

BASIC ministers provide political impetus for climate talks

Bonn, 15 Nov (TWN) – As the ongoing climate talks intensify, ministers of Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) underlined the importance of the conference to prepare the ground towards the completion of the work related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

They also stressed that enhanced and urgent implementation of pre-2020 commitments is a prerequisite for mutual trust among Parties and for building a solid foundation for post-2020 implementation and ambition, in order to ensure that subsequent nationally determined contributions do not become unduly burdensome on developing countries.

This was part of a 12 November statement that emerged from the 25th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change that took place in Bonn in conjunction with the 23rd meeting of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP 23). The participants were H.E. Mr. José Sarney Filho (Minister of Environment of Brazil), H.E. Mr. Xie Zhenhua (Special Representative for Climate Change of China), H.E. Ms. Barbara Thomson (Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa), and H.E. Mr. C.K. Mishra (Secretary and Vice-Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change of India).

The Ministers reiterated that the work on both the pre-2020 and post-2020 should be in full accordance with the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC). They also emphasized the importance of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and the Party-driven nature of the negotiations.

They urged developed countries to honor their commitments and increase climate finance towards at least the USD 100 billion per annum goal by 2020, to be scaled-up significantly thereafter. In the post-2020 period, they called upon developed countries to provide financial resources to assist developing

countries with respect to both mitigation and adaptation in continuation of their existing obligations under the Convention. Furthermore, Ministers called for collaboration among the various mechanisms on adaptation, finance, technology and capacity building, as well as the Warsaw International Mechanism on loss and damage.

The Ministers reaffirmed that the Paris Agreement is a hard-won achievement by the international community which enhances the implementation of the Convention in the post-2020 period and strengthens the global response to climate change in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, reflecting equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.

The Ministers reiterated that the global effort against climate change is an irreversible process that cannot be postponed, and that it offers valuable opportunities to promote sustainable development. The group underlined its highest political commitment to the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention, its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement in all their aspects.

The Ministers welcomed the large number of ratifications (169) of the Paris Agreement and requested remaining UNFCCC Parties to ratify the Agreement at an early date. They urged all signatories to stay the course and maintain their support to the Paris Agreement.

The Ministers recalled BASIC's request that was captured in the COP 22 report for pre-2020 issues to be given equal treatment at COP 23. In that regard, they underlined that COP 23 should accelerate the implementation of pre-2020 commitments and actions, including addressing this issue under a dedicated COP Agenda Item.

With regard to adopting balanced and meaningful outcomes in 2018 related to the implementation of the

Paris Agreement in the post-2020 period, they underscored the need for advancing textual negotiation in order to produce a comprehensive, party-driven negotiating text covering all the matters related to the implementation of the Paris Agreement at COP 23. This text can serve as the basis for negotiations in 2018, reflecting all Parties' views and inputs in a balanced manner. It is important to ensure that the COP-23 outcome captures the range of views as a set of alternatives and that the draft guidance operationalizes equity and CBDR-RC, while not reinterpreting the Paris Agreement.

In addition, those 2018 outcomes should be comprehensive and balanced, reflect differentiation, the nationally determined nature of Parties' contributions, and flexibility for developing countries.

On nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the global response to climate change, they reiterated that Parties' efforts should cover mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation, taking into account differentiated responsibilities and obligations of developed and developing country Parties under the Convention and Paris Agreement. The guidance being developed under the Paris Work Program should assist Parties with the preparation and communication of their NDCs, while respecting the nationally determined nature of Parties' contributions.

On adaptation, the Ministers stressed that this requires an urgent global response, and reiterated the importance of both the global adaptation goal and of the adaptation communication as a component of Parties' NDCs in achieving the purpose of the Paris Agreement. Ministers emphasized the importance making progress to define the information and methodologies and approaches to generate such information. They urged developed countries to provide adequate support to developing countries in meeting the cost of their adaptation actions.

On finance, they noted that the extent to which developed countries will provide sustained, predictable and adequate finance, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support to developing countries will determine the extent to which developing countries are able to contribute their highest possible ambition towards addressing the global challenge of climate change.

The Ministers went on to express their deepest concern over attempts by some developed countries to unilaterally apply new eligibility criteria for developing countries' access to funding under the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate

Fund (GCF). They recalled that such criteria are not compatible with guidance from the Conference of the Parties and are a departure from the letter and the spirit of the Convention and its Paris Agreement. Furthermore, they indicated that such attempts violate the terms of the relevant GEF and GCF instruments, falling outside the mandate of the GEF Council and of the GCF Board on eligibility criteria. They stressed the view that such attempts are tantamount to renegotiating the Paris Agreement and potentially undermine the level of ambition of developing countries in the global effort against climate change.

They emphasized that effective implementation of developed countries' legal obligations regarding support will be paramount for trust building among parties in order to create a international enabling environment for a successful implementation of the Paris Agreement.

A related issue emphasized by the Ministers was the need for further clarity and robust methodologies to track and account for the provision of finance by developed countries. They further highlighted the importance of discussing modalities for communicating indicative information on the support to be provided to developing countries.

In addition the finance, the Ministers underscored the importance of operationalising the long-term vision on technology development and transfer, as set out in the Paris Agreement. They called for accelerating the work on elaborating the new Technology Framework, including its guidance to the Technology Mechanism. They also emphasized the role of joint innovation and international cooperation on climate related technology in enhancing global actions.

They welcomed the adoption of the terms of reference for the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building at COP 22. The Ministers called for collaboration between the mechanism on capacity building and those institutional arrangements on adaptation, finance and technology. They also highlighted the importance of guidance to be provided by the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building to the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency, and urged developed country Parties to provide additional, continuous and adequate support to developing countries for enhancing their capabilities on transparency of action and support received.

The Ministers noted with concern that pre-2020 gaps exist not only in mitigation, but also in adaptation and support to developing countries. They stressed the

urgency of accelerated implementation of pre-2020 commitments and increasing pre-2020 ambition.

In this regard, on the historical occasion of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, Ministers underscored the importance that the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol enters into force without further delay. To date, 83 Parties have accepted the Doha Amendment, while acceptance by 144 Parties is required to bring it into force. They stressed further that developed country Parties should revisit and increase their economy-wide quantified emission reduction targets. Ministers emphasized that enhanced and urgent implementation of pre-2020 commitments is a prerequisite for mutual trust among Parties and for building a solid foundation for post-2020 implementation and ambition, in order to ensure that subsequent NDCs do not become unduly burdensome on developing countries.

On the Facilitative Dialogue (FD) in 2018, the Ministers look forward to an outcome in COP 23 that gives clarity in the design of dialogue. This will be an opportunity to consider collectively the overall progress made on the implementation of all pillars of the Convention in the global effort to address climate change. They emphasized the importance of outcomes that lead to the identification of challenges and opportunities to accelerate climate action and support, in the context of sustainable development, sustainable lifestyles, climate justice and poverty eradication as the overriding priorities of developing countries.

They pointed out that developed countries must take the lead towards closing the ambition gap so as to avoid transferring the burden to developing countries and from the pre-2020 to the post-2020 period.

In this context, the Ministers highlighted the efforts and substantial achievements of BASIC countries and

other developing countries in tackling climate change, both pre- and post-2020, and emphasized that these represent far more ambitious efforts compared to their respective responsibilities and capabilities. BASIC countries have made notable progress towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development and are committed to sharing experiences and supporting each other as they further develop their domestic climate policies and actions.

The Ministers also welcomed the adoption by the GCF of a pilot programme for REDD+ results based payments, noting the need for adequate and predictable support for the implementation of all REDD-plus activities. They underlined the imperative that REDD-plus ensures environmental integrity and, in this regard, reiterated that results-based payments shall not be used to offset mitigation commitments by developed countries.

The Ministers reiterated that the UNFCCC is the primary international forum to coordinate the global response to climate change. In this regard, they reiterated that measures and outcomes under other multilateral fora addressing issues related to climate change, such as the United Nations General Assembly, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Montreal Protocol, as well as the G20, must be consistent with the UNFCCC and in line with the principles of equity and CBDR-RC. They further underlined that measures under ICAO and IMO must not place undue burdens on developing countries and not create distortions to international trade.

The next ministerial meeting will be in South Africa in the first half of 2018.