenstein said, could you please unmute your microphone?

Reporter: Yes. Thank you so much for doing this. Um, can you help us understand sort of the range that we are now looking at that you said you've, uh, narrowed things to for the NCQG, for example. Can you tell us sort of the acceptable floor for the lowest quantum and the highest and the acceptable ceiling. So, we know sort of where you are in negotiations and how far you are. I mean, is the ceiling 1.4 trillion or is it 2 trillion or is it 1.2, or is it even in the trillions, as you mentioned, and is the floor more than 500 billion? Is it more than 200 billion? Just a sense of where, you know, how big the gap is and, and that you're dealing with. And if you can also help with a sense of how far you've narrowed this gap so far. Thank you.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you for the question.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Thank you for the question. Yeah. As I already mentioned, also in my intervention, this pre-COP was very remarkable as the parties for the first time agreed that the needs are in the scale of trillions. So, we have been talking about this through referring to the research and studies that have been made by different scholars and other researchers. But for the first time, the parties themselves also recognized that the needs are in the scale of trillions, but it includes a realistic provision and mobilization needing to be in hundreds of billions. It means the public funds provided for the purpose of meeting the needs that I have outlined to be in the hundreds of billions. For the moment, the exact range cannot be announced since the parties have different views on this and it's still subject to negotiation process. And the substantive framework of the draft negotiating text will be out soon, which will also help us to understand how the negotiation process can be further built upon with the co-chairs guiding us

based on the outcome of the pre-COP. But at the same time, it's good news that we have built some common convergence on the issue of structure, being the multi-layered structure of the potential decision to be a prevailing model that needs to be proceeded with. In this mode still, we need to identify what should be at the core and what should be at the other layers in order to get to the trillions.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you. So, the second question, Jayashree Nandi, can you please unmute your microphone?

Reporter: Hi. Yeah. Can you hear me? Yes, yes.

Nigar Arpadarai: We can.

Reporter: Please. Okay. Okay. Thank you for organizing this. I wanted to ask, is there any consensus or any landing zone on contributor base, which has also been an issue of debate? And what where is it going? Which direction? What are some of the agreements? I mean, uh, you know, basically is there any sort of landing zone on that? Thank you.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Thank you. As in the case of the quantum, the contributor base is also one of the elements that needs to be further scrutinized by the negotiators in the remaining period of time. In general, what I can tell you is that the whole process, the NCQG, with all its elements, needs to be agreed in a logically sequenced form, and some elements help us to unlock the others. So, what we have built here in Baku, consensus on, like structure, time frame and others will help us also to come to an agreement and to have a clear understanding of what contributor base should look like and what the quantum will be at the end of the process. But so far on the contributor base, still divergences exist and whatever that I have just explained does not mean that we already have consensus on everything. Still, some divergences exist, including on the element of the contributor base and quantum. And we need to do further work. And we have asked the parties to go and talk to each other as homework, to try to elevate the discussion at the top political level in order for us to make progress also on these two elements.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you. Another question. Victoria Seabrook, please.

Reporter: Hello. Can you hear me? Okay. Yes, yes we can. Yeah. Thank you so much. I can't tell you how helpful this is and how good it is to talk to all of you. So thank you. And I wanted to ask a more broad question. Azerbaijan, obviously you're working really hard to host this COP. Its own NDC is rated as critically insufficient. So I wondered what you're doing to convince the world of Azerbaijan's key climate leadership. Thank you.

Mukhtar Babayev: Thanks, Victoria. Azerbaijan is working on our new NDC and now the legal work and also all the necessity entities, ministries and governments, are now involved in the discussions regarding the new NDC. And when all these discussions will be and we will have the summary. We will have prepared our next NDC and will announce to communities.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you. Our next question. Matteo. Mr. Matteo.

Reporter: Please. Hi. Thank you. Thank you very much for doing this briefing. I wanted to ask a question about the COP Truce initiative that you are championing. Uh, you've announced this week or last week that, uh, more than 120 something countries have signed up to it. So far. I wanted to understand a bit more about the scope of this initiative and what countries exactly signed up to. Uh, are countries that supported are committing to an actual truce in their own

territory, or is it sort of a generic, uh, appeal for, for fighting to stop? Do you? Yeah. Could you, uh, shed a bit more light on this? Thank you.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Yeah. Thank you so much. The COP Truce initiative is one of the landmark initiatives of Azerbaijani Presidency of COP29. The 127 so far, parties have endorsed it. More than 1100 civil society, international civil society organizations, including three observer constituencies, six faith leaders and many prominent personalities like former presidents, foreign ministers, presidents of UN General Assembly and others have endorsed, and the main essence of the initiative is to call for a truce. It's a generic appeal for the international community to observe a ceasefire during the COP, and those who are endorsing this joined the appeal by making a plea to all the conflicting parties to put down their arms, at least for the period of the COP, and a week earlier, and a week later, just to not only to promote the peace agenda, but also to contribute significantly to the emission reduction activities. But when it comes to the composition of this 127, it includes countries from all geographies, countries from different development levels. They have EU member states in it, small island developing states, African states, Latin American states, Asia Pacific countries, countries from G7. So there are countries coming from diverse group of geographies and countries.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you I see hands up, offset and Victoria. Do you have any other questions?

Other: We're going to go to maybe John who hasn't asked a question yet or no.

Nigar Arpadarai: Then we have two more questions. Urmi, and then Daniela, please unmute yourself. For me. Okay. Then we maybe go to Daniela. Daniela, could you please unmute your microphone?

Reporter: Yeah. Yes. Thank you for doing this. Can you hear me?

Nigar Arpadarai: Yes. Yes we.

Reporter: Can. Thank you. Thank you. So, uh, I wonder what you call what COP29 could deliver in the discussion of transitioning away from fossil fuels. And also, I'd like to know if I may, how do you think that the US, um, how is the US participating on the discussions with the elections that is coming soon? Thank you.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Thank you, Daniela, for the questions. First, on transitioning away from fossil fuels. As you know, Global Stocktake has delivered already a very ambitious commitment on that. And one of our pillars of the balanced package, as I've outlined already, is the clear next steps following the GST outcome, which includes also the mitigation provisions of the Global Stocktake. So we have been, we have also come up with our own presidency initiatives, which include some mitigation related initiatives like green energy storage, green energy corridors, clean hydrogen. Which all of them also speaks to the implementation of the Global Stocktake, especially the paragraph 28 supporting the transitioning away from fossil fuel. On US participation so far, since the very beginning of the process, US delegation has actively engaged in all fronts to the negotiation process. Also has provided inputs and contributions to our presidency initiatives. The declarations and pledges attached therein. And so far, we may say that all those engagements have been quite constructive and active.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you. Next question. John. Ainger, please.

Reporter: Hi. Thank you very much. It's John Ainger from Bloomberg. Um, two questions for me. You said a time frame of ten years. You saw a general consensus around that. Is that ten years from 2025 or 10 years to achieve the goal? Um, I'm sorry. If you mentioned that. And then just secondly, a nerdy question on article six. I gather there was some progress over the last few days. Um, can you talk a bit about what progress has been made and what still needs to be done, and when we might be able to expect a final deal there? Thank you.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Thank you. Thank you for the question. Yeah. Ten years of time frame has already gained, has been gaining some consensual understanding among the parties. And we are talking about time frame starting from 2025 and up until 2035. And the parties have been asking for a five year time frame now have also started to come up with an idea that ten year time frame maybe could be more reasonable for thinking about a fair and ambitious NCQG. As for Article Six, yes, we've made a significant progress in that regard. And we are expecting the major milestone achievements in during Baku at the pre-COP, those issues. But this is in general very difficult, challenging process that have started since several COPs without any result. We have used the momentum we have had since the beginning of the year. We have asked for the parties having particular interest in this topic to advance the discussions, to elevate it from technical level to a political level, in order to gain more understanding and political momentum to resolve the issue. And now we already started to see the results of it on on several technical directions. We got some positive results at the end of SPM meeting, the subsidiary body meeting here in Baku, which has also managed to resolve a long-standing unresolved issues at the technical level. In terms of progress, of course, early progress across all major expectations, expected deliverables from Baku is something that we can appreciate among the parties. But taking into account the complexity of the decision itself, it will depend on the parties to decide whether they are ready to make progress and get any progress in advance.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you. Now we can ask Umi to try one more time with me. Could you please unmute your microphone? She's not here, I think. Uh, okay. Then we go to Megan. Megan. Rowling, please.

Reporter: Thanks for the briefing. I wanted to ask about the loss and damage. Um. And I think you, um, 29 presidency team mentioned at the start of the pre-COP, there was a need to convert pledges to loss and damage fund into signed contributor agreements. I was just wondering if you could update us on what's happening with that? Have the pledges, uh, that they're not coming through yet? And one question, and then the other question is whether we can expect, more pledges to the loss and damage fund at COP29 and if you are working towards securing those. And on what scale? Thank you very much.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Yeah. Thank you for the question. Yes, you are right, now we are working on converting those pledges that have been made into real practical actions by those who has announced this pledge. This is an important component of the whole process. And it's not only being applicable to loss and damage. In all other pledging events or initiatives, for all countries announcing their pledge, in order to convert them to practical result, they need to sign some contributing agreements. And we are working with all those announcing pledges to sign this agreement in Baku and to turn this into real money. But at the same time, we are working in parallel to other additional donors who may contribute to the fund, and so that we can increase it to be corresponding to the needs.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you. Megan. We see Sarah. Question from Sarah. Sarah, please.

Reporter: Thank you. I appreciate you taking the time to do this. Just to emphasize back on the transition away from fossil fuels, I wondered, is there, has there been any conversation about the fossil fuel piece of the transition. So, you mentioned the need for scaling up renewables and energy storage. But many countries I think, are still planning to increase fossil fuel production. So, have you had discussions around needing to scale that back, and do you expect that to be part of the final package?

Yalchin Rafiyev: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for the question. As I mentioned earlier, we want to have a balanced package. But at the same time, we have announced that top priority for COP29, top negotiating priority, is NCQG. Each COP has some main expected deliverables, and this year is finance and NCQG being at the center of it. So, all our focus for the moment is being directed on this. At the same time not disregarding the importance of mitigation or previous commitments agreed at the previous COPs are to be to be aside.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you. I think we all had questions. I see hands of John and Victoria. Do you have any additional questions? Because we have just I think five minutes and we are wrapping it up.

Reporter: Yes, please. If you've got time for a second question. Thank you. Very quick question. I just wanted to ask thank you a bit more about the possible layered climate finance goal. You've talked a bit about the figures, the hundreds of billions. I wondered if you could give us a bit of a clue about how you're going to navigate the debate about who pays in and the contributor base. Is that how the layers will come into effect with different countries sort of obliged to pay into different layers and will any contributor be obliged to pay in, or will some of them be voluntary? Thank you.

Yalchin Rafiyev: Yeah. They are, those elements that we still observed divergences on those elements. And we will continue consulting with the parties through several platforms for consultations, also using virtual means to reach out to the parties in order to bridge the gaps. But the concept, how to get to the trillions, then the constituent elements within the structure, multi-layered structure, their size and to whom they are directed, are still subject to further consideration.

Nigar Arpadarai: Thank you so much, dear ladies and gentlemen, we will be wrapping up and thank you for joining our session, and we will be looking forward to seeing you in Baku just in four weeks. Thank you so much. Thank you Minister. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.