

Workshop on ambition not limited to just mitigation – say developing countries

Bonn, 23 May (Fauwaz Abdul Aziz) – As the controversy over whether the work on “enhancing mitigation ambition” belonged to the work of the Ad-hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform (ADP) continued in relation to the “agenda fight”, a workshop on “Options and Ways for Enhancing Mitigation Ambition and Possible Further Actions” was held on Monday, 21 May.

Following the intervention of China which was supported by several countries on the scope and title of the workshop, the facilitator of the workshop, Maria del Socorro Flores (Mexico), agreed that the workshop would be re-named to “Workshop to Increase the Level of Ambition” to reflect the holistic nature of the ambition, which was not only about mitigation but also about finance, technology transfer and capacity building.

China questioned where ‘enhancing mitigation ambition’ stood in relation to the Durban Platform decision’s (decision 1/CP.17) where there was a broad referral to the raising of ambition rather than merely limiting it to only mitigation. It was of the view that workshop should also address other “ambition” issues related to the means of implementation such as finance, technology transfer and capacity building.

It wanted a clarification or reassurance that this workshop comes from paragraph 8 of the 1/CP.17, and the scope of work is to increase ambition, which did not limit the discussion to only mitigation. It also sought clarity on where the report of the workshop will go.

(Para 8 of the decision states- “Requests Parties and observer organizations to submit by 28 February 2012 their views on options and ways for further increasing the level of ambition and decides to hold an in-session

workshop at the first negotiating session in 2012 to consider options and ways for increasing ambition and possible further actions”).)

Other developing countries raised similar interventions or made statements in support of China’s intervention.

The **Philippines** said while it sees the workshop as a very important part of the process, especially towards enhancing ambition, it strongly feels that the treatment of ambition, as articulated by China, must be in broader terms. “The clarification is in order to the ADP to fulfill the mandate of 1/CP.17 paragraph 8. Would it be possible for us to expand the scope of this workshop in view of the concerns raised by China regarding the title? Would it be possible to explore how to address in the workshop ambition regarding the means of implementation, such as finance?”

India also endorsed China’s comments and said that the decision to hold the workshop flowed from a decision of the Conference of Parties (COP) and did not reflect or restrict in any way the work in other bodies. The “mitigation ambition” question also relates to the work of the working groups under the Bali Action Plan and the Kyoto Protocol. Hence, the outcome of the workshop must be reflected in the work of all the bodies.

Bolivia supported China’s comments, and also raised concerns over the issue of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) and activities in forest sectors, “high level of uncertainties”, and said it wanted these concerns reflected in the report.

Egypt echoed China’s question as to where the workshop report would be submitted. Saudi Arabia and Nicaragua, similarly, expressed their

endorsement of the position of China, Philippines and India.

At the conclusion of the one-day workshop, Flores proposed that the title of the workshop be changed to 'Workshop to Increase the Level of Ambition' in accordance with paragraph 8 of the 1/CP.17 decision to reflect that it was not only mitigation that was discussed in the day's proceedings.

She reiterated also that this had, in fact, been reflected in the discussion on finance, technology, renewable energy, short-lived pollutants, among other issues related to "the holistic view to ambition". She reassured China and the countries that had expressed statements in support that their comments as well as the other views articulated in the workshop, which would be reflected in the report to be presented to the COP Presidency (South Africa). All Parties agreed to Flores' proposal.

Emissions gap

In the presentations made earlier in the day, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the International Energy Agency and the Energy Technology Perspective (ETA) showed the latest information on the scale of the gap and the potential to address the gap. These presentations revealed the facts related to the need to raise ambition before 2020, the feasibility of raising ambition, options and ways to raise ambition under the UNFCCC, and options and ways to raise ambition within countries.

UNEP's Chief scientist Joseph Alcamo, for instance, warned that meeting the 1.5°C - 2°C targets would only be met if ambition was significantly raised and urgent action taken before 2020, as there is a gap of 6-11 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent between expected levels of emission in 2020 if Parties' pledges in Cancun were fulfilled and what is needed to keep global average temperature below 1.5°C to 2 °C, respectively, above pre-industrial levels, by the end of the century.

While actions such as higher standards on transport emissions, electrical appliances and other products and urbanisation processes are impacting positively on efforts to tackle the global climate crisis, country "pledges are not going to be enough as they are currently constituted, countries are going to have to work

harder to keep to the 2-degree temperature target." The IPCC's Working Group III head of technical support, Jan Minx, announced the forthcoming installment of the fifth Assessment Report.

Developed countries' consumption model also plays a role

In the subsequent country presentations on mitigation outcomes, closing the emissions gap, the role of national governments, international cooperation, the private sector and how to mobilize resources and support, such as climate financing, technology and capacity building, **China** reiterated that ambition, is not only a matter of mitigation, but also adaptation, technology, finance, and capacity building.

According to Professor Zou Ji, the China representative, there is a huge potential to enhance mitigation ambition, but Annex I Parties have only shown a low commitment level and unsatisfactory performance towards the Kyoto Protocol target. A significant contribution to emission cuts so far have come from the period of recession rather than emission-reducing innovations in such major emitting sectors as transport and building or a change from their high-carbon lifestyle, said Zou. He emphasised the role played by consumption in developed countries and the perpetuation of such high-consumption culture among developing countries following the lead of developed countries. This he said is leading ultimately to the emission of global GHGs, and he called for greater investment also in terms of technology, finance and capacity building for developing countries.

Following China's presentation, Norway, Australia and Japan asserted that China's claims that their countries had not abided by the Kyoto targets were inaccurate.

Australia spoke of its Clean Energy Future Package of policies, including on carbon pricing, energy efficiency, renewable energy and action related to land resources, its carbon price mechanism that will begin in six weeks, its 2020 target of a 5-15% emissions reduction, or 25% below 2000 level, and the new 2050 target of cutting emissions to 80% below 1990 levels. Australia also called for greater linkage between domestic and international action, an annual COP decision on ambition, greater transparency

and a greater role for market-based mechanisms to cut emissions at lower costs.

Japan spoke of its “visions and actions towards low-carbon growth and a climate resilient world,” its Energy and Environment Policy Revision, and called for the setting of long-term global goals, such as a minimum of 50% reduction of global emissions by 2050, increased transparency such as through measurable, reportable and verifiable actions, and the exploration of various approaches.

The **EU** said its 27 member countries as a whole are on track towards reaching its targets, with the union spending up to 35 billion Euros to achieve its pledges, while greater approaches could be explored such as in the aviation and maritime industries to cut emissions and a greater role for the UNFCCC. While closing the ambition gap is important – and affordable – there must be processes so as to understand that gap better, greater exploration of options to close the gap, robust rules such as for LULUCF, and the development of common accounting rules for Kyoto Protocol and non-Kyoto Protocol parties, said the EU.

‘Future vs historical responsibility’

The Dr. Jonathan Pershing of the **US** reiterated the idea of future responsibility as a parallel to historical responsibility, stressing that “tomorrow’s history is today’s action – we have to act immediately!” He also said focus should be greater on the implementation of current pledges – pointing out that a number of emitting developing countries had per capita GDP above US\$10,000 – and called for increased transparency and capacity through regular reporting, international assessment reviews (IAR) and international consultation and reviews (ICR) of national inventories and mitigation efforts.

Domestic mitigation ambitions should be enhanced by such means as renewable energies, and suggested that efforts outside the UNFCCC can also make an impact on efforts to tackle climate change, such as by working with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Maritime Organization (IMO) to develop a global framework and address emissions by developing countries. “If a country can afford airplanes, they can afford to curb emissions,” said Pershing. The US also proposed phasing out inefficient fossil fuel

subsidies towards supporting efforts to develop low-emission development strategies.

Brazil stressed the need to refer to both the science, and the equity of emission reduction, with ambition and equity also being mutually supportive of each other. Brazil reiterated the need to strengthen the UNFCCC regime principle of all Parties taking into account countries’ common but differentiated responsibilities as well as the need for enhanced action by all Parties while taking into consideration both historical responsibilities “based on what actually happened as opposed to future responsibilities based on projections”.

There was need also for the consideration of social and economic development and poverty eradication priorities of developing countries, stressed Brazil’s André Odenbreit Carvalho.

“Enhanced action by all must be achieved, respective to the differentiated efforts,” he said.

Equity favours ambition, and enhanced mitigation action by non-Annex I countries will depend on the level of support received from developed countries, as enhanced support will allow developing countries to reach the full mitigation potential of their nationally appropriate mitigation action (NAMAs). “Enhanced support would encourage developing countries who have yet to submit information on NAMAs to do so,” said Carvalho.

He cautioned against selecting specific countries by looking at “big” developing countries rather than considering socio-economic indicators.

Costa Rica asked Brazil how countries such as Brazil, China and India, who are seeking to gain a greater role in global governance like in the G20 but are under the label of developing countries, propose to go forward on their vision of equity within developing countries in terms of (climate change) mitigation and finance?

To this, **Brazil** answered that the issue of looking at the past, the notion of historical responsibility, “is not (the same as) looking backwards” and is a consideration it is not contrary to the notion of updating. “We need to see the parameters as they move in time. That is relevant. Historical responsibility (is about) what happened, and Parties must feel responsible. Future responsibility is not about emissions, which have happened, but is talked about in

terms of projections, which Brazil did not agree with.

“Equity within developing countries – acting to the full extent of national capability is important. We have lived up to our capability while we face other challenges. On Costa Rica’s selection of countries – one way (to respond) is to look at them as big countries. If you use other indicators such as social and economic indicators – (you) have another design,” said Brazil.

“It’s not about shying away from what we must do. It’s a little more complex than making just any selection of countries,” added Odenbreit.

At the conclusion of the workshop, on the topic of the next steps forward, Parties urged a variety of actions to be taken, including an “early, robust process capturing the sense of urgency (of

climate crisis),” and the release of all the scientific data that had been released in the presentations (Grenada); the **EU** called for the ADP process to start immediately and to be “continuous” on “technical” aspects of ambition as well as mitigation, and urged “transparency of action” on climate change action; **Nauru** on behalf of **the Association of Small Island States** spoke of the need to discuss “domestic measures” as well as the constraints preventing more vigorous policies and measures; **Costa Rica** requested that Parties be updated on the size of the emissions gap; and **China** urged for greater work to be done in the AWG- LCA and for Annex 1 Parties to enhance their emission reduction targets to a level that could be described as a “serious demonstration” of their ambition level.