

SBSTA agenda adopted

Bonn, June 9 (Meena Raman)- The 34th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) finally adopted a revised provisional agenda issued on 9 June, following a resumption of its meeting around noon the same day.

The SBSTA remained suspended for two days since its opening plenary session on June 6, as Parties were deadlocked over an agenda item on the “Economic and social consequences of response measures” which was pending resolution under the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI).

At the opening of the SBSTA session on June 6, Parties could not adopt the provisional agenda as Saudi Arabia and Bolivia wanted changes made to two of the agenda items, resulting in the Chair Mama Konate from Mali suspending the session for informal consultations.

Informal consultations on the REDD issue were resolved early in the week but consultations on response measures were still ongoing until midnight on Wednesday, 8 June.

Saudi Arabia had submitted a proposal to replace agenda item 7 of the initial provisional agenda on “Economic and social consequences of response measures” with the title “Forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures”. It wanted the amendment to reflect the mandate from the Cancun decision adopted at the 16th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP).

Since the SBI was also dealing with the same issue, the Chair of SBSTA proposed that Parties wait for the outcome of informal consultations that were undertaken by the SBI Chair. Following joint consultations by chairs of both SBI and SBSTA, agenda item 7 on this matter was revised and was accepted by all Parties.

The revision now reads as follows - “ Forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures at the 34th and 35th sessions of the subsidiary bodies, with the objective of developing a work programme under the SBSTA and the SBI to address these impacts, with a view to adopting, at the 17th session of the COP, modalities for the operationalisation of the work programme and a possible forum on response measures.”

On how to handle forum [which was mandated by paragraph 93 of the Cancun decision (1/CP.16)], the SBSTA Chair said that he and the SBI Chair will convene the forum to

deepen understanding of all aspects relating to impacts of response measures to develop a work program, modalities for operationalisation of the work programme and a possible forum on response measures. The forum will be akin to a joint contact group with the view to making recommendations to SBSTA and the SBI. The chairs will arrange a dedicated and related side event for interested Parties and relevant IGOs and stakeholder to present and contribute their views.

On the REDD issue, Bolivia had on Monday, June 6 disputed the inclusion of this as an agenda item (item 4) as it had objected to the adoption of the Cancun decision and had expressed concerns over the inclusion of forests in the carbon trading system. Bolivia wanted an amendment to the title of the agenda to reflect “forest-related activities.”

Following informal consultations on this issue, the title of this agenda item was also revised which then facilitated the adoption of the revised agenda. The revised agenda item now reads: “Methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.”

Several Parties had on Monday, June 6 proposed new items for inclusion into the agenda. Algeria and Saudi Arabia wanted the inclusion of “Carbon dioxide capture and storage in geological formation as clean development mechanism project activities”. Papua New Guinea wanted the inclusion of “Blue carbon: coastal marine systems”. Bolivia wanted the inclusion of an agenda item entitled “Rights of nature and the integrity of ecosystems”. Ecuador wanted the issue of impacts of climate change on water resources and water resource management to be discussed in SBSTA while Canada wanted a work programme on agriculture.

Upon the resumption of the SBSTA session on June 9, the Chair proposed that Parties adopt the revised agenda with agreement to work on all the items (agenda items 1-12) except those dealing with the proposals for the inclusion of these new agenda items (items 13-15) which will be put on hold pending further consultations and for a report to be provided to the SBSTA plenary on 10 June. This was agreed to by Parties.

Prior to the adoption of the agenda, Bolivia wanted the report of the session to reflect that the Cancun decision 1/CP 16 was adopted over a formal and explicit objection of a state party and this was agreed to. Bolivia had in Cancun formally objected to the adoption of the Cancun decision.