

Developed countries urged to reaffirm commitment to Kyoto Protocol

Bonn, 2 August (Hilary Chiew) – Developing countries urged developed country Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reaffirm their commitment to its supplementary treaty, the Kyoto Protocol.

Groups representing developing nations or non-Annex I Parties also expressed concern that the slow progress in the Ad hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) would result in a gap between the first (2008-2012) and second commitment periods.

They unanimously called for a resumption of discussions to make progress on the further commitments of Annex I Parties on their emission reduction targets, with an aim of reaching an agreed outcome at Cancun by year end, at the opening of the 13th session of AWG-KP in Bonn on 2 August.

The European Union said that it was open to considering a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, as part of a wider, more rigorous and ambitious agreement, provided that certain conditions, founded on the urgent need for environmental integrity and effectiveness of international action, are met.

For the EU, this meant that Annex I countries that did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol and other major emitters take on their fair share of the global emission reduction effort in the context of an ambitious, legally binding global agreement and that the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol would need to be addressed appropriately,

Speaking on behalf of the **Group of 77 and China**, Yemen said the Group considered the continuity of the Kyoto Protocol as an essential element for the future of the climate change regime. The definition of new quantified emission reduction commitments for Annex I

Parties under the Protocol is a legal obligation that must be met. It is a cornerstone of the Cancun outcome as a whole, it stressed.

The primary objective of the last session (in June) of the AWG-KP was to adopt conclusions on the scale of emissions reduction for Annex I Parties in aggregate. However, it said, the work has been transferred to this session, and should be the focus now.

The establishment of ambitious quantified emission reduction commitments for the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol that must start in 2013, is one of the most important actions to demonstrate the positive response of the Annex I Parties and their supporting partnership.

The Group noted that there is only one year left before the end of the first commitment period and to avoid any gap between the two periods, it is essential, therefore, for the AWG-KP to focus discussions on specifying the contribution of Annex I Parties, individually or jointly, to the scale of emission reductions to be achieved by Annex I Parties in aggregate.

It is pleased that the focus of work will be on the numbers, adding that time is short and it is now more urgent than ever that Parties progress as quickly as possible to quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments for Annex I Parties. Failure to do so, it added, would send a negative signal regarding the readiness of Annex I Parties to take forward their legal obligations under the Protocol and their readiness to contribute to a strong climate change regime.

As Parties sought to strengthen the global effort in (combating) climate change, the insufficient level of ambition expressed in the current mitigation pledges of Annex I Parties is of great concern to the members of the G77 and China, and an obstacle that must be overcome, it added.

It also said the Group is committed to constructive and transparent negotiations in this session to ensure that the AWG-KP delivers the results of its work pursuant to the decision of the CMP1 (first meeting of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties acting as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol) for adoption by the CMP at its sixth session (in Cancun).

The Democratic Republic of Congo, representing the **African Group** said that, as the end of the first commitment period looms large, and 2013 is fast approaching, it is very concerned about the possible gap that might occur between the first and second commitment periods. To Africa, it added, this is not acceptable.

The African Group expressed its serious concern on the slow progress being made under the AWG-KP and reiterated the African position on the two track approach as stated by the African Ministerial Conference on Environment, held in Bamako in June.

The African Group stressed that the AWG-KP must increase efforts to make progress on further commitments of Annex I Parties for an amendment to establish a second and subsequent commitment periods.

It welcomed the in-session workshop on the scale of emissions reduction to be achieved by Annex I Parties and hope that it will provide a forum for Annex I Parties to increase the transparency of their pledges and lead them to increase the level of ambitions to bridge the gap between their current pledges and the 40% (reduction) recommended by science. However, it cautioned that while discussing the means to raise the level of ambition is in itself important, it is more important for Annex I Parties to agree on aggregate numbers.

It reminded the Chair, John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda, of the strong views that Africa has on the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol and emphasized the need to conclude negotiations of the AWG-KP in Cancun, to avoid the gap. It said, these discussions were much more important than reaching a conclusion in the other track, referring to the work of Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC, as Parties have a mandate to ensure that there is no gap between the commitment periods.

Africa is of the view that the Kyoto Protocol has been a very effective legal instrument in addressing global

efforts to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate, which will be felt in Africa more than any other continents.

Grenada, speaking for the **Alliance of Small Island States** (AOSIS) said the AWG-KP is mandated to deliver a new set of Annex B (developed countries and countries with economies in transition, with emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol) targets for the second commitment period of Kyoto Protocol at Cancun and these targets must be ambitious and delivered on time.

It said the Kyoto Protocol, by its very design, enables a scaling up of effort from Annex B Parties, through a system that is transparent, inspires mutual confidence and allows for expansion. This is the time, it added, to build on the Kyoto Protocol's foundations and architecture without delay, rather than to look for cracks in its plaster.

It further said the time has come to move forward, and to move to the stage of upgrading the text (referring to the latest Chair's text) to the status of a full negotiating text.

In very pragmatic terms, this means that we should leave Bonn with agreement on LULUCF (Land-use, Land-use Change and Forestry) accounting rules, clear options for addressing surplus assigned amount units (AAUs) created in the first commitment period and a clear path for increasing the ambition of Annex I Parties.

AOSIS said that we need, at this critical time, to deliver results at Cancun that move Parties substantially forward in terms of emission reductions relative to 1990 emission levels and remove any public concerns over a possible gap between the first and second commitment periods.

It pointed out that the pledges of all Annex I Parties and non-Annex I Parties (in the Copenhagen Accord) showed that aggregate reductions would only reach 12 to 18% relative to 1990 levels, well below the 45% reduction that AOSIS has called for from Annex I Parties collectively, whether or not Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, in order to limit temperature increases to well below 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

It further highlighted that if (certain) Parties preferred changes to the LULUCF accounting rules, consideration of the impacts of surplus AAUs and surplus that is proposed for creation in the second commitment

period, the actual emission reductions from Annex I pledges could be as little as 1 to 7% reduction below 1990 levels.

It warned that if technical issues of LULUCF accounting and surplus AAUs are not properly addressed, we may see Annex I Parties' aggregate for the second commitment period actually eroding the small gains achieved in the first period.

It said this scenario cannot be defended especially now that we know our impacts on the climate is far more alarming than when Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period targets were agreed. It drew attention to the recent United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report which confirmed that the past decade was the warmest on record and that the Earth has been growing warmer over the last 50 years.

Quoting from the report that "For the past 15 years, sea level has been rising a little more than one eighth of an inch per year", AOSIS said that this is double the rate of sea-level rise during the past century, which followed 2,000 years of little change. It said it was mind-boggling for low-lying, small island developing states to contemplate their fate.

The problems we face are plain and the solutions are equally plain, it added.

It stressed that we cannot wait for Parties outside the Kyoto Protocol to find motivation before we engage the second commitment period machinery. We cannot have countries pledging to achieve less in the second commitment period than they agreed to achieve in the first period, undoing earlier commitments in the guise of new promises, it added.

The AWG-KP, it reiterated, must deliver at Cancun, commitments for reductions that are commensurate with the challenge we face; reductions that are transparent, ambitious and sincere.

China said the reason the AWG-KP cannot reach agreement is down to certain countries that do not wish to make progress; certain countries that are not prepared to shoulder responsibilities according to historical responsibilities, instead they came up with various kinds of excuses to avoid responsibilities.

It reiterated that the AWG-KP must stick to the basic framework laid down by the Kyoto Protocol and follow strictly the Bali Action Plan as the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol are the legal foundation to meet the climate change challenges.

Speaking for the **European Union**, Belgium said the group is committed to make all the progress that is feasible in both negotiating tracks towards a successful, balanced and concrete outcome at Cancun, as a constructive step towards an ambitious and comprehensive agreement in line with the 2 degree Celcius objective.

It stressed that while the EU still would prefer a single legally binding instrument that would include the essential elements of the Kyoto Protocol, it is flexible regarding the legal form as long as it is binding.

It is, therefore, open to consider a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, as part of a wider, more rigorous and ambitious agreement, provided that certain conditions, founded on the urgent need for environmental integrity and effectiveness of international action, are met.

This would mean, it added, that Annex I countries that did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol and other major emitters take on their fair share of the global emission reduction effort in the context of an ambitious, legally binding global agreement and that the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol would need to be addressed appropriately, in particular regarding LULUCF accounting and the carryover of AAUs and progress is made on the reform of existing mechanisms and on the establishment of new mechanisms.

It said the EU continues to stand by its own commitment to a 30% emission reduction as its contribution to a global and comprehensive agreement if other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and if advanced developing countries contribute adequately and according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities.

It agreed with non-Annex I Parties that current pledges do not meet the required level of ambition and the uncertainties regarding future accounting rules may further undermine the effort that is needed.

It said that we need a clear rules based system so as to ensure that the numbers correspond with reduction levels that are clear to us all. It is hopeful that the workshops before and during this session, will contribute to improve our understanding on how to bring the current pledges closer to the efforts needed and how to improve that Protocol's environmental integrity.

It also said the EU is of the view that carefully crafted market mechanisms enhance the cost-effectiveness of emission reductions, thus enabling Annex I Parties to take on more ambitious targets, and can promote technology transfer and generate additional financial flows to developing countries. It sees a continued strong role for the project-based mechanisms which needed reform in order to strengthen their effectiveness, geographical distribution, environmental integrity and governance, for example by establishing standardised baselines under the Clean Development Mechanisms.

While reforming existing mechanisms is important, it said, it is also crucial to develop new scaled-up market mechanisms, in order to deliver deeper emission reductions.

It further said the EU sees many synergies between the AWG-KP and the AWG-LCA and it believed that if common elements between both tracks are addressed together, using joint formats or back-to-back settings, it could unblock some of the discussions.

Representing the **Umbrella Group** (comprising Canada, Iceland, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Norway, Russian Federation and Ukraine), Australia said discussions in the AWG-LCA track, markets and role of forests should take place in a broader context and does not operate in isolation. It said it is pleased with progress on mitigation commitments in a comprehensive post-2012 framework.

It said the Copenhagen Accord pledges are broader than those in the Kyoto Protocol as they cover 80% of global emissions and represents the most substantial reduction and would drive the global efforts, now and beyond 2012, adding that the group wants to engage in the AWK-KP as part of a comprehensive outcome.

Japan, speaking for itself, said it had committed to extremely ambitious target under the Copenhagen Accord which captured the targets and actions of more than 80% of the global emissions in contrast to the limited coverage of the Kyoto Protocol which is only 30% of the global emissions.

Hence, Japan does not support amending Article 3.9 as it will not lead to effective global reduction. It said Japan will continue to pursue reduction of all major emitters and achieving coherent approach between this group and other group (the AWG-LCA).

Norway said it would be difficult to finalise a second commitment period as it is unclear of the level of commitments. However, it said it is flexible about the legal form of a new global climate commitment and is open to a second commitment period as part of a wider and more ambitious agreement.

Egypt shared its concern about slow progress in the AWG-KP process. It urged Parties to move into negotiation in order to achieve results in Cancun. It said it was compelled to intervene following some contradictory statements that said there must be a balanced and effective approach that take into consideration of environment integrity yet Parties must not consider the legal obligation under Article 3.9.

Egypt said that we need a reality check that it's impossible to form new market mechanisms if there is no target for the second commitment period. We cannot supply (carbon credits) without knowing what the demand is, it said, and warned that without a second commitment period, the whole system will be threatened.

We should work constructively to achieve a comprehensive and balanced outcome in Cancun, it added.

The Chair, John Ashe said, Parties need to re-double their efforts in view of the four months left before Cancun, adding that he would prepare a negotiating text as an outcome from this session. He said three contact groups – on scale of emissions or the 'numbers group', on the LULUCF and methodological issues, and on legal matters - will be set up drawing on papers to be prepared by the secretariat.