

## APA: Parties discuss preliminary organization of work

Bonn, 21 May (Indrajit Bose) – After adopting the agenda of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) on 20 May, Parties exchanged preliminary views on the organization of work.

Co-chair **Sarah Baashan (Saudi Arabia)** informed Parties that the APA Co-chairs had not had the time to fully consult Parties to discuss the organization of work.

(The APA was involved in informal consultations from 16-20 May to get agreement on the agenda. See TWN Bonn Climate Update 6: *APA adopts agenda after intense deliberations.*)

“We would like to hear Parties’ views on organization of work. If you are not prepared, or don’t have enough time, we will resume discussions at a later stage,” said Baashan.

Developing countries stressed that the work mode of the APA should be inclusive, transparent and balanced. They also said that the number of parallel meetings should be limited to take into account small delegations, and for the APA Co-chairs to lead Parties in contact groups.

**Thailand** speaking for **G77 and China**, said that the Group had not had a chance to have a thorough discussion on the issue of organization of work. However, it outlined a few elements to be observed in the APA proceedings. It underscored the importance of ensuring transparency and inclusiveness; limiting parallel meetings; for broader meetings to be conducted prior to breaking into contact groups; and necessary guidance given to contact groups to carry out their work.

**Malaysia** spoke for the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** and said the group entrusts the Co-chairs to lead Parties in the APA. “We entrust you to restrict contact groups/consultations/focused discussions to not more than two at any given point of time. We request you to conduct these under your able leadership,” it said.

Malaysia further said the decisions and the Agreement made in Paris represent additional steps in enhancing the implementation of the Convention. “Much more needs to be done to fully implement the Convention, including through its related legal instruments, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, so that we can combat climate change together successfully. The LMDC has constructively and positively contributed to this effort, and we will continue to do so.”

“As our work is under the Convention, the fundamental principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities remain the basis for our work together in combating climate change and achieving sustainable development,” it said.

Malaysia stressed that the PA was assiduously negotiated, carefully crafted and was well balanced, adding that, “In seeking to operationalise it we should keep this balance in mind.”

The LMDC underscored that, “The features for the NDCs should be derived from the PA. We see that the NDC is specifically named and set out in Articles 3 and 4 of the Agreement with references to related provisions. Hence, to move speedily forward we should incorporate the features as made evident by these provisions of the Agreement.

Malaysia urged the developed countries to adopt this approach “so that we can deliver results for the CMA’s adoption in a timely manner.”

It also said that “the process and the progress of our work must be fair and balanced, with all issues to be treated with the same degree of importance, and with progress to be achieved in a balanced manner. Transparency and inclusiveness remain, of course, fundamental and crucial to the legitimacy of the outcomes.”

On the APA agenda, Malaysia said that the agenda should be a dynamic one that would continue to evolve in Parties’ efforts to fulfill their obligations under the PA. “To that end, the various agenda of

the APA and the subsidiary bodies and the work to be done under these may need to be recalibrated in the course of our work with a view to ensuring that they reflect the provisions and principles of the Convention and our agreements and understandings from Paris. These constitute a single package," said Malaysia.

Speaking for the **Arab Group, Saudi Arabia** said while Parties needed to move swiftly, the aim is not to have some groups (on issues) move faster than others. The aim was to adhere to transparency and inclusiveness and to get the process right, it said. "We don't have time for reconsiderations, to correct the process. It is important to get the process right the first time," it stressed. Saudi Arabia also highlighted that any decision to open spin-off groups should be taken in a larger setting, to enable Parties to understand the mandate given to them. It also said that all issues needed to be addressed in a balanced manner.

Speaking for the **Africa Group, Kenya** said the key aspects in guiding the work of the APA would have to be a balanced treatment, including balance between mitigation and adaptation, ensuring transparency and inclusiveness and that there is no clash in the schedule of similar items, particularly with the ongoing work under the subsidiary bodies. Kenya said it was in favour of a broad meeting in a plenary to provide guidance to spin-off groups. It also emphasized the importance of stocktaking to make sure there is effective coordination. It would be useful to have a standing call for submissions under the APA, where Parties can clearly submit on specific substantive issues, said Kenya.

Speaking for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Democratic Republic of Congo** stressed the value of transparency and inclusiveness. It said smaller delegations should be kept in mind. The Group also said that not more than two contact groups or spin-off groups should be set up. It supported the idea of summarizing progress in a reflection note for future sessions and supported the idea of submissions to provide further insight and guidance.

Speaking for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Maldives** stressed the importance of a transparent and inclusive process, for each substantive issue to be treated equally, and to limit parallel thematic sessions.

Speaking for the **Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), Colombia** said contact groups or informals for

each substantive issue could be set up, but that crosscutting issues should be under the guidance of the Co-chairs.

**South Africa** said the nature of work would dictate the organization of work outlined by the PA and the COP21 decision. It said that work should not be fragmented across many bodies and not all the issues could be treated in the same manner. It said that while balance and coherence were important, a single work programme until 2020 was needed to ensure efficiency. It agreed on work mode settings such as plenary, smaller groups and call for submissions. A reflection note would be good at this stage and scheduling of work needed to take into account small delegations, said South Africa.

Referring to the stocktakes announced by the COP Presidency at the opening of the current Bonn climate talks, South Africa said that stocktaking was not sufficient, and that Parties must find another tool to figure out where they were in the process.

(On 16 May, the COP21 Presidency had [announced](#) they would convene two special stocktaking events to ensure balance across the subsidiary bodies and among cross-cutting issues.)

South Africa also called for clear mandates on what was expected. "We don't want a repeat of the ADP (Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action) discussion where there was uncertainty and friction," it said. It also said that there was a very crucial link between technical work and focused political discussions.

Speaking for the **Environment Integrity Group (EIG), Switzerland** said that while the operationalization of the PA seemed very technical, it would involve political considerations too. It asked of Parties to move ahead with the technical analyses and to resolve political issues later. It requested identification of relevant technical aspects Parties would have to develop over the years. This could be done in a plenary format. After a first reading, Parties could move into smaller and more targeted mode of work, which could be spin-off groups or contact groups. It also proposed that the Co-chairs capture in a reflection note progress made in Bonn, and ask Parties for focused technical submissions.

The **European Union (EU)** said that work should be open to observers as long as all Parties were okay with opening up the sessions to observers. Prior to small groups, it would be good to have conversations, and it is important to keep balance in the work forward, it added. It said further that

facilitators should lead the work in smaller groups and that work should evolve organically. The EU also said that since there would be a big time gap between the Bonn session and Marrakesh (COP22 in Marrakesh is scheduled for November), focused technical submissions might fill any gap. It proposed that alternatively, an intersession workshop could also be thought about.

**Norway** said work should be guided by inclusiveness and transparency. It said it was not of the view that the Bonn session would lead to any solution on the content, but it should set processes going, where Parties set out modalities for work. Norway supported the idea of submissions and workshops in the intersession as well as setting up smaller thematic groups.

Speaking for the **Umbrella Group** of countries, **Australia** said it supported the principles of transparency and inclusiveness mentioned by the G77 and China chair. “We have discussed the idea of broader discussions a lot. It will be good to have balance between broader discussions and some technical work. Having a mix of things would be a good way of going forward,” said Australia. It added that it could support contact groups and working groups. “Some groups will go fast, some won’t. We support reflections note and submissions, although targeted would be best,” it said.

**Canada** said it supported establishing a number of contact groups on a number of agenda items. It was

in favour of a standing call for submissions and technical workshops. It also said that it must be ensured that there are not too many sessions held in parallel.

**Laurence Tubiana** for the COP 21 Presidency said stocktaking was an opportunity to evaluate whether things were going well or not. It asked of Parties to get into substantive discussions and adjust the organization of work “as necessary”.

Concluding the discussions, **Baashan** said that the Co-chairs felt the need to discuss the issue and further consult with Parties. “We will undertake consultations. We will return to the plenary as soon as possible with a concrete proposal and launch it. These open-ended consultations will begin at 10 am tomorrow (Saturday, 21 May),” said Baashan.

Speaking for the incoming COP Presidency, **Morocco** said that in view of the possible rapid entry of force of the PA, there was a need to consider appropriate steps for the work programme of the PA to be completed. It urged Parties to intensify efforts to ratify the PA and assured Parties that even if the PA came into force early, inclusiveness would be key. “No Party should be disadvantaged from the collective rulebook, simply because it is in the process of ratification,” said Morocco.

The APA meeting then suspended for further consultations on the organization of work.