

Fears of “Platform-jumping” by developed countries confirmed

Bonn, 24 May (Fauwaz Abdul Aziz) – Fears of developed countries “jumping platforms” by shifting the issue of “enhancing of mitigation ambition” away from the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform (ADP) were confirmed on Wednesday, 23 May, at an AWG-LCA informal group meeting.

A large number of developing countries had expressed concerns in the Bonn session of the ADP that negotiations under that working group on “enhancing mitigation ambition” must not render meaningless the work of bodies such as the AWG-LCA and the working group under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP).

Japan said the ADP should be the place to discuss the issue of mitigation and that Parties needed to be “careful” when dealing with the issue under the AWG-LCA.

Switzerland was equally forthcoming on its vision of what was a priority for the informal process, the Doha COP and the extent of “global” mitigation ambition and universal comparability that applies even to developing countries, (thereby breaking the firewall principle that had hitherto been accepted under the UNFCCC and the Bali Action Plan).

“For us, it’s also clear we must think beyond Doha. It’s a matter of fact that the world will not remain static after the AWG-LCA closes. We need advanced clarification on what Parties are doing (on mitigation). There must be a process coming out of this work on what are the conditions beyond the pledge, including comparability. For us, it’s clear that we must do as much as we can this year through workshops and submissions and allocate work we need to do beyond Doha in a way that takes things forward efficiently,” added Switzerland.

Mali, on behalf of the **G77 and China**, responded to the intervention by Switzerland and said the task of

AWG-LCA is not to define pre- and post-Doha processes, but to finish the work of the working group. Adopting a decision in Doha is the task at hand and Partners have been postponing the issues for a number of years, and there was need to conclude this work.

Developing countries insisted that deliberations be focused on the meeting of mitigation ambition in concrete terms of targets to tonnes, and to ensure comparability of efforts between Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and developed countries (UNFCCC Annex 1 Parties) that are not Parties to the Protocol.

In response, the **United States** expressed disagreement on whether these issues should be addressed and in which format.

Mali, for **G77 and China** expressed concerns about the lack of progress not only over the issue of comparability of efforts but also on the lack of a rigorous framework for common international rules to govern compliance of developed countries to their emission reduction ambition targets. “The level is very far from (the recommendations of the) IPCC,” said Mali in its intervention.

The **Marshall Islands**, representing the **Alliance of Small Island States**, expressed the view that work by developed countries on mitigation has been lacking on ambition. It wanted increased ambition reflected in updates of the technical paper. It wanted to secure transparent, single unconditional numbers from Annex 1 Parties, with 1990 as the year for the basis.

China said that while it agrees that the technical papers and the discussion on the structure and processes of the workshop (on developed countries mitigation) have been very useful and important and help us further understanding, the mandate of the Bali Action Plan is to ensure ‘comparability’, and is not just about increasing understanding of the pledges.

It called for submissions from Parties on the issue of comparability. It was of the view that before the work is finished in Doha, “we should not be going to see what to do beyond Doha. Our work is to see what we’re going to do before Doha.”

Bolivia said that a decision in Doha on mitigation commitments of Parties is needed to fulfil the Bali Action Plan mandate, which called for quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives. Developed countries should make submissions on this matter to have a decision in Doha on these comparability numbers. “We require in Doha increase in ambition level and comparability of efforts. We definitely require assurance of fulfilment of the Bali Action Plan and Convention”.

The comparability principle, in paragraph 1(b)(i) of the Bali Action Plan, refers to quantified emission reduction mitigation commitments of Annex 1 Parties that are not Parties to the Kyoto Protocol comparable in scale, timing and legal effect to Annex 1 Parties to the Protocol.

Bolivia also expressed the need to address what the transitional compliance system would be for those countries that are not in the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol.

India pointed that the message from the Parties in the informal is that the AWG-LCA discussions and scope have a limited mandate - one that is limited to workshops, and so on.

Reflecting on past negotiations in Bangkok last year, this issue was intensely deliberated. An understanding was reached that the work of AWG-LCA consists of unfinished tasks, which are set out in the Bali Action Plan, and that the group agreed to take the work forward with a view to achieving a comprehensive and balanced outcome.

In Durban, it was also agreed to finish the work of the AWG-LCA and the AWG-KP and this was part of the mutual reassurances arrived at under the Durban Platform. The workshops have helped in the elaboration of the underlying assumptions of the pledges of developed countries. The question that must be asked is whether this is enough, and whether this helps us to move forward. If the mandate of this group is to organise further workshops without achieving significant results in comparability of efforts which are (measurable, reportable and verifiable, then who will complete this work, asked India.

It made a specific proposal on the need to address the gaps that exist in the information on the pledges of developed countries to enable the comparability of

efforts and in monitoring outcomes in terms of tonnes of emission reductions. Those gaps need to be identified and based on that, further information is needed so that the gaps can be bridged and technical analysis done, which puts all the pledges on the same platform. This will inform what the net actual emission reductions are. The gaps need to be captured in common templates and addressed in future workshops.

The **European Union**, meanwhile, said that on the issue of the lack of mitigation ambition, its view is that it is necessary but not sufficient to close the gap and implement what had already been agreed as to what would be done. The EU then proposed that the UNFCCC secretariat update the technical paper that had been presented on the subject, and a further workshop would be needed to clarify the pledges.

The EU also said the issues to be discussed would centre around on progress towards targets, the use of market mechanisms, estimated emissions reductions, and so on. It would make sense to continue deliberations, said the EU, and a similar approach should be adopted when addressing pledges from developing countries.

Norway sought more discussion on the theme of the next AWG-LCA workshops, methodological basis, the update of the technical paper, the generation of more focused work under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA).

Mexico, South Korea, and New Zealand voiced similar positions.

In summary, the facilitator said there had emerged in the course of the meeting, agreement to continue with workshops, which are to be focused, and interactive; for an update of the technical paper to capture new information presented by Parties; to invite those Parties that have not sent their submissions to send them in as soon as possible; on substantive areas to cover those relevant aspects of the decision 2/CP.17; and that the overall goal is to advance and complete clarification of targets and how Parties will measure progress.

He also said differences lay in the issue of comparability of efforts and the need for common accounting rules, compliance, the ambition gap and how to address the ambition gap. On the overall work to be done, some had called for the development of a work programme, while others said immediate steps should be taken so as to consider in Doha how to address any outstanding issues.