

Global Stocktake on ‘Integrated and holistic approaches’ draws sharp reactions from China and India

Bonn, 12 June (Meena Raman) – At the roundtable on “Integrated and holistic approaches’ held on 10 June under the Global Stocktake (GST) session at the climate talks in Bonn, Germany, **China** and **India** provided sharp reflections on the theme, elaborating on the need to underscore and reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities between developed and developing countries (CBDR).

The roundtable was held as part of the first technical dialogue (TD 1.3) of the first GST, which is chaired by Co-facilitators **Harald Winkler (South Africa)** and **Farhan Akhtar (United States)**.

China said that both the historic and current context should be presented in the technical assessment of GST in relation to the consideration of equity. “Equity and CBDR need to be operationalized in our way forward towards achieving the Paris Agreement (PA), and this should be a key message out of this roundtable”, adding that “equity and CBDR are deeply rooted in the self-evident truth, that all countries enjoy the equal right to development, and every one of its people across countries enjoys equal rights to a decent life.”

Elaborating further, China said that “Historically, the unregulated emissions since the industrial

revolution sustained the economic and technological advantages of developed countries over developing countries.” Citing the 6th Assessment Report (AR6) of Working Group 1 (WG1) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), it said that “due to its cumulative effects, historical cumulative carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions did not just disappear, but determine to a large degree the warming to date. In addition, according to the IPCC’s WG3 report, just part of the developed countries take-up 40% of cumulative emissions between 1850-2019; not to 1990 but to 2019, which lays out the fact that emissions by developed countries are both historically and current in an integrated manner.”

China stressed further that “Today, the global climate governance is well-established, while also low-end manufacturing with intense emissions were shifted from developed to developing countries. So the basic fact is that developing countries manufacture products and extract fuels and minerals, leaving emissions in our own territories, while developed countries get to consume the products and minerals without emissions.”

Referring to a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

(OECD), China said that “every year OECD countries transferred nearly 2 billion tons of CO₂ to non-OECD countries by trade, which equals to 15% of annual emissions of all OECD countries. IPCC AR6 WG3 further confirmed that developed countries are net CO₂ emission importers, whereas developing countries are the net CO₂ emission exporters.”

Reflecting on the situation of developing countries in implementing the PA, China said that they are not responsible for historical emissions, or for the transferred emissions from developed countries as they suffer from the failure of developed countries in providing financial support and technology transfer, face multiple domestic challenges including eradicating poverty and sustainable development, imposition of carbon border taxes by developed countries, and a deteriorating international cooperation environment, with developing countries at different starting points, with different resources, who are requested to take the same course, hit the same finishing line, at the same time, with developed countries. “These facts and the messages to operationalize equity and CBDR should be sent through the GST,” stressed China.

On the issue of ‘International Cooperation for climate actions’, China said that an assessment of the current landscape should be presented out of this roundtable, with a clear recommendation to eliminate unilateral measures and ensure international enabling environment for climate action. It said that “the environment for global climate efforts is being sabotaged,” citing the imposition of “sanctions on clean energy products and blockages on international clean technology cooperation”, adding that “Some countries even issued a list of critical and emerging technologies that they will only cooperate with allies and restrict broader international cooperation. On this list, renewable energy generation and storage, batteries, energy efficiency technologies are core areas. This clean-energy-technology-monopoly jeopardizes the accessibility to clean technologies by developing countries, as well as the possibility for developing countries to establish and develop our own clean energy solutions and industries.”

China also referred to “Green barriers and unilateral measures on trade and investment, disruptions to global economy, trade, investment,

supply chains, etc. which is not only inconsistent with the rules of the World Trade Organisation and other respective regimes, but will also undermine the capabilities and progress to address global climate change collectively and individually, in particular for developing countries.”

It said that “a clear message and recommendation to eliminate unilateralism and enhance international enabling environment for climate action should be presented in the synthesis report.”

India took issue with some of the “emerging messages” from the reflections section of the summary report prepared by the co-facilitators from the Technical Dialogue 1.2 under the roundtable 4 theme of ‘Integrated and holistic approaches’.

On the message that “*While nations continue to pursue efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, and overshoot increases risks to people and planet, we need to plan pragmatically for scenarios of temporary overshoot*” India countered as follows:

“The term overshoot is a term that comes from the literature on scenarios that has deep flaws in terms of equitable energy access and supply, income growth and consumption levels across the world. In much of these scenarios, huge levels of negative emissions, especially from afforestation and diversion from other land uses, are assumed, particularly in the developing world, even to meet the target of 1.5°C. The term overshoot implies a situation where having crossed the 1.5 degrees C target, it is hoped that there are technologies that will bring down the peak warming level, by huge absorption of CO₂ gases and/or reductions of non-CO₂ gases from the atmosphere. These are unproven at best, and where proven are traditional methods such as afforestation that call for deployment at huge scale. While all technological research for dealing with the climate challenge is necessary, it is not clear to us why we should include this as our considered GST outcome, especially given its highly contestable assumptions. The plain reality is simply the likelihood of breaching the 1.5°C threshold sooner than later.”

On the message that “*The Convention and the Paris Agreement are processes that set norms which drive policy outcomes to increase international*

cooperation on climate, within and beyond the processes themselves” India said that “While the Convention and the PA have undoubtedly many processual aspects, it would be particularly ill-posed to emphasise solely these aspects. They are treaties. They are negotiated, signed and adopted and ratified by each Party. The UNFCCC provides the foundations of the global climate regime, as the academic literature would call it, with the PA being a specific agreement under this Convention, with membership to the Agreement being contingent on membership to the Convention.

India also emphasised that “all Parties have precise obligations and commitments under the Convention and its PA, which are based on principles and values that are as clearly laid out. The scope for further detailing of these, including in terms of quantification, do not take anything away from the precision of these obligations and commitments. Developing countries have long been critical of the developed countries in terms of fulfilment of these obligations and commitments across the arena of mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. And meeting these will provide the best foundation for trust and confidence. There are similar issues with the Paris Agreement in terms of implementing the equity and differentiation aspects of the Convention.”

“This is an issue that is of considerable significance to our consideration of the GST and our understanding, of where we are and how we got here” said India further, adding that “this needs to be fleshed out in detail, much of which has already been set out in our other roundtables of mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation. The question of historical responsibility, of pre-2020 gaps in commitments and implementation and the absence of the meeting the provision climate finance would not be positioned correctly in our outcomes without understanding them in terms of obligations and commitments.”

On the message that “*Governments should implement integrated policy packages that mainstream climate resilience and low GHG (greenhouse gases) development, and strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty*” India said that this point “has

some serious issues”, adding that “the entire thrust of which is focused on the developing countries ” and questioned why the focus on what developing countries must do.

Referring to Article 2.1(b) of the PA, India said that the Article states : “Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production. Unfortunately, enough, we have found that the vast majority of scenarios of the IPCC that recommend stringent mitigation action, lead to serious consequences for food production and food security. It is these scenarios that are now being used to ask all of us to accept global targets,” it stressed further.

“The real issue is the relationship between development and climate action, that is still an area with huge knowledge gaps that need to be bridged urgently for climate action that does not endanger development”, elaborated India adding that what the IPCC scenarios demonstrate, “is the lack of emphasis of equity and differentiation. These are the two foundations of the international covenant that governs our global climate action efforts. Without equity, the words ‘eradicate poverty’ ring hollow. Unfortunately, the constant attempts to limit equity, as applicable only in the context of ambition, will only fuel this mistaken emphasis, argued India further.

On the message that “*Systemic transformations open huge opportunities but are disruptive. A focus on inclusion and equity can increase ambition in climate action and support when it builds trust and solidarity into an upward spiral of ambition and climate action*” India said that “While these are hopeful words, these are hardly met in practice. Speculative ambition without feasibility will eventually entail cynicism, while practical, measured and deliberate steps will assist in pragmatic moves forward.”

“Yet again we meet concepts that ignore differentiation. Systemic transformations fit countries and economies that have reached settled levels of accumulation of wealth, of assets, of infrastructure, of human capabilities and the ability to potentially pursue this indefinitely. Systemic is a

term that hardly fits developing countries, the vast majority of whom are indeed striving precisely to develop the systems that would provide them a virtuous cycle of growth and sustainable development, as much as costs and barriers as well as the lack of means of implementation would permit”, it said further.

India also said that “the unsustainable production and consumption of the developed world that brings the entire planet to the threshold of the current climate and ecological crises, is hardly called into question in this generality. It is in keeping with this reality, and underlining our own commitment to walking the talk, that India has called for a global movement called LiFE, or Lifestyle for the Environment, a movement away from destructive and unsustainable consumption to mindful and deliberate utilization of natural resources.”

“Transformational adaptation is a particularly disturbing term, when adaptation is the forced reality for the more than 50 per cent of the world

that contributes less than one-sixth of the annual emissions. The majority of these 50 per cent live on less than USD (PPP) 3 dollars per day, much less in terms of real dollars. The enormous assistance and support that this half of humanity requires to meet its needs of survival, adaptation and low-carbon development is truly enormous. And yet today our greatest challenge is the provision of the means of implementation, an area in which obligations and commitments have not been met or kept,” India emphasised further, adding that “To call this challenge an opportunity seems less than accurate at best.”

India urged the Co-facilitators to reformulate the key messages in these points, highlighting also the gaps noted and to provide a more balanced set of messages.”

Other groups of Parties and countries also intervened in the roundtable, including Non-Party Stakeholders.