

Parties outline priorities for climate talks

Bonn, 18 June (Evelyn Teh) - The climate talks in Bonn, Germany, have kicked off on 17th June, with the convening of the 50th sessions of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), which are scheduled to complete their work on 27th June.

At the joint-plenary session of the Subsidiary Bodies, Parties outlined their priorities for the session. Among the work to be undertaken include matters that were not completed at the 24th session of the Conference of Parties (COP 24) to the UNFCCC in Katowice, Poland, held last year.

Speaking for the **Group of 77 and China, Ambassador Ammar Hijazi**, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the **State of Palestine**, stressed that “the latest heat waves and severe temperature fluctuations, as well as droughts and floods, that have hit many parts of the world during the past few weeks are only a reminder that the devastating effects of climate change are real and sudden.”

The Ambassador also reiterated that pre-2020 action is the foundation for the post-2020 phase of the climate regime, adding that the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (KP) is one crucial element of the pre-2020 effort. The Group was concerned that “a significant number of ratifications of the Doha Amendment are still pending and called on those Parties that have not yet done so to ratify it as a matter of urgency.”

At this SB50 session, the G77 representative said that it was of utmost importance that Parties strive for greater balance in the work in accomplishing those items that we were not able to conclude at COP24.

He also called for urgency and ambition in the mobilization, provision and accessibility of financial resources from developed to developing countries with adequate, new, additional and predictable finance

resources, particularly through the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The G77 representative noted with concern the shortfalls in the pledges by some developed countries to the GCF under the initial resource mobilisation (IRM) and called on developed countries to scale up their contributions to the GCF so as to at least double the contributions from the IRM period, and result in an ambitious expected first replenishment by the end of 2019. He also stressed that need to depoliticize the flow of international resources by all Financial Mechanisms under the Convention and its Paris Agreement (PA).

The G77 representative said that the work on the terms of reference (TOR) for the review of the Warsaw Implementation Mechanism on Loss and Damage (WIM) was of great importance, and that the review must result in a WIM that is able to avert, minimize, and address issues of loss and damage through facilitated access to functional and operational support in line with the principles of the Convention and the PA.

He also said that it was imperative to urgently scale up action and support for adaptation, which is a critical priority for developing countries and stressed that by doing so, the much needed balance in the process would be restored.

In his closing remarks, the G77 representative said that at this session, and going towards COP25 in Chile, “we have a new opportunity to right our course and ensure that all of the elements that had been so finely balanced under the Convention and its PA get reflected and implemented in a balanced way in terms of the finalization of their operational modalities to scale up action and ambition.” This he said, means that the foundational principles of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and equity must be reflected, and that the real differences between developed and developing countries in terms of both historical

responsibility and capability are fully taken into account.

Iran, speaking on behalf of the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** also underscored the need to treat adaptation with the same urgency and importance as mitigation; and in the fulfilment of the commitments by the developed countries to provide means of implementation to developing countries.

On the issue of common time frames for the nationally determined contributions (NDCs), it stressed that there should be full recognition that Parties, in particular developing countries, will have different national circumstances that may require the application of different time frames.

As regards Article 6 (on voluntary cooperative approaches), the LMDC said that the purpose of the provision is to allow Parties to implement their NDCs as they define them. In this regard, it said that there should be no limitations on NDC types, projects, or metrics, adding that “the spirit of Article 6 is cooperative efforts and not exclusive approaches.” It also said that the approaches should be “bottom up and nationally driven.”

The LMDC also welcomed the outcome of the work undertaken by the Facilitative Working Group of the Local Communities and Indigenous People’s Platform (LCIPP) and added that the participation of observers from indigenous peoples and local communities should rightly be “considered as contributors rather than just observers,” and that “it is the first time in the history of the UNFCCC process that the indigenous peoples and local communities’ views are directly reflected in a workplan that is directly related to them”.

Egypt, speaking on behalf of the **Africa Group** said that in the last months, the African continent has witnessed climate induced extreme events, which displaced thousands of people, has resulted in deaths, has witnessed desert storms and heatwaves which have affected livelihoods and agricultural productivity. It has also affected livestock, water, crops, wildlife, and the energy sector. It recalled the cyclones in Southern Africa, which severely affected Mozambique and also neighboring countries, Malawi and Zimbabwe. “In Mozambique, 3 million people are affected, with estimated USD 1.4 billion in total damage, and USD 1.4 billion in losses. The recovery and reconstruction cost is estimated to be 2.9 billion USD. In Malawi, devastating floods have affected the lives of 870,000 people,” it added.

Egypt welcomed the doubling of pledges by some Parties to the GCF, like Germany of their contributions, but expressed concerns with the growing appetite of some contributing Parties to shift from grants to loans for the replenishment and conditionality becoming a major requirement for support. It said further that the group expects the replenishment process to conclude with a doubling of the resources provided in the IRM period and in securing the grant-based instruments and resources for developing countries particularly for adaptation.

On the broader finance architecture, it was concerned with limitation of other sources of finance like the Climate Investment Funds at a time when the Global Environment Facility climate allocation is reduced by 40% and GCF has a shortfall of USD 3 billion.

On adaptation, the Africa Group was apprehensive with the lack of prioritization on the further work from the Katowice outcome, and the slow progress of the adaptation discussion in the Adaptation Committee and absence of adaptation elements in the agenda of the Subsidiary Bodies.

Belize, on behalf of the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** envisioned 2019 as the year of ambition, which encapsulates enhanced mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage and finance. It said that the IPCC Special Report 1.5 finds that rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities are required to reduce emissions by about 45% by 2030 and achieve net zero by around 2050 if there is any chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, beyond which is likely to trigger climatic, environmental, and ecological tipping points and thresholds from which the world would not be able to reverse or recover. This, it said, implies the facilitation of feasible, yet faster, socio-technical transitions, the deployment of multi-sectoral mitigation measures and the fostering of ambitious international cooperation and transformative policy environments in the short term that target both energy supply and demand. It called on the international community to deliver by 2020 new or updated NDCs.

It also stressed that the GCF replenishment process must also deliver adequate finances, in line with the best available science, and that new conditions and criteria are not imposed for developing countries to access these much needed funds.

Bhutan on behalf of the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** referred to the IPCC Special Report on 1.5°C and expressed disappointment that Parties did not unanimously agree to welcome the report last year. It

added that as a global community come together to create a safe and prosperous future for all and called for Parties to submit new and more ambitious NDCs by March 2020 that represent countries' fair shares to achieve the pathways consistent with 1.5°C.

The LDCs identified the issue of loss and damage as being very important and looked forward to finalizing the terms of reference for an effective review of the WIM to ensure a review that builds a stronger and more effective WIM, so that the focus of its work can be on supporting concrete actions on the ground that protect poor and vulnerable countries.

It also wanted to see robust rules for markets under Article 6 that maintain environmental integrity and result in real overall mitigation in global emissions. Amongst other things, it said that it was critical that emission reductions cannot be double counted and that perverse incentives are not created for unambitious reduction targets. On the Adaptation Fund, the arrangement of membership of the Adaptation Fund Board should urgently be finalised to ensure smooth transition with no major governance changes, added Bhutan.

Saudi Arabia on behalf of the **Arab Group** referred to Article 6 and reiterated the importance of allowing all Parties to participate within a cooperative approach if they so wish. It said that the goal was to allow Parties to cooperate to implement their NDCs, which are bottom up.

Brazil, on behalf of the itself, South Africa, India, China (**BASIC**) hoped that the talks would enhance the WIM and its Executive Committee so as to

enhance capabilities on addressing current and future climatic risks.

Other developing country groupings who also delivered statements included the **Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA Group)**, the **Coalition for Rainforest Nations**.

Switzerland for the **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)** also expressed the importance of completing the work on Article 6, which must help deliver the NDCs, that can only happen if double counting is avoided and sustainable development is ensured. It also said that there was need to focus on the review of the WIM.

Australia for the **Umbrella Group** underlined that COP24 was a significant milestone. It highlighted the need to move forward on Article 6 of the PA, so that there is an outcome that ensures markets with environmental integrity. It also looked forward to the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit in New York in September this year to build and maintain climate actions and highlight the ambition of Parties.

The **European Union** said that COP24 was successful in making the PA came to life and operational. On the road to Santiago, Chile (COP 25), it stressed the need to reach agreement on Article 6, which has to ensure rules to avoid double counting and maintain environmental integrity.

Edited by Meena Raman