



## Differing views on addressing 'mitigation' in new agreement

Geneva, 8 May (Meena Raman) – Divergent views were expressed among countries on how to address the issue of mitigation in the new agreement to be concluded by 2015 under the UNFCCC.

Developed countries wanted to see a 'spectrum of commitments' among developed and developing countries which is legally binding for all. There was a general view by developed countries for nationally determined targets in accordance with national circumstances and capabilities, and for a periodic review of those targets to enhance ambition in line with the temperature goal of 2 degrees C. They also want a different form of differentiation according to the emission profiles of countries rather than that which exists in the Convention (which is a differentiation between developed and developing countries). Developed countries also wanted common accounting rules for mitigation and transparency for both developed and developing countries. The United States did not want developing countries to condition their contribution to emission reductions on the availability of finance and technology transfer.

Several developing countries on the other hand were opposed to differentiation other than that in the Convention, which is along the lines of developed and developing countries or Annex I/non-Annex I. They also stressed the importance of the historical responsibility of developed countries and for them to take the lead in emission reductions and for finance, technology transfer and capacity building to be provided to developing countries. Several developing countries including the LDCs did not support a bottom-up approach

in determining the mitigation commitments of developed countries as this would not deliver on the ambition needed to limit temperature rise.

These views were expressed at the climate talks in Bonn under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform (ADP) in the roundtable on 'mitigation' held on 2 May, which was chaired by Mr. Harald Dovland (Norway). He asked Parties to address the question of what is needed in the 2015 agreement to enhance mitigation actions in 2020. He referred to some countries referring to a 'spectrum of commitments' and a 'range of actions'. He asked Parties to focus on how they foresee such a 'spectrum'. On the issue of a "top-down versus bottom-up" approach (in determining mitigation targets), he asked, after adding the bottom-up targets determined nationally, how will the emissions gap be fixed if they are not sufficient to address the long-term global temperature goal? He also asked Parties how they saw the dynamics for a durable agreement.

**Saudi Arabia** said that given that the principles and provisions of the Convention apply to the 2015 agreement, any range of commitments and spectrum should be in line with the established structure, principles and provisions of the Convention. Attempts to renegotiate them are a waste of time. Sustainable development is the core of the endeavour for any action on mitigation and the costs for mitigation efforts are high for developing countries. Hence, the means of implementation is important and adaptation should also be given balanced consideration.

**Australia** said there were four elements to consider: (i) Parties forward commitments they will

make within a spectrum which is nationally determined, respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities (CBDRRC); (ii) there is a process in place for the commitments to be considered before they are finalised to see if they are fair; (iii) rules for transparency and accounting are in place and (iv) a process for countries to revisit their commitments at regular intervals to enhance them is in place. A key question, it said, was how to clarify the spectrum of mitigation commitments. It said that the mitigation spectrum is based on the types of targets and actions countries pledge to take. This could be a variety of actions, which could be carbon budgets, absolute emission cuts, carbon intensity etc. It proposed a roundtable discussion in June on what kind of efforts Parties will be taking in the context of their national circumstances post-2020. Every country could choose their type and level of effort. It expressed caution about forcing Parties to take commitments, which will drive them away from participation in the new agreement. The commitments should be quantifiable with enough information and assumptions to know its expected impact.

On ambition, the approach should be designed as an “upward escalator”. Australia could not see Parties doing less than what they are doing today. For the post-2020 period, advanced countries with appropriate circumstances should take on absolute economy-wide reduction targets and other major economies for economy-wide commitments. The rules based for accounting should be fit for purpose and match the diverse spectrum of commitments taking into account different circumstances and capacities. On the issue as to how the efforts by Parties compare to the ambition level required by science, fairness and equity, it proposed a roundtable on what the ex-ante review could look like and the analytical reference points to consider those efforts. Australia said there is a need to consider how countries could revisit their commitments including the length of the commitment period and what the mechanism could look like. The new architecture should capture this approach. It proposed the idea of

having national schedules for the commitments and for international rules determined top-down.

**Switzerland** for the **Environmental Integrity Group** said the ADP must deliver on appropriate mitigation commitments and targets by all Parties according to their national circumstances. It called for fair differentiation taking into account national circumstances, evolving responsibilities and capacities. There should be common rules for accounting which are internationally determined. The new agreement should be dynamic, reflecting current realities.

The **European Union** proposed a step-wise approach that is: (i) to define a menu of commitments; (ii) Parties choose what commitments they would do and (iii) a review process to see what is effective and fair. On the first step, there is a need for a simple and limited range of options and to develop an appropriate accounting system for different types of commitments and to facilitate comparability amongst Parties. These options could be emission-reduction targets, carbon neutrality, reductions in per capita emissions, policy changes, energy mix, reductions in carbon intensity etc. It supported Australia for a workshop on different types of commitments. There can be differentiation with different timelines, baselines, and differences in coverage of sectors. There is then a need to collectively consider which of those can be appropriate from the menu of options in the post-2020 period. There is also a need to consider what criteria can facilitate designing of commitments including on transparency to ensure how robust they are and for effective monitoring. On the kind of information needed according to science to stay below the 2 degree C goal, the EU said the indicators need not be restricted.

**China** said that there are already criteria to build an effective and equitable regime. Equity needs to be a top priority to ensure sustained motivation and to ensure the broadest participation for all Parties to address climate change. It had to be cost effective and adheres to achieving multi-possible objectives especially for developing countries. There is also a need to ensure the necessary

supporting conditions for finance, technology transfer and capacity building for developing countries to undertake mitigation efforts.

China said there is a need to address both the sources of emissions and sinks. On the sources, it said that it is important to look at the different stages of development of countries. For the emerging economies, emissions are from the manufacturing sector, while for industrialised countries, it is mainly from transport and buildings. Industrial countries' emissions are consumption-based while emerging economies' emissions are manufacture-based. There is also a need to look at the division of labour in the context of globalisation, said China. The post-2020 agreement needs to be effective to address all the different sources of emissions and for effective solutions to be found. Different types of instruments are needed especially to ensure sustainable development in developing countries, which is a top priority. China said that the foundation for the new agreement is the Convention principles and provisions. The basis is not abstract without political consensus. Referring to statements by some developed countries that the world has changed, China said that the fundamental facts have not changed. As regards historical responsibility, latest research up to now showed that the cumulative emissions from developed countries account for over 70% of the global emissions. Hence, the principle of CBDR continues to be the rationale. Without this, it could not imagine an agreement as it has no basis. It stressed Article 4 of the Convention and its continued importance. Differentiation should be on the basis of developed and developing countries and any other form of differentiation would go nowhere. On this basis, there can be more discussions on top-down or bottom-up approaches and if they could work.

**Iran** said that the current regime of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol must be adhered to in the new agreement. There needs to be equality in the use of atmospheric space, recognising historical responsibility and the right to development. It is key for developed countries to show leadership in mitigation efforts and

developing countries will continue to contribute with enhanced support as was agreed under the Bali Action Plan.

**Bangladesh** said that without ambitious mitigation efforts, adaptation will no longer be viable. The key pillars are effectiveness and predictability. Mitigation responsibility has to take into account the principles of the Convention, considering different national circumstances. Differentiation has to be fair, with developed countries taking the lead. It wanted an equity-based spectrum of commitments. Effectiveness and durability also have to be addressed.

**Norway** said that all Parties needed to participate and supported the EU's proposal on a step-wise approach and Australia's proposals. A range or spectrum of commitments is a fruitful way to go. The overarching characteristics should be that commitments should be quantifiable so as to express emission reductions. Economy-wide reductions should be dominant. It supported the use of carbon markets with environmental integrity. It also wanted a common framework of rules. On the overall ambition level, there is a need for a process to reach that. There is a need for regular processes to scale up efforts. All Parties should raise the level of ambition towards an upward movement, not downward.

**Ecuador** called for a review of the adequacy of the mitigation efforts of developed countries. On how transparency can provide additional clarity, it wanted clear financial targets from developed countries and a roadmap for delivery under the new agreement for adaptation and mitigation. It wanted a system for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of support to developing countries to assess compliance by developed countries of their commitments. The MRV system should be able to differentiate between public and private flows. It was also concerned about some developing countries facing law suits under bilateral investment treaties in arbitration tribunals brought by foreign corporations for making changes to their domestic regulations. If such suits are brought in the context of climate change, it was

doubtful if developing countries would have funds for taking climate actions.

**Indonesia** said there is a need to accelerate the implementation of the Convention under the principles of CBDR and in accordance with national circumstances. It said that mitigation ambition in the pre-2020 and post-2020 timeframe should not be viewed separately but are integrated and in a continuum.

**Tuvalu** speaking for the **LDCs** said that enhanced commitments and actions are crucial. It wanted a new protocol based on the latest science, with inclusive and universal participation. On the issue of top-down and bottom-up approach, it said there should be multilateral oversight and for allocation of commitments which has to be a top-down approach. It did not believe that a bottom-up approach can deliver the ambition needed in mitigation. It called for a fair categorisation of countries as regards differentiation and a system to accommodate changing circumstances. It also wanted an ex-ante review mechanism to ensure that targets are measured against the temperature rise goal of 1.5 degrees C. It also wanted a robust compliance system.

**Chile** speaking for the **AILAC** wanted all Parties to have commitments to unilateral actions according to different levels of emissions and capacities. The common element is that the commitments are legally binding. There has to be differentiated effort for enhanced support for those who have less capacity. On equity and mitigation, the result should ensure there are no unfair results.

**Swaziland** for the **African Group** said the agreement should have a general aggregate of commitments by Parties and must ensure they are delivered with accountability and compliance elements. It has to contribute to limiting temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees C. There must also be associated finance and technology transfer goals. It supported the need for an equity reference framework, against which the relative efforts must be measured.

The **United States** said that mitigation is the core of the agreement as part of a broader 2015 outcome. The spectrum of commitments needs to be applicable to all. This does not mean that one size fits all but should be in accordance with each Party's national circumstances, responsibility and capacity. This spectrum approach can be in national schedules. The US did not see differentiation for mitigation efforts according to the Convention. Parties need to see contributions as being fair and reflective of their own mitigation profiles. There have to be consultations on their relative contributions and the impact of that. For this purpose, ex-ante clarity is needed with the development of common information. Each Party's contribution relative to its emissions profile has to be clear. Each country has to provide information so that its level of ambition and the overall contribution to the 2 degree C goal is understood. The consultative period (regarding the mitigation contribution) has to be suitable which allows Parties to reflect and consider the criteria. Finance is essential, but the contributions for emission reductions should not be conditioned on finance. The phrase 'applicable to all' means that all countries make contributions that have the same legal force. The agreement will not work for mitigation actions, which are conditional and dependent on support of others. What countries list as their contribution must be what they know they can deliver, said the US.

The **United Arab Emirates** supported nationally determined mitigation targets which are periodically reviewed. It wanted the agreement to have positive incentives for countries to participate rather than having a punitive mind-set. The commitments have to take into account a country's national circumstances, economic structure, historical emissions and other factors. Having a period for consultations in this regard can help ascertain why each country's pledge is fair. It said the CBDR principle must apply.

**The Philippines** said that leadership in mitigation must come from developed countries. This must start with an early ratification by developed countries of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and for comparable efforts by

developed countries that are not party to the Protocol. It also called for effective implementation of finance and technology transfer to developing countries. It emphasised that only with a successful outcome in workstream 2 (on the pre-2020 ambition) will there be a successful post-2020 agreement.

**Brazil** wanted to see an agreement which is compatible with the CBDR principle and for mitigation according Annex I and non-Annex I differentiation. The ADP negotiations are under the Convention. It stressed the importance of

sustainable development and the eradication of poverty as a priority for developing countries. It was worried about references to a spectrum of commitments as small interventions and initiatives are insufficient and there is a need for real structural changes to promote solutions. Developed countries must take the lead and this was not by shifting responsibility. Developing countries are taking actions and are willing to do more but require the enhancing of finance and technology transfer.