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Subsidiary Body on Implementation commences work

Bonn, June 10 (Meena Raman) –The Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) finally managed to commence its work yesterday, 9 June, in Bonn after the adoption of a provisional agenda, which was revised and issued the same day.

The SBI could not begin its work as scheduled on Monday, 6 June, following an intense wrangling over the agenda in relation to the development of guidelines for biennial reports on developing countries mitigation actions.

Developing countries had been calling for the deletion of this agenda item as they felt that this issue needed further work under the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and was not ripe for the SBI to deal with it. They also stressed that no mandate had been provided by the Cancun decision in this regard for the SBI to consider this matter. (See TWN Update 6).

When Parties gathered for the convening of the SBI session late afternoon yesterday, this issue was still on the agenda under item 4(e), leading to a further stalling of the meeting, with developing countries in intense discussions with the Chair, Mr. Robert Owen Jones (from Australia).

Finally, when the session began , the Chair said that having heard the opinions of Parties, item 4 (e) of the agenda would be deleted along with agenda item 3(e) which related to the guidelines on the reporting of the developed countries including that of biennial reports.

The Chair also said that agenda item 4(b) on the "Information contained in national communications from Parties not included in Annex 1 to the Convention" would be left in abeyance (as has been the case in the previous SBI session) and which would return for consideration at the next SBI session.

(Developed countries have been pushing new obligations on developing countries to do more frequent reporting of their national communications including in doing biennial reports of their mitigation actions which would be measured, reported and verified (MRV) and subject to international consultations and analysis with analysis of the reports by technical experts. These obligations were agreed to in Cancun by developing countries).

On another agenda item which caused delay in the adoption of the initial provisional agenda related to the "forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures". Following consultations with Parties, there was a reformulation of this agenda item as was also the case in the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) agenda in this regard.

The SBI Chair said that he will convene the forum at this session of the SBI as well as its 35th session, to deepen the understanding about the impacts of response measures (undertaken in addressing climate change) with the objective of developing a work programme to address these impacts and for the operationalisation of the forum. He said that the forum would be under the format of a joint contact group (with SBSTA) with the view to making draft recommendations to the consideration of Parties. He said a dedicated side event relevant to the forum would be held at this session.

The Chair's proposal to then adopt the provisional agenda was agreed to by Parties, with agreement on the request by Bolivia for 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. Bolivia had in Cancun formally objected to the adoption of the Cancun decision.

Saudi Arabia said that the only lesson from this process was that while chairs of subsidiary bodies have the right to draft agendas, they needed to be aware of contentious issues that will take a very long time to sort out if chairs wanted to be innovative and change the holistic nature of the agenda. It said that in future, all chairs listen to Parties before imposing agendas on them.

Tuvalu while accepting the adoption of the agenda, expressed grave disappointment over the deletion of items relating to the national communications and for biennial reports for Annex 1 Parties and Non-Annex 1 Parties. It was disappointed that the SBI did not have the mandate to further work on this. Similar sentiments were also expressed by **Barbados**.

Tanzania for the **African Group** said it has been fighting hard so that the issue of "loss and damage" was combined with the issue of national adaptation plans and did not wish for this to be separated (as is now the case). It hoped that in the course of discussions there must be a fair treatment of this matter.

Ambassador Jorge Arguello (of Argentina) who is **Chair the G77 and China** reiterated that the Cancun outcomes introduced new issues under the SBI and some assignments are clear but there are new processes that need further political development and must therefore be kept under the AWGLCA. Unresolved issues should continue in the AWGLCA track and not transferred to other bodies since that would not be in line with the Convention or the mandate given by Parties to the AWGLCA.

He emphasized the difficulties faced by developing countries in lacking technical and financial support in enabling them to prepare their national communications. The Cancun decisions contain additional reporting obligations as well as more frequent timelines for the submission of reports, especially on GHG inventories which require specific technical and technological inputs as well as increased human and institutional capacities. Predictability of funding and the provision of the agreed full costs for the preparation of national communications are crucial for developing countries which are currently subject to limited financing allocations.

The Group asked the developed countries to provide detailed information or make available their national communications the level of improvements made in emissions reductions or lack thereof. It is important to maintain and strengthen annual reports on the technical review of GHG inventories of Annex 1 Parties as well as to monitor, report and evaluate their domestic mitigation actions.

The G77 and China also called for more contributions to the funds under the Convention, in particular under the Special Climate Change Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Adaptation Fund. It said that there must be fewer conditions attached to the allocation and use of the funds that are managed through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) as an operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention, in particular, the requirement of co-financing for the use of these funds and to treat adaptation in an equal manner as mitigation.

Australia speaking for the **Umbrella Group** in an apparent reference to the wrangling over the agenda, said that the process was unconscionable and humbug over a simple agenda. .

Grenada for **AOSIS** said that for some Parties, the only issue seemed to be that of MRV alone and about institutional structures as if this was an end in themselves. It said that the end is the reduction of GHGs and the need to address the adverse impacts of climate change on vulnerable countries.

Gambia for the **LDCs** stressed that national adaptation plans were the second phase of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAS), that will help the medium and long-term needs. It also called for the removal of co-financing conditions imposed by the GEF in supporting project implementation.

Democratic Republic of Congo for the **African Group** stressed that the core areas key for the SBI are developing the modalities and guidelines for LDCs as regards their national adaptation plans and for approaches to address loss and damage. It also welcomed the forum on the impact of response measures.