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Durban Platform: Addressing adaptation and loss and damage in new agreement

Bonn, 12 March (Nathan Thanki) – An interesting exchange of views took place under the UNFCCC's Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) on how the issue of adaptation can be addressed in the new agreement to be concluded in 2015.

There was divergence on how adaptation is to be treated in the new agreement. Developing countries wanted it to be a central element of the new agreement, while some developed countries like New Zealand saw the issue as part of a larger package of decisions rather than it being in the 2015 agreement itself.

The African Group led the call for a global goal on adaptation to be envisaged in the new agreement, which saw much resistance from developed countries who raised questions about methodology in relation to setting such a goal.

In addition, developing countries called for the new agreement to also address the issue of loss and damage but this too saw disagreement from developed countries who felt that the international mechanism on loss and damage which was launched in Warsaw last year was still new and it was premature to consider this at this stage.

Co-chair of the ADP, Kishan Kumarsingh (Trinidad and Tobago) commenced the open-ended consultations on Monday, 10 March, on what he called the "long term perspective" (post-2020) and asked Parties to focus on the issue of adaptation.

Nauru speaking for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** asked for a clarification of a procedural nature, saying that it only found out that the session was about adaptation half an hour before it began. This concern over process was later explicitly raised by the Philippines, China, Saudi Arabia, Bolivia, and India in their interventions. Nauru requested more notice in the future.

On substance, Nauru reiterated that ambitious and timely means of implementation are needed for adaptation. It noted the limits to adaptation and the need to reflect the nature of loss and damage. It urged Parties to define the relationship between mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage. It said that enhanced action is needed for adaptation, not just for mitigation under the new agreement. In relation to nationally determined contributions, it called for Parties to take into account the vulnerable countries, particularly SIDS and least developed countries (LDCs). Enhanced action on adaptation should focus on impacts, their economic and social costs, the scale of needs, transparency of support and loss and damage. On loss and damage, it reiterated the importance of the Warsaw mechanism and urged that it be built into the 2015 agreement.

Sudan for the **African Group** in relation to the 2015 agreement called for further elaboration of specific provisions and commitments of the Convention related to adaptation. It saw Article 2 as having an intrinsic part in the objective. It called for a global adaptation goal and an ex-ante assessment of adaptation needs. On the debate around the local vs. global nature of adaptation, it pointed out that the same argument was never made regarding mitigation. All actions are planned and implemented within sovereign jurisdiction but the result impacts global emissions. The global concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) provide a global dimension to mitigation and adaptation. Looking at the aggregate mitigation commitments, what are the expected global impacts, what emissions pathways are projected, and what resultant temperature scenarios look like, going beyond just 1 or 2 degrees C.

It said that there was already experience of costs associated with impacts that would help in developing an understanding of different magnitudes of projected impacts. National Adaptation

Programmes of Actions (NAPAs) or national adaptation plans (NAPs) would then decide on a climate response and estimate the associated cost. Through this process Parties can understand what adaptation needs are and develop a collective goal to meet those needs. There is need to reflect the commitments for financing adaptation as contained in Articles 4.4, 4.8 and 4.9 of the Convention. All governments' first line of defence is to invest in adaptation. It is important to recognise these efforts which are also contributions. There is also need to assess the adequacy of the efforts and there needs to be a process which is identified within the context of the commitments within Articles 4.1 and 4.2 of the Convention.

The African Group also stressed the importance of understanding the mandate of existing institutions and mechanisms, and to look at the guidance for NAPs and the minimum information on how adaptation finance is given. The ability of existing institutions to deliver has to be assessed. Parties needed to find convergence around technical aspects and guidelines on NAPs as well as information on how adaptation support is granted.

The Philippines reminded the Co-chairs that their questions are supplemental to those of Parties, not the other way around. It supported the Africa Group's proposal for a global goal on adaptation, reminding Parties that in some countries, such as the Philippines, it is impossible to talk of mitigation without first implementing adaptation. It said that the ADP did not have the mandate to discuss the "long-term perspective" of adaptation but just discuss adaptation. Referring to the Convention, it pointed out that all references to adaptation only deal with its financing. The existing framework for adaptation is deeply rooted in the Convention, and what the ADP was doing is only the tip of the iceberg.

It said further the ADP should work with those other existing processes such as the Nairobi Work Programme, Cancun Adaption Framework, the LDC Fund, and the Special Climate Change Fund etc. Lamenting on the lack of funds in the Green Climate Fund (GCF), it said that the UNFCCC faces a crisis of adaptation funding, and demanded that progress be made in 2014 on the issue—otherwise there could be no ambition in the 2015 agreement. It reminded Parties that adaptation challenges and loss and damage need to be faced now, not just in the future.

Bangladesh said that adaptation has a long-term aspect but also a short-term aspect, with many extreme weather events proving the point. While there is a need to get the long-term adaptation perspective into the agreement, some countries like the LDCs can hardly implement concrete adaptation actions. It acknowledged that the UNFCCC had taught LDCs many lessons in short term adaptation planning. The question of how adaptation deficits can be crafted into mitigation function remains unsolved. Planning is only one part of the puzzle while implementation is another. Parties are good at planning but not so good at implementing and providing resources. It said that transparency and the measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) of finance is necessary.

China raised procedural concerns and said that the questions in the Co-chairs' scenario note were misleading. It asked where this term "long-term perspective" (in the context of adaptation) came from as it was not in the mandate from the decision of the Conference of Parties (COP). It requested that the organisation of work be changed as Parties need to go through all the elements of the draft negotiating text before going to the stocktaking of the ADP on Wednesday, 12 March. This, it said, was better than proceeding on the basis of questions posed by the Co-chairs.

On adaptation, China said all Parties should take enhanced action by forming and implementing adaptation plans. Additionally, developed country Parties should, in accordance with Articles 4.4, 4.8, and 4.9 of the Convention, provide financial and technological support to implement projects.

Responding to Co-chair Kumarsingh's request that Parties ask their own questions, China listed several which are included in its submission: which provisions of the Convention are relevant; what have already been achieved?; what are the gaps in implementing the provisions; what enhanced actions must developed countries undertake in relation to financial and technological support post 2020; and what information should they submit?

Bolivia expressed discomfort with the informal process and called instead for a formal contact group under workstream I. As the new agreement is under the Convention, it is also under the principles and commitments of the Convention. Bolivia saw that as a clear link to finance demands – operationalizing adaptation requires the means of implementation in the context of equity, historical responsibility and common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR). Adaptation also has strong links to sustainable development and poverty eradication. Bolivia called for the NAP process to be strengthened in both formulation and implementation, which requires finance. It suggested defining the methodologies for a joint mitigation and adaptation approach, as the two cannot be dealt with separately. Just as for adaptation, there needs to be concrete finance for loss and damage.

Colombia said that adaptation could not be ignored any longer as a collective responsibility, even if action occurs at the local level. It agreed with the European Union that the best adaptation is early adaptation and pointed out that when adaptation does not occur, loss and damage results. It proposed an adaptation assessment framework, building on the Cancun Adaption Framework.

Colombia said that Parties have a good understanding of mitigation methodologies but not the metrics and methodologies of adaptation. It listed a number of areas to develop, including identifying how to model climate change scenarios, learning how to undertake vulnerability assessments, developing metrics for risk assessment across all sectors, quantifying non-economic losses, developing a methodology for monitoring and review. It asked what a systematic approach might be, what the costs and benefits were, what traditional practices existed, and how they could be scaled up. Speaking on capacity building, it said that more actors had to be included—local authorities, community leaders, academics, and media—in the understanding of adaptation information.

Regarding nationally determined contributions, it said that the term should be unpacked more as it includes adaptation as well. Colombia stated its demand that support for adaptation action be subject to MRV. It wondered how, beyond the insurance sector, the private sector would be involved. It stated that all countries should assess their vulnerabilities through NAPs and national communications. Loss and damage is inevitable and must be part of the new agreement.

Saudi Arabia reiterated the same concerns over process as well as their support for a global goal on adaptation. Pointing out the many gaps in adaptation decisions to date, it asked how Parties can bridge those gaps. It asked how it is possible to decide what contributions Parties would be making if they did not know the elements of the 2015 agreement are. It said there was a false dichotomy about the local and global dimension in relation to adaptation. It pointed out that many had said that mitigation benefits are global but adaptation benefits are local.

However, Saudi Arabia was of the view that, scientifically, they are linked. Mitigation does have global benefits, but so does adaptation. At the core, mitigation is adaptation. It suggested the development of a registry or platform for adaptation. It proposed a workshop to let Parties see what different adaptation efforts were being done as well as what support is available from developed countries. The Secretariat could produce a technical paper which would lead a pathway to create a registry, which itself would be delineated along developed/developing country lines, and would list available finance. Developing countries would facilitate the issue of access and provide supplementary information on their needs for other means of implementation besides finance. The registry could be proposed as a table later on, similar to the process for nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs). It also stated that there is a need for adaptation action in the form of economic diversification

South Africa stressed that adaptation is a global responsibility and should therefore have a global goal. This goal should be linked to mitigation ambition, the temperature goal, and means of implementation. It said that Parties should build on existing arrangements and draw them together for a comprehensive global response. The strategic framework should focus on resilience, ensure cooperation at national, regional, and global levels, formalise the link with loss and damage, provide coherent access to finance, maximise support, and formalise governance arrangements. It said that adaptation must be considered as part of the contributions. Parties need to bring forward analysis of vulnerable sectors as well as assessments of climate, national adaptation, information on programmes, and their own investments in adaptation.

India raised concerns over the process, and suggested that clarity be reached as to the outcome of the discussion. It asked if the result of the consultations was to develop reflection or conclusion notes of the Co-chairs? It said it would be more fruitful to get into text negotiations in a formal mode.

India saw adaptation in the 2015 outcome as building on the existing framework and structures of the Convention. Article 4.4 of the Convention provides the basis of international cooperation under which Annex II Parties committed to support the costs in developing countries to address the adverse effects of climate change, including on loss and damage, and enable developing countries to enhance their actions to adapt to climate change. Provisions should be included to strengthen and fully finance existing adaptation-related institutions under the Convention.

It added that non-Annex 1 Parties would have contributions in relation to adaptation subject to provision of support from Annex II Parties, capacity building, implementation of relevant sustainable development actions (including food security). Each non-Annex 1 Party will have its own priority and options to choose the types of actions, including on adaptation, avoided emissions, sustainable development, food security, etc. in accordance with country circumstances and development priorities.

It said the 2015 outcome should give more emphasis on sectors like agriculture, water, health, coastal eco-system and cities and disaster reduction. Up to December 2013, $324.4 million has been received by the Adaptation Fund Board. Out of this, $188.3 million was from the monetization of certified emission reduction (CERs) and $136.1 million from additional contributions. According to information by the Adaptation Fund Board secretariat, $115 million was available for new funding approval. Taking into account the current price of CERs and estimated certified emission reduction issuance level, the potentiality of resources from the monetization of CERs is very low. Taking into account availability of funding and the trend of resources available in the future through the existing mechanism, it will not be able to meet even the fraction of requirement of adaptation activities in the developing countries. It is therefore felt that the Adaptation Fund should be further strengthened through appropriate provisions in 2015 Agreement.

India added that the GCF is also relevant here. The funding for the adaptation component under it should include preparation of national adaptation strategy with a provision to update periodically, technology, know-how, information on best practices and dissemination and creation of knowledge hub and monitoring and evaluation. It asked how adaptation financing through GCF would address the adequacy, predictability, and additionality of resources. India wanted the 2015 outcome to have a provision for monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the adaptation activities undertaken by all Parties at global level and report to the COP on its progress and impact on reducing vulnerability and associated risks at regional and national level. This would help COP to take future decisions for enhancing the adaptation actions under the new agreement.

Nepal said that LDCs want the 2015 agreement to strengthen existing adaptation efforts, which requires means of implementation, as “finance follows function.” It demanded a clear and robust MRV system for the provision of support.

Egypt lamented the fact that in Warsaw, the UNFCCC Secretariat had 60 staff positions for mitigation and only 16 for adaptation. It disagreed with the EU that loss and damage should not be central to the 2015 agreement, pointing out that it had to be included because Parties had agreed in Warsaw to address loss and damage.

Iran said that national actions by developing countries depend on the fulfilment of financial commitments by developed countries. It called for a strengthening of the existing regime, pointing out that the problem at present it a lack of follow through on commitments from developed countries.

Palau insisted that loss and damage be in the new agreement, as it is part of the continuum of mitigation-adaptation-loss and damage. There must be clarity on support. Addressing the question of how loss and damage can be reflected, it stressed that the Warsaw Mechanism could be anchored in the new agreement just as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) was anchored in the Kyoto Protocol. It suggested reframing the issue similarly to insurance companies by asking "how can we have a framework to assess damage and which damages can be compensated for or not?" It supported Colombia in saying that non-economic loss should be included. It also agreed with Norway as regards financing, that adaptation should be anchored in sustainable development

Grenada said that there should be three broad outcomes: a mechanism to assess scale and scope of social and economic impacts; what kind of dangers exist given GHG concentrations and temperature scenarios; and some mechanism to address the issue systematically. The agreement could set up a framework to facilitate operational details at local level. This would be done in five ways: by settling the relationship between mitigation and adaptation and linking finance to the level of effort; by anchoring institutional arrangements like the Adaptation Committee and the Warsaw Mechanism on loss and damage into the agreement in the same way that CDM was anchored into Kyoto Protocol; by addressing the relationship between means of implementation and NAPs and embedding that into the agreement; by establishing MRV of support; and finally by anchoring loss and damage in the agreement. It said that there should be more discussions about whether or not loss and damage is part of adaptation or a stand-alone part.

Peru said there were political, legal and institutional issues to consider. The legal issues relate to whether there should be a global goal or several goals;

whether or not to establish targets; should it include provisions for adaptation actions in development plans; how should the agreement have specific provisions for financing from the GCF and other institutions; and what is the MRV or compliance scheme for adaptation?

On the institutional design, issues were on what provisions are needed to scale up knowledge management; what mechanism and methodology is needed for sustained climate change impacts and how to anchor exiting adaptation and what institutions are important. To address methodological challenges, Peru said this could be done building on existing activities. At COP 20 (in Peru), it added, there could be agreement on a knowledge platform to enhance the Nairobi Work Programme and to further operationalise the NAP process and increase the capacity of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and orientate the financial entities to support the implementation gaps. This will create political momentum for the ADP.

The **Dominican Republic** reminded Parties that small countries have to be careful about how to make national plans and are more attracted to treating mitigation and adaptation as linked processes. It reiterated the provision of support for adaptation be subject to MRV and accounting.

United Arab Emirates pushed back on the idea that adaptation is uniquely different from mitigation, saying that mitigation is also complicated and done at a local level, but yet is not thought of as something that cannot have broad application. The ADP provides an opportunity for international cooperation and creative thinking that cannot happen at a local/regional level – whether it was capacity building, research and development, technology transfer, or building resilience.

Timor Leste pointed out that even though it has formulated a NAPA, implementation is not possible because of a lack of funds. It noted some critical areas of loss and damage that needed to be addressed, including commitments to support recovery from impacts of climate change.

Mexico said that the new agreement should give adaptation the same priority as mitigation but in a differentiated manner. Parties should develop plans and strategies to cope with climate change, which would further develop the adaptation goal. All should cooperate in adaptation efforts and share knowledge. Support must be provided. Existing arrangements must be reflected in 2015 agreement. There needs to be a gender perspective to adaptation.

The **European Union** expressed agreement with much of what had been said, especially that existing work on adaptation should be built on. Commitments of all countries will require enhancing adaptation in planning processes including at sub-national levels. It added that one of the gaps in adaptation was actually mitigation. There is need to reflect collective action in relation to risk assessment, regional actions, addressing transboundary risks. The new agreement could enhance the role of existing institutions especially that related to the means of implementation such as the GCF and the Technology Network and enhance investments in adaptation.

The EU was less enthusiastic about including loss and damage as a central component of the 2015 agreement, stating that the Warsaw Mechanism is new and needs time to develop. On the long term goal, it was useful to build on the 2 degree C goal and include this in the text of the 2015 outcome or in the future review of adequacy. However, the call for an adaptation goal presents methodological issues, for example on better predicting of the costs of adapting. It asked how the goal could be made operational and said that it was difficult to envision both politically and practically an operational role for the goal in terms of allocating costs.

Norway considered other Parties' demands for a financial goal for adaptation linked to mitigation to be technical difficulty. It questioned if it strengthens action on the ground. Reflecting on the need to balance adaptation and mitigation, it said that the GCF Board had confirmed at its last meeting to aim for a 50-50 split between mitigation and adaptation allocation. It also agreed that national responsibility of Parties should be met with international support, particularly for SIDS and LDCs.

Switzerland expressed a liking for the long term perspective on adaptation but also for an operational perspective. While some Parties think the objective of the Convention should be the objective of the 2015 agreement, what it saw as elements are: commitments from all Parties to prepare for adaptation action; integrated approaches to adaptation; and cooperation with a view to enhance resilience. Concerning operational elements, it said Parties must reconsider and look at existing arrangements. On the call for regular reporting and sharing of progress and experience, it agreed that the 2015 agreement should have provisions for that. Ultimately, the agreement has to equip Parties to enhance resilience.

New Zealand recognised the importance of adaptation, but said that the focus of the new agreement should be to provide a framework for ambitious mitigation. In its view, adaptation is country driven and does not lend itself to a legally binding outcome. It suggested that the 2015 outcome could be a single global agreement with accompanying COP decisions. On the adaptation goal, it said that it should be high level, simple, directive but not quantifiable, something along the lines of "all Parties shall ensure resilience to climate change by integrating policies of adaptation into national plans etc." It said that this approach did not give adaptation a second class status.

Japan agreed that adaptation and mitigation have synergy and that adaptation is a global responsibility, but said that there is no one-size-fits-all solution as actions varied according to countries and regions. Adaptation actions cannot be prescribed in the 2015 agreement as it is considered at the local level and not at the global level. On the call for a global goal for adaptation, it observed difficulties in understanding this. If it was about global costs, it said that various studies conducted had yielded widely varying results on the costs of adaptation and it was hard to grasp this. It said that the 2015 agreement should have 3 elements: to encourage Parties to integrate adaptation; to stress the importance of enhanced cooperation; and to get NAPs and other adaptation policies to take into account the needs of the most vulnerable in society. It was of the view that it was premature to consider loss and damage in the 2015 agreement as the Warsaw Mechanism was still new, needing further review.

Australia observed that adaptation is not abstract, and claimed that among developed countries it is one of the most vulnerable. It said that more attention to practicality and legality was needed, and wanted clarity on the legal nature of a NAP as a commitment type. In terms of structure, it said that there is an important political role for adaptation to send a clear signal. On the global goal, it stated that adaptation is localised and responses differ according to local information and situation, which led it to question the utility of the global aggregate approach. Regarding finance, investors, be they public or private, will want a clear understanding of the benefits arising from actions. Echoing many developed countries, it said that the Warsaw Mechanism needed more time to develop before being discussed as part of 2015 agreement.

The **United States** said that mitigation is designed to limit adaptation and that all Parties should focus on the impacts of climate change while prioritizing action at national and provincial level. Adaptation needs to be integrated into development planning, assessments of impacts and vulnerabilities need to be conducted, and national plans developed. It wanted to strengthen governance and enabling environments for adaptation action, as well as to build an MRV regime for adaptation action. It noted that the national communications could be improved, leading the better accountability.

On the global goal, it shared developed country concerns over how it could be operationalized. Differentiating between mitigation and adaptation, it said that aggregate mitigation benefits all, whereas adaptation does not. Concerning the global goal for different levels of temperature rise, it said that this posed difficult questions. In regards to adaptation contributions being considered as part of overall contributions, it claimed that this was counter-productive to mitigation efforts. Nationally determined contributions should focus on mitigation only.

Sudan for the African Group in response to a number of Parties welcomed the understanding of the adaptation goal proposal, albeit with methodological questions. This provides a platform for Parties to reach the shared objective. It recalled other documents that had been provided in Warsaw which would help conversations around methodology, including the Adaptation Gap Report and a technical paper by the Secretariat.