

Durban Platform: Some progress in agenda discussion but no solution reached

Bonn, 24 May (Meena Raman) - A plenary meeting planned under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) that was supposed to be held at 8 pm on Wednesday, 23 May, was cancelled because no agreement had been reached on the agenda.

Announcement of the ADP plenary flashed on CCTV monitors, providing an expectation that an agreement over the agenda would be reached by early evening and that the plenary would be able to discuss and adopt it.

However at around 7pm, delegates and observers learnt from the CCTV that the plenary was cancelled. This happened as informal consultations on finding a way forward on the agenda were going on since 6 pm. (See below for further details).

The cancellation of the plenary indicated that informal consultations, which were open-ended (where all countries are invited to take part) had not yet come to a solution on what the agenda of the ADP would be.

Thus, the fight over the agenda has now continued to the final days of this two week session. The ADP session was scheduled to end Thursday, 24 May.

Although some delegates had portrayed this "agenda fight" merely as a procedural issue, many consider it not only as being substantive in nature but that this was actually at the heart of the battle over the Durban Platform decision (1/CP.17)

In issue in the original provisional agenda prepared by the UNFCCC secretariat in consultation with the President of the Conference of Parties (South Africa) for adoption, are the following items: "3. Planning of work in accordance with decision 1/CP.17; 4. Workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition."

Agenda item 4 had been challenged by a number of developing countries on the ground that a separate agenda item on this matter should not be put as this issue (on enhancing mitigation ambition) was being discussed in other fora such as the Ad Hoc Working Group under Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA).

Some countries had come out with different proposals for amending the agenda. One proposal that was prominent and which gained traction among many countries was from the Philippines.

The Philippines' proposal was for the deletion of item 4 of the agenda and for amendment of item 3 as follows: "Planning of work in accordance with **all elements** of decision 1/CP.17" –

Other countries wanted to maintain the reference to the "workplan on enhancing mitigation ambition."

On Sunday, about 17 countries were called for informal consultations by Sandea De Wet (Interim Chair of the ADP from South Africa), which did not lead to any conclusions.

Following this, several countries at the open plenary of the ADP held on Tuesday, 22nd May called for further informal consultations to be open-ended.

At this session on Tuesday, many countries repeated their views on the agenda, thereby showing the deep differences that remain.

In another attempt to bridge the differences, another round of informal consultations was held at 6 pm on Wednesday, 23 May.

According to diplomatic sources, De Wet at this informal consultation put forward a proposal for amendments to the provisional agenda as a possible way forward as follows:

Item 3 was as follows: “Implementation of all elements of decision 1/CP.17 (with a footnote): (a) Planning of work in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5;

(b) Matters related to paragraphs 7 and 8;

(c) Additional matters;”

The footnote proposed reads: “The consideration of this item shall take note of the context of decision 1/CP.17, be in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention, be pursuant to paragraph 6 and build upon the work of the subsidiary bodies, noting that work to give effect to paragraph 1 is being undertaken by the AWG-LCA to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its eighteenth session.”

According to diplomatic sources, some developed countries including the United States were not agreeable to the reference to “the principles and provisions of the Convention”.

The ADP is expected to reconvene in plenary today at a time to be announced.

On a separate issue over the impasse on the election of the Chair of the ADP, according to the UNFCCC website which provided a summary of the consultations between the Presidency and regional groups held on Wednesday, 23 May 2012 at

4 pm, an “emerging consensus to reach agreement based on a proposal presented” during consultations in the morning had fallen apart.

According to the information on the website, the Presidency informed the Coordinators of regional groups that in view of this impasse, the only avenue left is an election of the officers of the ADP Bureau.

The daily programme of Bonn meetings today had the following information. “The President of the COP/CMP wishes to inform Parties that, following unsuccessful consultations among regional groups, the ADP will be invited to elect its officers in accordance with rules 51 and 52 of the draft rules of procedure being applied. The election of officers will take place during the plenary meeting of the ADP on Thursday, 24 May 2012.”

The impasse over the election of the Chair of the ADP stemmed from nominations from 3 groupings of countries for the position. The Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) have nominated Mr. Harald Dovland of Norway, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean (GRULAC) countries nominated Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh from Trinidad and Tobago and the Asia-Pacific region has nominated Mr. Jayant Mauskar from India.