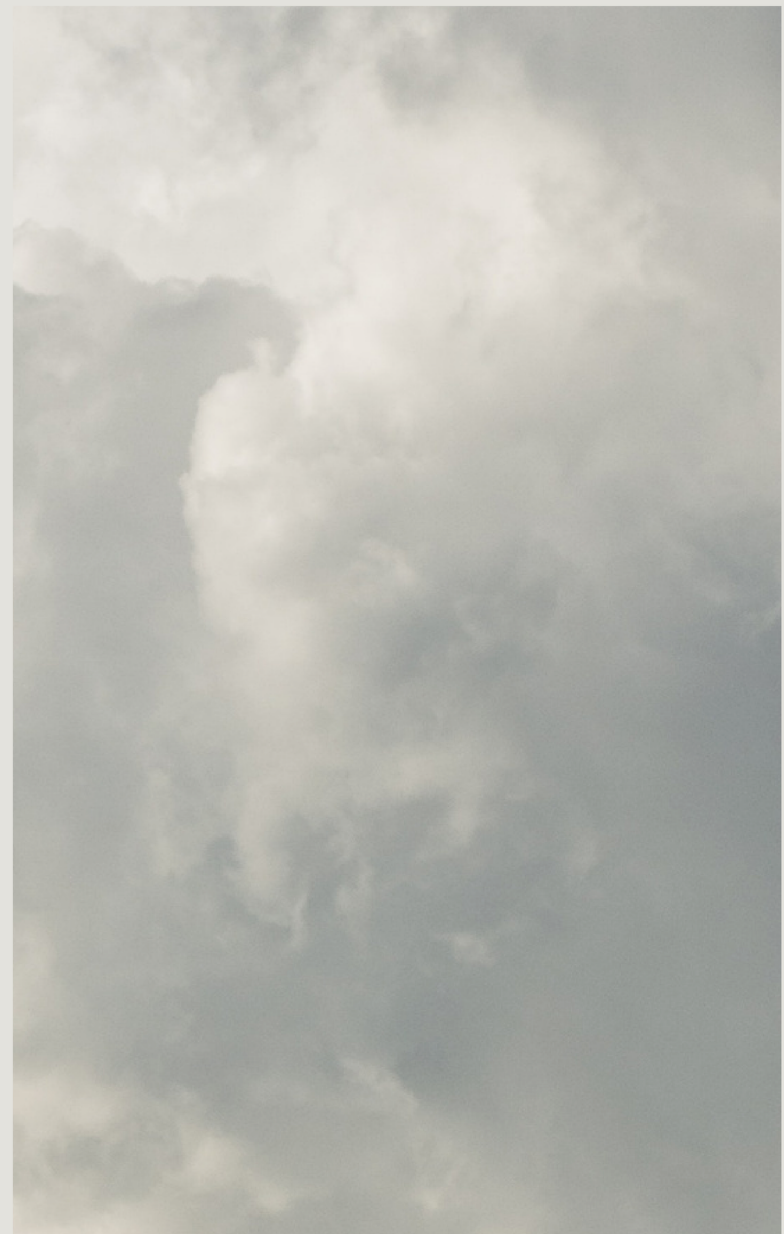




**Better Climate Governance**



# **Better Climate Governance Matters! Conference 2023**

**September 6, 2023**

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## **executive summary**

The third Better Climate Governance Matters! Conference was held online on 6 September 2023.

The Paris Agreement established a collective, bottom-up process to share national ambition and a mechanism, called the Global Stocktake (GST), to assess global progress. This year, 2023, is historic as it will mark the completion of the first Global Stocktake in December at COP 28. Given this historic landmark in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, this 2023 conference provided a forum to assess our accomplishments in accountability and share ideas on how to strengthen it, within the UNFCCC process and beyond.

The central question it addressed was: What is needed to hold ourselves accountable for meeting the Paris Goals?

Aarti Gupta, Professor of Global Environmental Governance at Wageningen University, and Tracy Tollmann, from the UNFCCC Secretariat, spoke about the opportunities and challenges associated with accountability and climate change. We then had several small groups discussing global options for improving accountability, followed by two conference streams on the global stocktake in the UNFCCC process and accountability on the national level beyond the UNFCCC with very interesting insights from our participants.

# introduction

## **Better Climate Governance Network**

In 2019, Christine Peringer and Katharine Rietig found a mutual passion for strengthening the negotiations and other aspects of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process.

They founded and co-lead the Better Climate Governance Network, which offers an open and inclusive forum for anyone working on climate action to share and exchange ideas, best practice and lessons learned to facilitate capacity building and accelerate ambitious climate action. A key activity each year has been hosting the Better Climate Governance Matters! Conference.

We have been able to undertake several research projects including:

- Improving UNFCCC Negotiations with Facilitation/Mediation Approaches
- The interpretation of consensus at UNFCCC meetings (and how not to conflate it with unanimity)
- Using non-negotiation spaces to promote climate ambition
- Achieving just transitions in the forestry sector through climate policy integration and learning
- Learning in the Technical Dialogue of the Global Stocktake.

We have also founded the Better Climate Governance Network. Anyone who agrees with its goals is encouraged to join. Here is a list of our fellows: <https://betterclimategovernance.com/fellows-page/>

See our website [www.betterclimategovernance.com](http://www.betterclimategovernance.com) for access to our policy briefs and other documents.

## **Context**

In 2015, the Paris Agreement set a shared goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C - 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. It created a framework with mechanisms to provide the financial, technical, and capacity-building support needed to meet this shared goal and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement established a collective, bottom-up process to share national progress and a mechanism, called the Global Stocktake (GST), for countries to assess progress. 2023 is historic as it will mark the completion of the first Global Stocktake in December at COP 28.

## **Conference theme**

The theme of the 2023 conference is accountability and climate commitments. Specifically, we considered: What progress has been made in holding ourselves accountable for achieving the Paris goals? What more is needed to limit temperature increases to 1.5°C - 2°C ?



## keynote speakers



### **Topic: Better climate governance: What role for accountability?**

Prof Aarti Gupta – Aarti is Professor of Global Environmental Governance at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, with a background in international relations and political science.

Aarti's presentation started with a discussion of how to define and conceptualise the notion of accountability from an academic perspective, and then examined what such a conceptualisation of accountability might mean within the UNFCCC negotiation context and beyond.

She considered words that are associated with accountability, such as trust and responsibility, and actors who are to be accountable such as governments and individuals. She explained that the Oxford Dictionary definition of the word accountable states that it means to give an explanation for yourself in some sense, an account of yourself: answerable and in some sense also responsible.

Aarti pointed out that the notion of our being answerable then raises the question of who is answerable to whom and for what. She noted that this has been addressed in the academic literature, and that very useful analyses and unpacking of accountability have been done by scholars such as Peter Newell and Susan Park.

She put forward the idea that accountability is a relational concept with an additional three other important elements. The first element is a relational concept: someone is held to account by another. So there are account givers, and there are account holders. The key and very contested question becomes: who is or who should be accountable and to whom? This is at the core of an accountability relationship. Then the question arises, for what? There has to be some standard of behaviour or performance for which a particular actor is accountable. Then we also need a means of assessing whether in fact that standard of performance and behaviour is actually being adhered to. The question becomes, by what kind of process do we judge if a standard is being adhered to? And who decides? Finally, if we actually want meaningful accountability, we need to not only be able to see whether a standard of behaviour performance is being adhered to, by a given actor, but also that there should be some consequences -- sanctions or penalties -- for non-adherence. So breaking down this concept of accountability into these four elements: there's the relational element, which is about linking those accountable to those who have a right to hold to account; there's the normative element, accountability for what, the standard of behaviour, and what is considered appropriate behaviour; thirdly, there's a very important process and decision element, an assessment about whether that standard of behaviour is being met, and the process to judge that; and finally there's the sanctioning element, penalties in case of non-adherence to the standard of behaviour.

Aarti then described another core distinction one can make regarding components of this conceptualisation. The first three can be understood as constituting answerability, in the sense that a core set of actors are answerable for their specific behaviours, and there's a judgment about whether they are adhering to certain agreed set of behaviours or what they say themselves that they will do; and then the enforceability element of accountability is about whether there are any sanctions or not.

Having conceptualised accountability in in this manner, Aarti moved on to consider how this is relevant in the UNFCCC context.



## ***keynote speakers***

Aarti drew attention to the words *ex post* and *ex ante* accountability in the accountability box. She argued that an additional core challenge in climate governance is that increasingly we need accountability not only for behaviours that have already occurred or underway (*ex post*) – but that we also need to hold to account certain specific actors for what they intend to do in the future (*ex ante*). She argued that it's a big challenge: how do we secure accountability, and how do we put into place institutionalised accountability processes for behaviours that have not yet occurred.

She contended that, in general, if you look at the answerability and enforceability components of accountability, then in the context of the UNFCCC, the enforceability aspect is largely off the table. In earlier agreements, under the UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol etc, there might have been sanctions and a compliance procedure for legally binding standards of performance and behaviour that certain key actors (e.g., Annex I) had to adhere to, but under the Paris Agreement, it's much more facilitative. So with enforceability largely off the table as a core component of securing accountability, the question becomes whether we even have answerability – the 'milder' form of accountability – within the UNFCCC context. We can see that accountability is a politically contested notion, because the relations – who is to be held to account, and to whom, for what – is tied up with very contested broader questions about who should act, and who has responsibility to act first, who should do how much, what they should do and when. These are the contested questions of burden-sharing and differentiated responsibility that are at the heart of determining who is actually to be held to account, and for what standard of behaviour. In the Paris Agreement, the standards of performance and behaviour are nationally determined. So there is a collective standard of performance – we have the 1.5 degree target that collectively we aspire to – but achieving that is dependent on the self-determined action of nations as expressed in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). And then the question also arises within the UNFCCC context: how do we judge whether what countries are meeting their NDC standards? The global stocktake is the mechanism to assess the adequacy of the sum of the action taken. The key question here is whether it has a potential to fill what is otherwise an accountability deficit in the UNFCCC context, because of the voluntary nature of deciding standards.

She added that there's another process within the Paris Agreement relevant to judging whether countries are doing what they said they would do, and that is the Enhanced Transparency Framework. Aarti explained that in her own research she has been carefully trying to understand the relationship between accountability and transparency. Transparency is widely assumed to be essential to accountability. So in terms of who is to be held to account: who is to be transparent, to whom, and about what? Is the transparency about mitigation, is it about adaptation, is it about loss and damage, is it about the all-important question of support and finance? What is the priority? Where are the transparency arrangements focused? Where does the burden of being transparent ultimately come to rest? Aarti said that these are some of the questions which will determine the extent to which the EHF can be a key tool to further accountability in the UNFCCC context.

Aarti concluded by describing her research project which is looking at the transformative potential of transparency as a key mechanism and means of accountability and climate governance. She asks, does transparency indeed enhance state-to-state accountability, and for what? Does it enhance trust and help to increase climate ambition? She explained that there's been very little theoretical or empirical examination of this, but meanwhile infrastructures of transparency are ever expanding; so it is an important question. And finally, in terms of accountability and climate governance beyond the UNFCCC, the questions remain very similar and become ever more complex in a multi-actor multi-level context to even identify, let alone agree on, these questions of who should be accountable, to whom, for what standards, who decides, who evaluates, and if there are any sanctions for non-adherence.



# keynote speakers



## **Topic: Non-Party stakeholder participation in the UNFCCC**

Ms Tracy Tollman - Tracy has over 20 years of experience working as a process management specialist with UNFCCC Secretariat in Bonn.

Tracy shared her insights into how the UNFCCC works, specifically how non-Party stakeholders have participated in what is commonly acknowledged as a Party-driven process.

A “Party-driven process” means that countries – Parties to the Convention – are the *de facto* primary decision makers when it comes to shaping our negotiated climate change mandates, and are accountable to their domestic electorate for creating and implementing climate change related legislation. Since Tracy’s first UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP5 in 1999) she has witnessed a gradual change in the role of non-Party stakeholder (NPS) in the climate change process, as well as an overall increase in the general levels of transparency. NPS have moved from being very much on the sidelines, as mere observers, often prevented from accessing meeting rooms, to gradually being allowed into the negotiation space to watch, but not engage. There has also been a shift from a very strict block on any type of NPS interventions to now a limited ability to make interventions at contact group meetings and plenary sessions, time permitting. There have also been some notable moves forward in the level of inclusion and engagement, such as seen at the annual Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) dialogues, and the 2018 Talanoa dialogues.

Building on these processes, Tracy pointed out that recently NPS have had the opportunity to participate at an unprecedented level at a mandated event, namely, the Technical Dialogue of the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement (GST1). The GST is a key element of the Paris Agreement and, with a ratchet mechanism, seeks to conduct a comprehensive assessment of collective progress towards its goals. Tracy explained that the GST is an opportunity to evaluate our efforts, identify gaps and increase ambition in the fight against climate change, so as to course correct and get on track. (Tracy noted that she deliberately said ‘get on track’ rather than ‘get back on track,’ as we have never been on track.)

The Technical Dialogue (TD) took place in three meetings which were held at the 56th, 57th, and 58th sessions of the subsidiary bodies in 2022 and 2023. Within 252 hours of meetings and discussions in a variety of novel events and formats taking place in very compressed timescales of one week at a time, the Technical Dialogue was ‘full on.’ Two innovative and creative co-facilitators led the meetings with the assistance of the climate change secretariat. Having supported the work of the GST TD for the past 18 months as a process manager, she could confirm that it has been a learning-by-doing experience. But she added that what truly sets it apart from other mandated events and negotiations within the UNFCCC is enshrined in its mandate in decision 19/CMA.1. And while people’s eyes may glaze over when a decision is quoted, this one is important, because it clearly states that they decided that the GST will be a Party-driven process conducted in a transparent manner with the participation of non-Party stakeholders. This has allowed for an unprecedented engagement of NPS in a process under the UNFCCC.

Being a technical dialogue, there was already an inherent emphasis on having technical experts over political expertise. This requirement automatically increased the number of NPS that needed to be involved. Respecting expertise, gender, and geographical balance, a number of



## keynote speakers

technical experts and facilitators were selected by the co-facilitators to support them in the thematic areas of mitigation which included response measures, adaptation which included loss and damage, and the means of implementation comprising finance capacity building and technology, as well as systems transformation and holistic approaches which were added as of the second meeting.

PowerPoint slides, prompts, and topic notes were used to guide and focus the participants discussions in world café sessions, round tables, breakout groups, and focused exchanges. The NPS experts and facilitators were also integral to contributing to the summary reports upon conclusion of each technical dialogue. Parties and non-Party stakeholders were invited to make submissions on the arrangements for each of the technical dialogue meetings, and general input to the global stocktake, with non-Party stakeholders, making a total of 250 submissions (more than Parties submitted). These served to inform the planning of each meeting, and to represent an online repository of good practices and lessons learned, as well as suggestions to bridge gaps and increase the level of ambition. Tracy explained that non-Party stakeholders within the UNFCCC process are made up of accredited observer organisations, which includes: the UN system and its specialised agencies, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other non-credited non-Party stakeholders. The NGOs were asked to self-select identifying participants within each of the 9 constituencies – business and industry, environmental NGOs, farmers, Indigenous peoples' organisations, local governments and municipal authorities, research and independent organizations, trade union, women and gender, and youth – while all others were invited to an expression of interest process, where the participants were selected using predetermined criteria and respecting gender and geographical balance.

Tracy explained that the following is the really important part. During the technical dialogue, and for the first time, non-Party stakeholders made up approximately 24% of the invited participants to events, and secondary badges were issued to secure Party delegates and non-Party stakeholders seats at the table, guaranteeing that they weren't only being seen, but that their voices were heard and captured in the discussions. Seating at the opening and closing plenaries deviated from the usual very defined and rigid setup, and here parties and non-Party stakeholders were mixed up in an à la carte arrangement, the first time that this had happened. Interventions at the opening and closing plenaries were arranged with groups of Parties going first, as is always the case, but then followed by parties and non-Party stakeholders alternating to take the floor – again, a complete break away with the usual way of doing things. The co-facilitators invited the submission of posters and a total of 80 posters were received, with a large proportion coming from non-Party stakeholders. Poster sessions were held in the first week of COP27 and at SB58, and there were a large number of non-Party stakeholders stood with their posters to answer any questions. Finally, the co-facilitators invited people to participate in a creative space at COP27. Here they could showcase their climate action projects and ideas through any creative medium, such as videos, poems, song, theatre, or dance; around 30 non-Party stakeholders participated, and it was very warmly received.

Tracy concluded by saying that the TD of the first global stocktake has opened the way for non-Party stakeholders to participate more fully, to actively engage. It has raised the bar and there is expectation for other UNFCCC processes to follow suit. NPS participation ensures that the stocktake process is not confined to the closed doors of diplomacy but becomes a truly inclusive and transparent endeavour. It has socialised the idea of non-Party stakeholder participation, with many recognising the value added of multiple perspectives and calling for non-Party stakeholders to continue to be included in the mix. The non-Party stakeholder journey from the margins to the heart of the UNFCCC process is a testament to the power of collective action and the determination to address the climate crisis. Their participation is a significant milestone in the pursuit of accountability, transparency and equitable climate solutions.



## *moderated panel*

**Chair: Prof Katharine Rietig**

**Panel: Prof Aarti Gupta, Ms Tracy Tollman**

**Question:**

**How can accountability be strengthened, especially within the UNFCCC process? And when we think about the global stocktake, what would be necessary to get a successful conclusion of the global stocktake, especially around COP28, and looking beyond.**

Tracy Tollman:

It's very difficult within the UNFCCC, it's a very slow-moving organism and very bureaucratic. And the Parties to the Convention are very possessive about their control of their role in this whole thing. They are our employers - they are paying contributions. When we have tried to make creative changes and gradually increase the level of transparency and accountability, or spread it around a little bit, we often get accused of the tail wagging the dog. So it's very difficult. We have been making very slow incremental changes, and that is evidenced by what we've managed to achieve thus far compared to where we started. It's not where we need to end up and it's not ideal, but we are trying to have that improved.

What I hear time and time again from colleagues, and especially from Parties - from delegates - is that if they want to discuss something and have an honest discussion, it's impossible to do that if the room is opened up to everybody. There are a number of discussions that need to take place where they at the very least need to understand where each other is coming from. And that level of frankness and honesty cannot take place in an open environment, and that needs to be understood and respected. But having them have that will then allow them to get on to the next phase.

The evidence is there that these efforts have borne fruit and that the level of transparency and engagement and participation by non-Party stakeholders has increased, and we are fighting to have it increase even more.

The other thing that you need to understand is that there is the UNFCCC process, and then there's the climate change Secretariat, and the staff in that are trying to make everybody happy. It's not an easy task.

**Question:**

**You're bringing up a very important point about transparency; we assume that this would help the process but there are instances where it can actually be an additional hindering factor that needs to be overcome. And it's important to actually find some balance here between improving effectiveness and letting parties get on and have the frank conversations necessary, but then also have enough transparency for the global public and other stakeholders. So what lessons learned would you see for future stocktakes, to improve effectiveness, accountability, and other aspects?**

Tracy Tollmann:

For me, one of the biggest lessons learned, and, as it relates to non-Party stakeholders in their engagement in any process, is that their level of competency and capacity needs to be improved dramatically.

We had a number of non-Party stakeholders who were participating in roundtable discussions, who didn't know how to raise their flags. Or they put it up, see that we'd noticed that it had been put up, and then put it down again. And just sort of simple things like that, understanding what the unspoken rules are of asking for the floor, turning your nameplate so that the people who are desperately trying to create a list of speakers can read who you are. Because otherwise, the co-facilitators weren't in a position to be able to announce them properly and give the floor to them.



## *moderated panel*

Additionally, there were people that were taking the floor and making interventions and who were obviously very skilled at their thematic substantive item, but who weren't very good public speakers. And this made it quite difficult, in some cases to actually understand what they were saying. I think this is something that can definitely be improved; if you know you've got these opportunities coming up, don't let them be wasted opportunities. We also had some non-Party stakeholders who sat there throughout the entire round-table discussions and didn't say a word, they didn't take the floor. And for me, that was the greatest injustice of all, because they had this opportunity that other people are very keen to be able to take advantage of, and they didn't use it – what a waste! I get quite annoyed about this because I have been around for a long time and I've seen how people have fought for these opportunities.

### **Question:**

**Based on your research and the findings and especially this really interesting project around the link between transparency and accountability, how can accountability be strengthened within, but especially outside, the UNFCCC process? And what strategies have you identified, or do you see as available, to achieving those objectives?**

Aarti Gupta:

That's an important question. I think what happens outside the UNFCCC in terms of accountability is – and this might be an unpopular opinion – very much contingent ultimately also on what happens within the UNFCCC, because the direction of travel is set by this global regime that we have: the standards of performance etc, with the messages about who should do what, who needs to act, how soon, how far, and how legally binding or mandatory these obligations are (because if we leave everything to voluntary efforts whether it's of individuals, cities, NGOs, private actors etc, that will only get us so far). So we will continue to have an accountability deficit in climate governance as long as both the standards to which we are aspiring – whatever the climate action we need to see (and the IPCC has given many guidelines about this) – but also the accountability processes themselves and the mechanisms themselves, remain voluntary. In terms of accountability outside the UNFCCC, of course we've talked about states being accountable to each other, but we can talk about corporate accountability, and then the question is what are the mechanisms we have.

Transparency has been much discussed and as Tracy was saying it's a double-edged sword in the context of the global stocktake. 'Is more always better' is a question that also runs through my research. I could be drowned in disclosure of various kinds – it's the relevant transparency: is there actionable transparency, is there meaningful transparency and that's a question for corporate accountability outside the UNFCCC. A key mechanism of accountability, in the absence of legally mandatory actions that corporate actors need to take, is transparency – corporate voluntary reporting – and that sometimes can replace action, depending on the purpose is it intended to serve. Is it behind expensive paywalls? Is it reporting on all the essential Scope 3 emissions What is voluntary transparency getting us in terms of holding the corporate sector to account? Another mechanism that could be very powerful is climate litigation: can we hold corporate actors and other states to account through litigation? That is becoming very very powerful as we see examples in the Netherlands. Also there is ex ante accountability: we can hold Shell to account for example for what they should do by 2050 rather than their behaviour in the past. So those are some mechanisms but I think the most crucial thing is that ultimately what we need is mandatory legally binding obligations with strong enforceability. As long as we do not have that, we can talk till the cows come home and we can come up with all kinds of nice ideas but there will be an accountability deficit as long as we don't force action by the powerful.



# ***small group discussion 1***

The first set of small group discussions by conference participants was facilitated by members of Mediators Beyond Borders International (The facilitators are listed at the end of this report).

## **Focus questions:**

- **What supports exist for accountability? What is working well or could assist things to work better?**
- **What works against accountability?**
- **What makes strong accountability processes - at the global, international, national or sub-national level?**

These are the ideas that emerged from the discussions:

## **What supports exist for accountability? What is working well or could assist things to work better?**

- Court cases at the national level
- Emission registry in the Bahamas to hold corporate entities accountable for their emission levels
- Whether there could be some certain accountability - need to have another legally binding framework to hold more parties accountable
- Sanctions (might not be effective) Kyoto Protocol, Paris Agreement - not all are not parties
- There are resources in place such as guiding documents and frameworks
- Voluntary process => self interest
- Global reach would need to be addressed
- Accountability lies within each one of us
- The prime minister of Bahamas made it a mandate to address climate change as a country to support against it (eliminate plastic waste, introduce solar panels, asking countries to participate in purchasing sea grass as carbon credit)
- More active participation from the international community - better governance at state level individual governments need to take significant steps to comply
- Raising awareness and presenting more incentives for adhering - "making it easier to go green" for all
- More actors beyond national states are more sensitive towards climate change and awareness are raised at an international level
- Big companies, NGOs - more actors
- The commitment of the members and the leaders.....
- Increasing engagement among stakeholder groups in the UNFCCC processes
- Before we get to accountability we need agreement on transparency, transparency should be the first column before we get to accountability. If countries don't share details then how can we be accountable. So this may be what works against accountability. Transparency is the biggest challenge to accountability.
- You need to know what you are talking about, that is have knowledge of the subject of climate change, so people know how it is related to the subject. Also people need to have information and understand how it is related to their experience and how it affects them.
- A lot focuses on countries and the interaction between countries, what about the importance of the secretariat in conducting conversation in channels behind the scenes. A lot of the discussions cannot be frank in open forum, so does that mean we need more back channel diplomacy before we get to those discussions?
- Perhaps we need training as well for those participating so people understand how to have a voice.
- In addition, we need engagement before the conference so that there are less awkward discussions during the event.
- How much systematic engagement is there between businesses and states before the conference or is everyone there just at the meeting but have they had opportunities to have frank discussion in smaller groups before the big conferences. Will this make accountability easier? Perhaps accountability should take part in small groups first before entering the larger forums.



## ***small group discussion 1***

- If you know your subject and can communicate it well then it is easier to be accountability.
- There needs to be an atmosphere of problem solving rather than finger pointing. Trust has to be a part of accountability.
- The element of accountability should be something to face when the job is not done and how do we apply that? It is a challenge because of the world we live in and not all states follow international law. We need to have some legally binding agreements but they will only go as far as states are willing to abide by them. It is selective and countries will pursue their own interpretation as well.
- Where countries have been forced into action, generally occurs more often when citizens are pushing for change and implementation - when the bottom is insisting on change.

### **What works against accountability?**

- Lack of multilaterally-agreed standards of behaviour
- Power asymmetries
- Specific standards are self-determined - polarized government structures, lack of trust in systems, democratic structures at national/regional levels create constant change
- Individuals who are reluctant to change or companies which are more interested in their own profits
- Sense of ownership: to relate back to responsibility
- Accountability derives power from civil society
- The sanctions that are being put in place are less effective
- If you make something enforceable or compulsory, the states don't participate - no accountability as a result of inaction
- The ease of engagements is usually dependent on how closed or open the groups are. Thereby hobbling accountability
- Language and complexity of issues are a hinder to many affected groups to properly engage
- The level of 1) engagement, and 2) knowledge campaign for climate governance

### **What makes strong accountability processes - at the global, international, national or sub-national level?**

- Emissions registry
  - Adapt the discussion to move away from the academic level
  - Too much "greenwashing" around
  - ...hence, Client Earth - pro bono organisation (pressure group) - take governments and corporations to court (e.g KLM, UK GOV) legal action and held them accountable for "greenwashing"
  - "keeping them on their toes"
  - Sanctions must be enforced properly - various role of actors at a national level
  - The commitments for climate change can be more engaging with frontline actors
  - Openness
  - Transparency
- o In general, it's the practice of governance and transparency...
- ...who have power need to be kept in-check - somehow
  - The mechanisms in place, at the moment, are not proactive enough
  - Involve more stakeholders but also actors who need to be held to account
  - They are reactive, in my view, because such procedures or processes ago hold stakeholders to account are still evolving in some developing nations, for instance.



## ***small group discussion 2***

The second set of small group discussions was preceded by short presentations on the two topics to be discussed. After the presentations, conference participants split into two groups depending on which topic they wanted to discuss. Both groups were again professionally facilitated by MBBi facilitators.

### **Topic A: The Global Stocktake: Now and in the future.**

#### **Presentation by Christine Peringer.**

The Paris Agreement has two articles focused on how countries who are party to the Paris Agreement will track their progress and hold themselves accountable:

In Article 13:

- Countries committed to reporting on actions taken in climate change:
  - mitigation - including sharing of their greenhouse gas inventories
  - adaptation measures and
  - support provided or received.
- This system is titled: Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF).
- It also created procedures for the review of these national reports.

Article 14:

- The Global Stocktake process for periodically assessing the implementation of the Agreement and collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement.
- It informs Parties as they update and enhance national actions and support in accordance with the Agreement, as well as in enhancing international cooperation for climate action.
- Parties committed to hold the first GST in 2023 (8 years after the PA), and every 5 years after that.

As Tracy has told us, the GST has three primary components:

1) Information Collection and Preparation: Including all the data gathered through the Enhanced Transparency Framework

2) The Technical Assessment: to assess collective progress towards achieving the purpose and long-term goals of the Agreement as well as identifying the gaps and opportunities for enhanced action. There have been reports of each of the Technical Dialogues and a Synthesis Report.

3) The Consideration of Outputs:

• This is the political phase - parties will discuss the implications of the findings of the technical assessment at COP28 in Dubai. It is expected to conclude with a decision or a declaration.

The Better Climate Governance (BCG) Project has been carefully observing the Technical Dialogues, and noting the process innovations developed by the two co-chairs, Harald Winkler (South Africa) and Farhan Akbar (USA). BCG submitted our preliminary findings through the TD submissions portal - there you can see all the documents prepared by Parties to the Paris Agreement and non-party actors (civil society and other bodies). We are in the process of developing our final findings. These conclusions will be shared at [betterclimategovernance.com](https://betterclimategovernance.com).



## ***small group discussion 2***

Some of the innovations we observed that we are finding enhanced the strength of this aspect of the GST are the following:

- Use of small group and World Café processes to support unscripted exchanges between Parties and between Parties and non-Party stakeholders
- Use of skilled external facilitators, rather than Parties, to lead small group process
- Informality - use of first names rather than being called on by country
- Inclusive approach allowing Parties and non-Party stakeholders in some of the full plenary sessions to speak equally (rather than non-Parties speaking at the end, often to empty rooms.)
- Our interviews with participants (Parties and non-Party) show that these innovations have been mostly well-received.

### **Focus questions for Topic A - The Global Stocktake: Now and in the future:**

- **What is the meaning of accountability within the UNFCCC process?**
- **What worked well (or less well) so far in the first GST?**
- **What is needed for a successful GST conclusion at COP28?**
- **What are the lessons for future stocktakes?**

These are the ideas that emerged from the discussions:

- Relates to what is visible at the COPs. honour the commitment to global action, action at the global level (regional level etc)
- Some countries fail to look beyond self interests - their own agendas
- Also private companies, private entities that also have their own agendas
- Climate action and sustainability
- Global Stocktake (GST) not recognised by all - a way to frame the GST - relevant for all to understand
- Language that might be easier to understand by all - more comprehensive to understand
- "Climate Change Denial" factor in how do we ensure that does not sway away from the UNFCCC goals and the GST
- Accountability and Transparency
- Transparency is often included
- Accountability - range of Democratic / Non Democratic participants - differs in different contexts and situations
- What are your governments doing whether provincial, state, federal, where you are, what are your governments and leaders doing to help with this cause (what is good governance in relation to this)
- Involving civil society and local community, accountability well addressed in terms of reporting - transparency (what is done by states in terms of engaging with indigenous communities) but low accountability
- Rwanda for instance, civic space is very limited
- Incentive - the softer side to ensure ease to hold a state accountable
- In Nigeria, we have the National Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI).
- Which is a third sector organisation that keeps both Federal, State and Local Government levels accountable and especially Multinational mineral exploiters/prospectors. Especially, pertinent is the influx of Chinese small scale artisanal prospectors- mainly from China et.al.
- The method of evaluating GST should be discussed.



## *small group discussion 2*

### **TOPIC B:**

#### **Actors and Strategies for strengthening accountability outside the UNFCCC process (from the global, regional, international, national to the sub-national).**

#### **Presentation: Prof Katharine Rietig**

Aarti has given us a great introduction to accountability. As a refresher and some additional aspects, I'll share some details on accountability as it is conceptualised in the academic literature around global governance and sustainability.

- There are diverse conceptualisations of accountability including political, social, market, democratic, public, stakeholder, technical, in networks and multilevel governance and administrative accountability.
- Most of these concepts imply a somewhat different characterization of the accountability relationship between societal actors where one is called to account (accountor) by another one (accountee).
- The nature of this relationship can range from hierarchical to horizontal. Hierarchical relationships are often framed as the principal-agent type, such as between voters and the government in political accountability or between the executive government and its agencies in administrative accountability. Horizontal accountability, on the other hand, refer to relations among peers, stakeholders or other contexts where there are no formal hierarchical relationships
- By asking 6 questions we can identify and map the key elements of accountability relationships: (1) who is accountable; (2) to whom; (3) for what; (4) through what processes behaviour is reported and accountability assured; (5) by what standards behaviour is assessed, and (6) with what effect is someone held answerable for behaviour.
- There are four discourses of accountability each associated with a narrative of promised outcome: institutionalisation (democracy), mechanisation (control), incentivisation (performance), and juridicisation (justice).

So what does this mean for the UNFCCC and implementing the Paris Agreement?

In the global governance of climate change, we can differentiate between the national level and the UNFCCC level. At the national level, we have hierarchical accountability as the government is accountable to the voters, who in turn can hold the government to account over meeting/not meeting targets and its approach towards the implementation of the Paris Agreement. There is also the option of litigation and court action once the PA is implemented into national law, the same holds for sub-national levels. Public awareness and public support are important here as the public can put pressure on politicians through their voting behaviour, but also through vocal demands through the media and demonstrations.

On the UNFCCC level, this is limited to horizontal/peer accountability, where countries can hold each other accountable through 'softer' approaches that are mostly normative such as the Global Stocktake process. These 'softer' approaches focus on measuring, reporting and verification of emission and/or financial targets and then putting pressure on countries through the media, activism/demonstrations and other 'naming and shaming' activities. Countries and non-state actors such as civil society organisations can also employ 'boomerang' tactics by approaching another country that, e.g., provides development assistance or has close trade/other economic ties and gets this country to put pressure on the first country that is not complying with its commitments.



## ***small group discussion 2***

**Focus questions for Topic B: Actors and Strategies for strengthening accountability outside the UNFCCC process:**

- **How can accountability be strengthened outside the UNFCCC process?**
- **What strategies are available and are they achieving their goals?**
- **How can we maintain and strengthen public support?**

These are the ideas that emerged from the discussions:

- Fossil fuels = big problem. Government firm on private taxes, Downside: polarized. Political agenda and influence of deniers are fighting. Federal: collective agenda, but regionally a problem
- Depending on leadership. Green technology. Battery companies to reduce fuel, More political will.
- USA the ability of our government make groups accountable has been made less by the courts: have not allowed to make groups accountable. Groups can create: set a good example and known in the media
- (from Rwanda) Create awareness. Create power groups
- Reduce complexity of issues. So people understand better and engage and cooperate.
- Exchange with each other of information (reliable) is necessary. Building capacity around reporting. Frontline.
- Engaging (Al Gore) and leadership. Create more urgency to create accountability. Success stories but have to be pushed.
- (from Spain): we talk about climate change with students. they are aware, BUT: pp do not want to invest, etc. We adopt well the EU directives in Spain (cities not accessible for cars, etc.). Personal responsibility is lacking
- Al Gore great job in informing people in easy way. Focus on more campaigns to inform people about these. TikTok trainings. snow ball which starts growing. More tangible.
- Providing feedback at various levels, for instance community levels. Online actors. And people should go to the field and talk together

## ***conclusion***

The conference concluded with thanks to the keynote speakers, facilitators, conference managers, and participants, as well as an invitation to join the Better Climate Governance Network as a fellow.

Participants expressed appreciation for the insights shared. They appreciated gaining a clearer understanding of the challenges around accountability in general and the Global Stocktake in particular, and developing mechanisms how these challenges can be addressed through mutual learning and sharing of experiences.



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## CO-HOSTS

### **Newcastle University, UK**

As a founding member of the Russell Group of Research intensive universities, and a Global Top 110 university (QS World University Rankings 2024), Newcastle University is dedicated to excellence, creativity and innovation, pioneering solutions that can change our world. Delivering world-class research and teaching, we are tackling some of the biggest challenges facing society globally. We educate for life, nurturing the next generation of creative practitioners, clinicians, scientists, engineers and educationalists.

### **Mediators Beyond Borders International**

Mediators Beyond Borders (MBBI) builds local capacities for peace, advocates for mediation, and facilitates the transformation of conflict globally.

### **British International Studies Association**

The British International Studies Association (BISA) is a society which develops and promotes the study of International Studies, Global Politics and related subjects through teaching, research and the facilitation of contact between scholars.

## **BETTER CLIMATE GOVERNANCE NETWORK CO-FOUNDERS AND CO-LEADERS**

### **Christine Peringer JD**



Christine is Co-Investigator on this project and is an expert in multi-stakeholder planning and problem-solving facilitation, working in sectors including environment, sustainable development, justice and health. Clients have included the Government of Mexico (Guidelines for Mexico's Greenhouse Gas Inventory), Canadian Environmental Law Association (Great Lakes Summit), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (Country Strategy for Vietnam-Canada collaborative projects) and Quaker International Affairs Project (Dialogue Process on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights).

Christine holds a law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Toronto, Ontario (1985) and is the author of "How We Work for Peace" Peace Research Institute - Dundas (1997). She is an active member of the Climate Change Project of Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) and has been a member of the MBBI observer delegation at the UNFCCC negotiations since 2019. Since 1985 she has been a member of the World Federalist Movement - Canada and currently serves as Senior Advisor on Climate Governance.

Christine has served for twenty years as a principal in her consultancy firm, Group Facilitation and Mediation Services. For more information see [www.peringer.ca](http://www.peringer.ca)

### **Prof Katharine Rietig**



Katharine is Principal Investigator of this project and Professor in International Politics at Newcastle University, UK. She is an expert in global climate change negotiations, climate change policies and transitions to low carbon societies. Her research examines how negotiation deadlocks can be resolved through learning, non-state actors and multilevel governance dynamics between countries and the United Nations, and how these dynamics facilitate policy change for more effective environmental governance. She has been participating regularly as academic observer in the UN Framework Convention on



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Climate Change negotiations since November 2009 and conducted various research projects on the UNFCCC negotiations focusing on the influence of non-national actors, negotiation strategies and the role of leadership by state and non-state actors.

She holds a PhD and MSc in Environmental Policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science and an M.A. in Political Science, International Law and Economics from the University of Munich. Her research and impact activities have been funded by the UK Research and Innovation Council/ Economic and Social Research Council, the British Academy, the Wolfson Foundation and the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. Her work has appeared in leading peer-reviewed journals including *International Affairs*, *Global Governance*, the *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *Policy Sciences*, *Public Administration*, *Environmental Politics*, *International Environmental Agreements*, as well as *Environmental Policy and Governance*.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

### **Prof Aarti Gupta**

Aarti is a Professor of Global Environmental Governance at Wageningen University in the Netherlands, with a background in international relations and political science. Her recent research focuses on international climate policy, with an interest in questions of transparency and accountability. She also works on anticipatory governance of novel and potentially risky technologies, such as modern biotechnology or climate engineering. She is current Co-Chair of the Scientific Steering Committee of the Earth System Governance (ESG) network, one of the largest interdisciplinary networks of sustainability researchers worldwide, a Coordinating Lead Author of its 2018 Science and Implementation Plan, and co-editor of the Cambridge Elements Series on Earth System Governance.

She is also the principal investigator of the Netherlands Research Council-funded TRANSGOV project on the Transformative Potential of Transparency in Climate Governance (<https://transgov.org/>) and co-editor of the book *Transparency in Global Environmental Governance* (MIT Press).

She holds a PhD from Yale University in environmental studies.

In addition to academic pursuits, Aarti has worked for international development and environmental NGOs, including Oxfam Novib in The Hague and Transparency International in Berlin. She has also been a consultant for UN agencies such as UNDP and FAO, and donor agencies such as GIZ.

### **Tracy Jayne Tollmann**

Tracy has over 20 years of experience working as a process management specialist with UNFCCC Bonn, starting at COP 5 in 1999. Most recently this includes coordinating the global stocktake technical dialogues. Prior to that she has held various process management roles in support of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI); the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP); the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), which culminated in the Paris Agreement, and has supported negotiations on Article 6 under the convention, now known as Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE - an acronym that she personally coined), as well as the Momentum for Change initiative.

She has a first class honours degree in environmental science and post graduate diploma and certificates in environmental policy-making and environmental management from the Open University (UK).



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## CONFERENCE ADMIN:

Jecel Censoro, British International Studies Association and Newcastle University

Elizabeth Muggleton, Newcastle University

Anand Roy, Newcastle University

## FACILITATORS

We would like to thank all our facilitators from Mediators Beyond Borders International for volunteering their time at our conference:



**Anil (安纽) Changaroth**, an internationally accredited Mediator (and Arbitrator, Adjudicator, Dispute Board, Restorative Justice practitioner) is the Co-Head of ESG Practice of Singapore-based RHTLaw Asia (and chair of the Law Society of Singapore's new ESG Working Group). An Advocate and Solicitor of Singapore, Solicitor of England and Wales, and qualified as a Barrister, Middle Temple England, his practice in Asia Pacific includes Civil, Commercial, Criminal Dispute Resolution and front-end contract advisory. Also trained in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Emotional Quotient, his book "Resolving Disputes, A Guide to Appropriate Dispute Resolution" was published in 2019.

<https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/all-roads-lead-to-peacebuilding-member-spotlight-anil-changaroth/>



**Damian Croker** is an international arbitrator and mediator at DCArbMed. He is founder/CEO of ODRPlat, a carbon neutral online dispute resolution platform and a former consultant to 51 to Carbon Zero, emissions measurement and reporting software and services. Damian is a member of the Society for Computers and Law Sustainability and of Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI) Climate Change Project. He is former Chair of the Campaign for Greener Arbitrations Latin America Committee and visiting Professor in international commercial arbitration at the Shanghai Lixin University. He is a signatory of both the Arbitration and the Mediators Green Pledge. More details at <https://www.dcarbmed.com>



**Jake M. Goodman** is a certified mediator and research fellow for a United Nations affiliated research center. He recently graduated with a Master of Arts in Conflict Analysis & Dispute Resolution at Salisbury University. During his undergraduate studies at Towson University, he received a Bachelor's of Science in Political Science and Geography & Environmental Planning. He also double minored in Meteorology and Applied Adult Disabilities Studies. He has held numerous internships and fellowships with organizations like the U.S Department of State, National Disability Rights Network, and The Office of Congressman Jamie Raskin in the U.S House of Representatives.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jake-m-goodman-560814109/>.



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**David Kay** is a faculty member at Cornell University. David's work focuses on energy, land use, community development and regional economics. He has served on the boards of not-for-profit and government organizations concerned with sustainability and municipal land use planning and chairs the American National Extension Climate Initiative. A community mediator, he also volunteers with the Climate Change Team of Mediators Beyond Borders International. <https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/focusing-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-member-spotlight-david-kay/>



**Brown Masingati** is a social worker from Malawi. Brown's goal is to use the knowledge he has acquired through experience in non-profit organizations and research institutions for the benefit of the people he serves and the nation at large. He has worked as a Community Conflict and mediator officer, Child Protection Officer, Resource Mobilization Officer and Community Development Officer. Among organizations he has worked for are World Vision Malawi, Partners in Action for Sustainable Development, Centre for Social research at the University of Malawi. He possesses Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Zomba Theological College. <https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/standing-for-children-protection-and-women-empowerment-in-malawi-member-spotlight-brown-masingati/>



**Luis Ore** is a mediator, consensus building stakeholder engagement practitioner and negotiation consultant. He is the former Deputy Secretary of Conflict Management in the Prime Minister's Office of Peru during the Sagasti Administration (2021). He holds a Masters in Conflict Management ICM (Lipscomb University), negotiation pedagogy training from The Program on Negotiation (Harvard Law School) and a law degree (University of Lima). Luis was Chair 2010-2011 of the Association for Conflict Resolution's International Section and Vice-Chair 2011-2012 of the American Bar Association's International Investment and Development Committee. He's a peace-builder with MBBI, director of ORASI Consulting Group (U.S.- Peru) and managing partner of Strateus Consultores (Perú).



**Liliana Pimentel** is an architect and urban planner, a specialist in water resources management in watersheds. She has a Master's in Urban Planning and Design and is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Geography Department at Universidade de Brasilia. She is a former Fulbright Hubert Humphrey Fellow and works at the Ministry of Regional Development of Brazil. Liliana is also a mediator interested in transboundary cooperation and conflict prevention related to natural resources. Her passion for mediation and peacebuilding drove her to join MBBI years ago, hoping to learn and contribute to enhancing those skills amongst different actors involved in the decision-making and public policy processes. <https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/changing-hats-is-incredibly-crucial-member-spotlight-liliana-pimentel/>



## appendix



**Linda Reijerkerk** is an accredited mediator, facilitator and coach for more than twenty years. Since 2006 Linda has served as CEO of the Centre for Conflict Resolution and Mediation [www.cvc.nl](http://www.cvc.nl), one of the top Dutch companies specialising in training on mediation and negotiation. She is a professional coach and mediator for business disputes, as well as for public law disputes (environmental). She has specialized in multiparty and intercultural conflict resolution, multi stakeholder processes, consensus building and dialogue and interactive policy formulation, etc. She is one of the few experts on mediation in water and climate change related conflicts.



**Crista Renner** holds a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Waterloo and a Bachelor of Arts in Justice Studies from Royal Roads University. With nearly 20 years of experience in the innovation space, she has worked with hundreds of start-ups including Velocity, the University of Waterloo's incubator and Western University's Ivey Business School's Innovation North. Specializing in conflict resolution, she assists organizations in fostering collaborative and transparent environments. She is a Qualified Mediator and a practitioner in Workplace Fairness. Crista contributes to community-based peacebuilding with her work as a Rotarian and a member of MBBI.



**Intan Amalina Sarit** is from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She is an accredited Mediator in Civil and Commercial Matters (ADR Training Group, UK) and Workplace Matters (Emsolutions, UK). She has an LLB (Hons) London however she is not a practising barrister at law. Currently she is the Malaysian Representative of Mediators Beyond Borders International, a mediator/consultant with Mediators Beyond Borders Consulting, an insider mediator at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and a partner and fellow of Three C's Met International Institute of Mediation, Nigeria. She is also one of the founding pioneers of the Asian International Arbitration Centre's Young Practitioner's Group Mediation Committee.



**Britt K. Sheinbaum** has an aptitude for recognizing common ground to facilitate meaningful communication. Born and raised outside the USA, of a U.S. Foreign Service Officer father and a Danish mother, and having travelled extensively throughout the world as a professional, her background is steeped in peacebuilding to support local and global communities. Britt is a certified North Carolina Superior Court mediator with a specialty in facilitating dialogue around water resource collaboration, as well as an Adjunct Professor of Conflict Management graduate studies in the Public & International Affairs Department at the University of North Carolina (Wilmington, USA).

<https://pollackpeacebuilding.com/about/britt-k-sheinbaum/>



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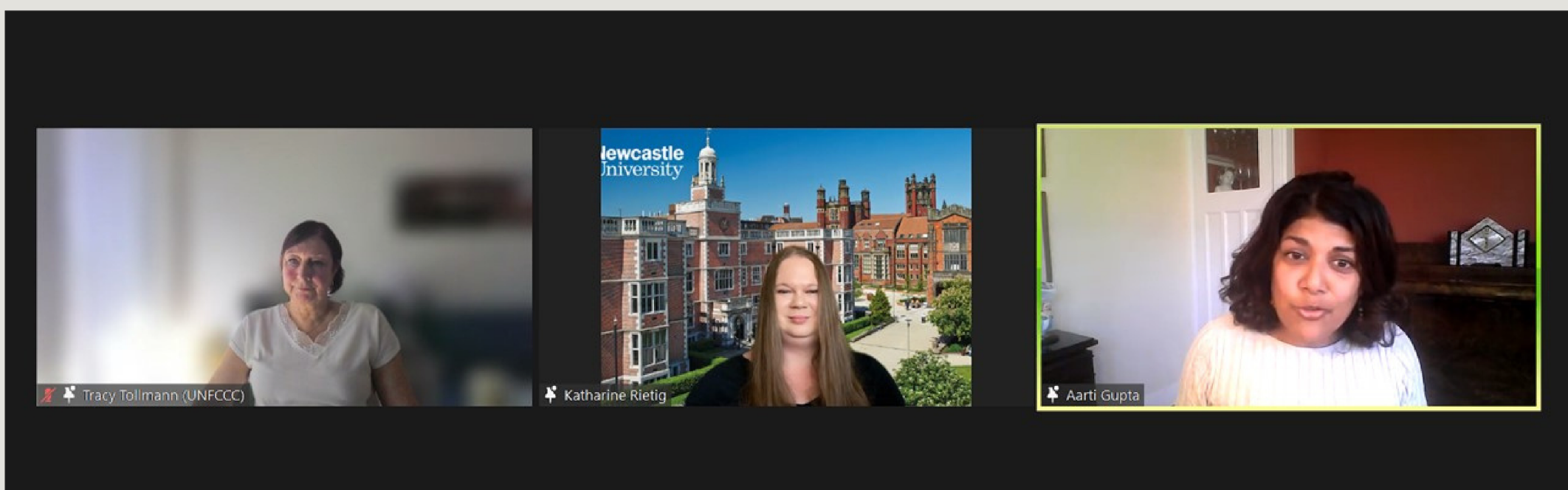


**Lisa Singh** is a professional mediator, facilitator coach and intercultural trainer based in the United States who has devoted all her professional career to helping people communicate more effectively. Lisa leads teams in creative problem solving, works with business to provide more effective meetings, and consults with communities to create public conversations that work. Lisa is an active member of the Climate Change Team of Mediators Beyond Borders International. Learn more about Lisa here: <https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/a-starfish-hunter-member-spotlight-lisa-singh/>

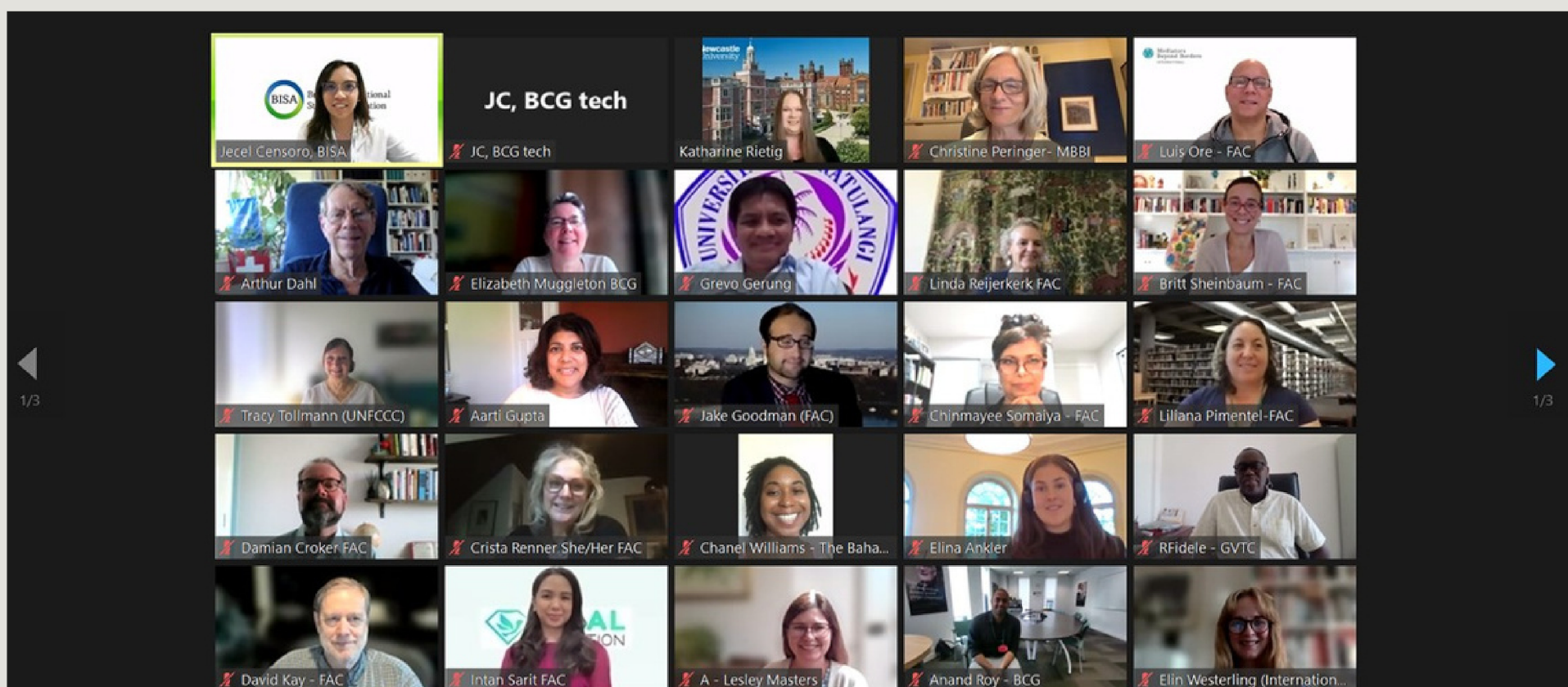


**Chinmayee Somaiya** is a leadership coach and group facilitator based in Sydney, Australia. Her career started in engineering and progressed to global engineering leadership, where she led program delivery across geographical and organisational divides. In the process, she became adept at bringing people of different backgrounds, agendas, and seniority together. Realizing her core passion for systemic change, she transitioned into coaching and facilitation fully in 2020. Chinmayee is deeply aligned with MBBI's vision of building facilitative capacity in communities and bringing facilitation to global dialogues. She joined MBBI in 2020 and is a member of the Climate Change project. <https://mediatorsbeyondborders.org/focusing-on-compassion-and-humanness-member-spotlight-chinmayee-somaiya/>

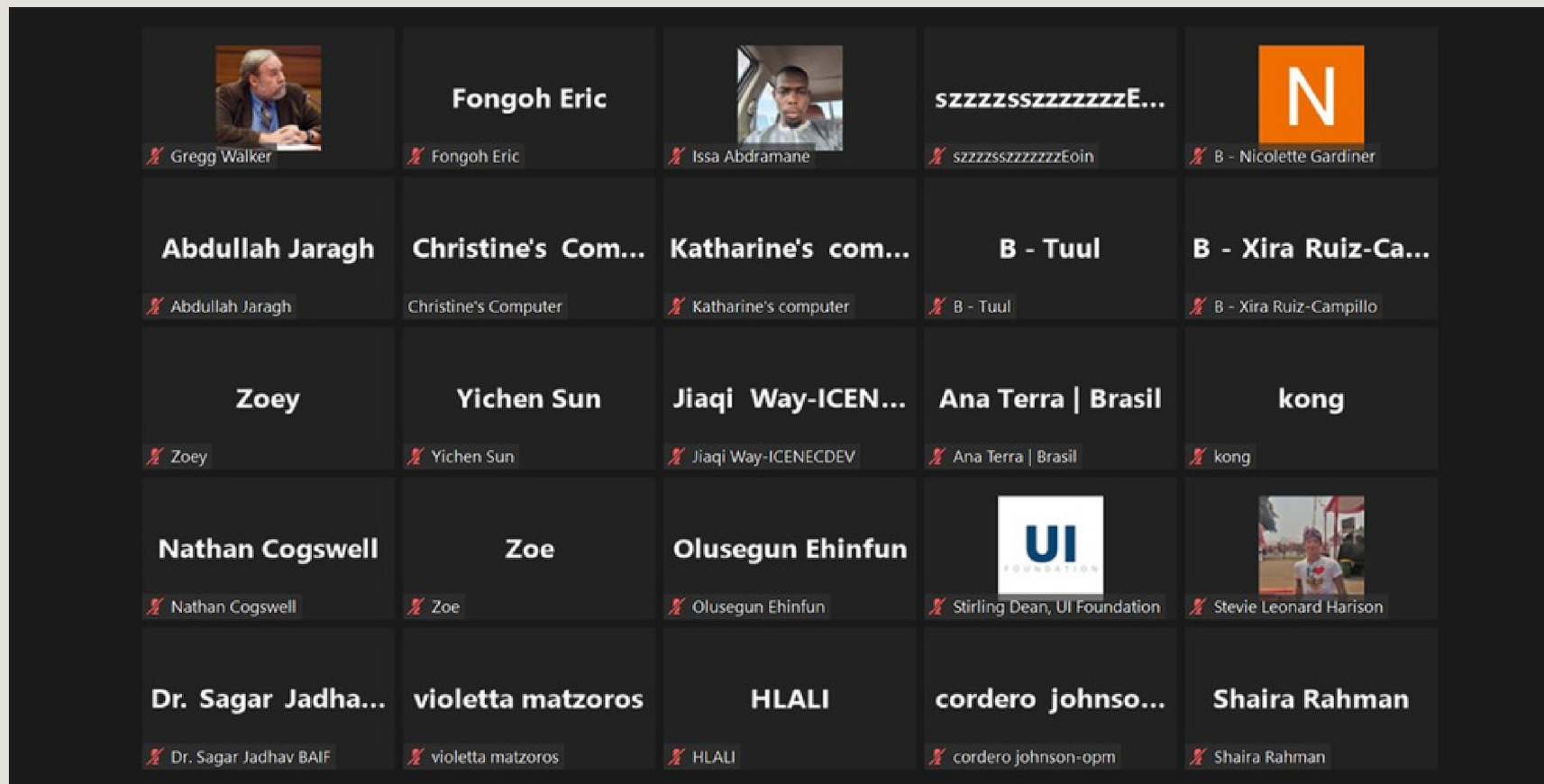
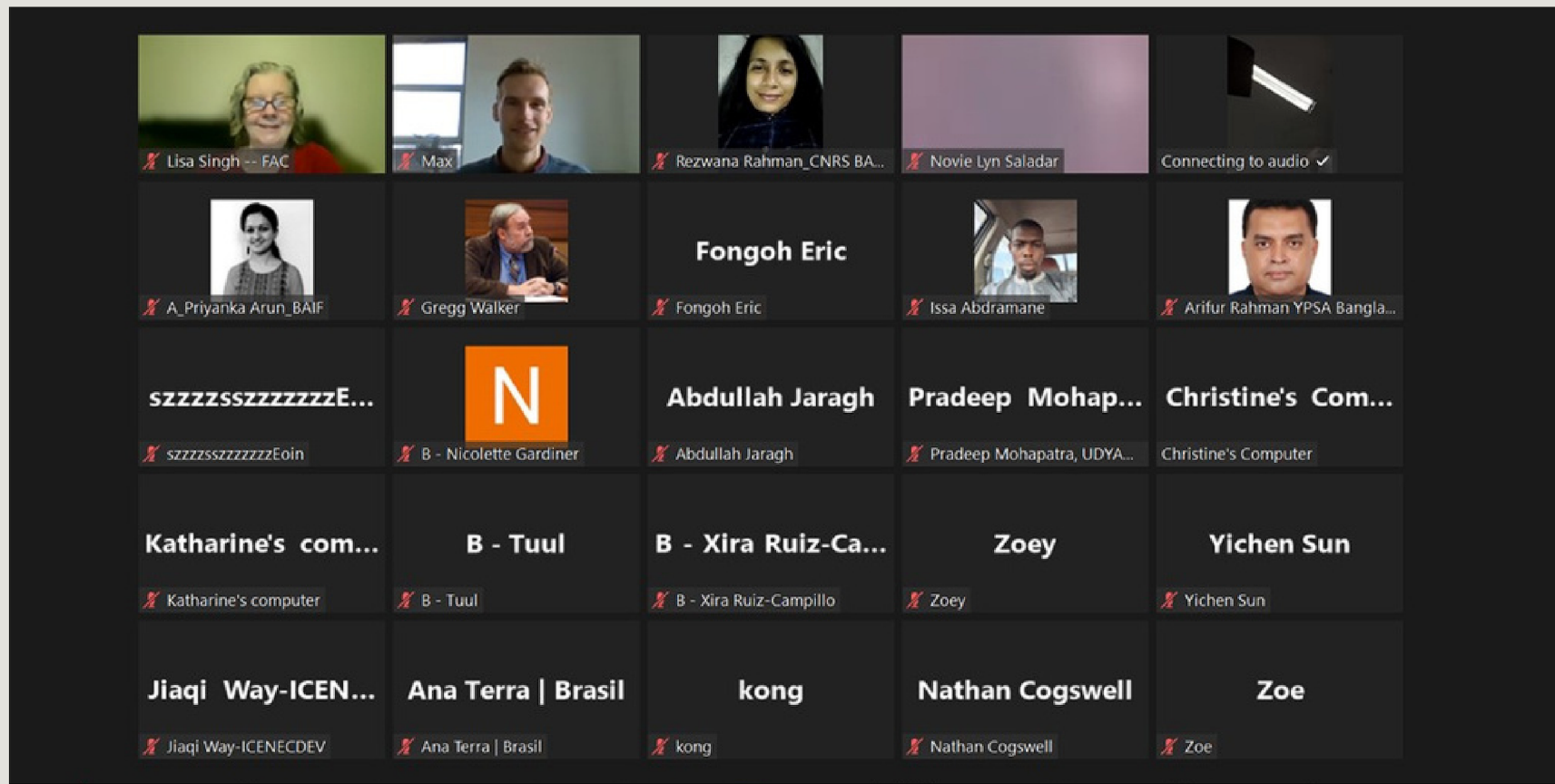
## Conference photos



Moderated panel with Tracy Tollman, Katharine Rietig and Aarti Gupta







BCG Conference 2023 attendees

***Thank you to everyone who participated  
in our conference!***

## ***contact us***



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