TWN
GLASGOW CLIMATE NEWS UPDATE
PUBLISHED BY THIRD WORLD NETWORK
13
12 NOVEMBER 2021

Concerns over mitigation pathway to 'carbon colonialism'

12 Nov, Glasgow (Evelyn Teh & Meena Raman) - As the Glasgow climate talk enters its final day of scheduled conclusion on Friday, Nov 12, groups of Parties were in intense bilateral consultations on Nov. 11 with Ministers (tasked to resolve divergences between developed and developing countries), on the remaining issues relating to the overarching cover decisions, mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, finance and Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (PA) on market and non-market approaches.

The bilaterals with ministers continued till late into the night, as negotiators battle into the finish line, hoping that their demands and concerns are reflected in the final texts, which are expected to be released sometime on Friday, 12 Nov.

In the meanwhile, COP 26, the CMA (meeting of Parties to the PA) and the CMP (meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol) convened evening of Thursday, to gavel the decisions forwarded from the Subsidiary Bodies which had been agreed to and were not controversial.

As the hours go by, many along the corridors are wondering if the talks will conclude on Friday as planned, or will spill over the weekend, (as has been the case in previous COPs), as wrangling among Parties continue.

As pressure to conclude intensifies, the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) held a press conference morning of Thursday (Nov. 11), to provide the group's reflections on the negotiations and expressed concerns over what was viewed as a pathway to advance "carbon colonialism".

Dr. Diego Pacheco, from **Bolivia**, who is the spokesperson for the LMDC, explained that the group represents almost half the world's population, and recognised the critical problem of the climate crisis. He said that group fully agreed that there is a need to increase ambition, but this is not only in mitigation but also in adaptation, and in the means of implementation viz. the provision of finance, technology transfer and capacity building for developing countries.

He elaborated that the largest share of the historical emissions originated in developed countries, and they have the historical responsibility for causing the climate crisis and should take the lead in combating climate change.

On the issue of limiting temperature rise to the 1.5°C temperature limit, Pacheco explained that 80% of the carbon budget has already been exhausted, and of that, 60% is the responsibility of developed countries, which only represents 18% of the world population.

He underscored that this fact should clearly establish that developing countries are not equally responsible for the emissions gap (resulting from the aggregate effect of the emission reduction targets of all countries in their nationally

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determined contributions under the PA and the reductions needed globally to limit temperature rise).

Explaining further, Pacheco said that developed countries have overused their domestic carbon space, and were now using up the remaining carbon space of developing countries, which are needed for their development rights and for the protection of Mother Earth, stressing that this fact is key to the understanding of the LMDC position.

He added that there is very little carbon budget left for developed countries, and it was unfair to pass the burden of climate change to the developing world. "For the LMDC, history matters, and it is vital to understand and put this into context in the discussion on ambition in mitigation", he said further.

Pacheco also said that developed countries have had a history of breaking their promises under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol in reducing their emissions to the levels agreed to, and that commitments for climate finance were also not fulfilled.

He highlighted the delicate balance reached under the Paris Agreement (PA), particularly in implementing and operationalising the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDRRC) in the context of national circumstances.

Pacheco also explained that the climate crisis for the developing world is closely related to sustainable development and poverty eradication, which is also recognised in the PA. In that regard, inclusive multilateralism is required to understand that the basis for addressing climate change is the UNFCCC and the PA, stressing that there is no need to reinvent or rewrite the latter at COP26, and that this is entirely unacceptable.

NEW RULES TO DISMANTLE CBDR AND ADVANCE CARBON COLONIALISM

Pacheco also pointed out that the world has arrived at the point of choosing between two pathways: carbon colonialism and good faith for the planet, people and Mother Earth.

He said that "The carbon colonialism pathway is very risky for the world, in particular the developing countries. This pathway implies moving forward with the narrative pushed by the developed countries to address climate change, which only focuses on a mitigation-centric approach. The developed countries are attempting to impose new rules of net zero by 2050 for all the countries. This implies a new target for the developing world and no recognition of equity and CBDRRC, which effectively transfers the developed world's responsibility to the developing world."

Pacheco emphasised that the LMDC "will not accept the changing of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility into common and shared responsibility, as there should be differentiation and the recognition of CBDR in the negotiation process, including recognition of the pre-2020 ambition gap. If net zero by 2050 is accepted, the developing world will be trapped in a very unjust situation to address climate change as only the developed world will have the conditions, financial capabilities and technology conditions to ever achieve that target".

He stressed that "the developing world needs to fight against carbon colonialism, which is very risky for their countries and completely ignores the historical responsibility in climate change", adding that "developed countries are requested to achieve real emissions reduction immediately by 2030 instead of making distant 2050 targets".

"The developed countries are currently pushing very hard on the 1.5°C narrative that will lead them to control the world, whereby Parties that cannot achieve the target by 2050 will be financially and ethically condemned. This is against climate justice, and it is unacceptable that the COP26 will be the scenario for transferring the historical responsibility of developed countries to developing countries," said Pacheco further.

KEEPING THE PA ALIVE TO KEEP 1.5°C ALIVE

The LMDC spokesperson also stated that developed countries do not want to engage in real and meaningful discussions on finance and that this is part of the "carbon colonialism pathway," where their responsibilities and commitments under the Convention and the PA are being watered down and diluted.

Pacheco also stressed that "the LMDC is against having parallel processes to the already agreed processes under the PA, which is an attempt to introduce new procedures to push Parties to get on with the narrative of achieving the 1.5°C limit", adding that "the LMDC attempts to bring balance to these discussions on the understanding of mitigation ambition at COP26".

For the "other pathway of good faith, for the people, the planet and Mother Earth", the LMDC spokesperson reiterated that "there is no need to reinvent or rewrite the PA as it has the key provisions and key principles of equity and CBDR" and its implementation is what the negotiations should be addressing. Pacheco added further that "finance is not charity, but is an obligation of the developed countries to the developing world".

He also said that the LMDC is fighting very hard to operationalise climate justice, adding that "climate change is not an opportunity to improve businesses. Climate change is a problem for the people, and the COP needs to solve the problems of livelihoods of the local people".

The LMDC spokesperson emphasised that "the issue at COP26 isn't about keeping the 1.5°C alive, but rather it is to keep the PA alive, in order to keep the 1.5°C alive".

He called on the UK Presidency not to "pick, and choose paragraphs of the PA" but "to take into account the PA in a holistic perspective".

FRAGMENTED COVER DECISION

In response to a question on the cover decision put out by the UK Presidency, particularly on the section on mitigation, Pacheco explained that the proposal presented a very fragmented understanding of what the PA is about, especially in view of issues relating to mitigation, adaptation, finance and so on. "While some ideas can be adjusted regarding adaptation and loss and damage, and finance", he said there are major concerns with the section on the mitigation ambition that attempt to shift the responsibilities from the developed world to the developing countries. "The text addressed the idea of climate change as a collective effort without considering the operationalisation of equity and CBDR in enhancing mitigation".

In response to a question related to the annual revisiting of the national efforts, including the revisiting of NDCs, Pacheco explained that the PA already provided "for existing processes in a very structured way which needs strengthening", instead of challenging the process which have been agreed already. (Pacheco was referring to the Global Stocktake [GST] process provided for in Article 14 of the PA, which is a collective assessment of the progress made by Parties in reaching the goals of the PA, including on mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation, in light of equity and best available science. The first GST will take place in 2023 and Parties in Glasgow have been discussing the process for this.)

On a question relating to the phasing out of coal and fossil fuel subsidies, the LMDC spokesperson said that "this is an important issue as it is key to address climate change, but it must be considered in a context of an equitable scenario. The transition away from fossil fuels must be developed with the consideration of equity" and "this implies more understanding on the means of implementation and finance that is required for an equitable transition faced by countries in the developing world".

On the issue of loss and damage, Pacheco said that it is critical to recognise that "it is not just about creating new entities and work programmes, but the real need is to have additional financial support for loss and damage".