

Significant issues on agenda of UNFCCC subsidiary bodies

Bonn, 4 June (Meena Raman)* – The next two weeks will see important meetings in Bonn, Germany, taking place under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from 4 to 15 June.

Highlights will include two high-level ministerial events: one under the Kyoto Protocol (KP) on progress of commitments of Annex 1 Parties under the second commitment period (CP2); and the second, on the Durban Platform that will take place on 5 and 6 June respectively.

Among the key negotiations will be an attempt to make progress under the Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform (ADP) on the elaboration of elements for the negotiating text of the climate deal to be concluded in Paris in 2015.

The two UNFCCC subsidiary bodies that will also meet are the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). Some of the significant issues under these bodies which will be closely watched will be discussions on the Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage, market and non-market mechanisms, the 2013-2015 review, technology transfer and the implementation of response measures.

This June gathering of the subsidiary bodies is the first session to take place following the recently concluded meeting of the Board of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in South Korea, on 21 May. The GCF Board has agreed on eight essential requirements needed to receive and disburse financial resources. No agreement was possible on setting a numerical target for the Fund's initial capitalisation due to opposition from developed country Board members.

However, a process has been launched for the GCF's initial resource mobilisation to *"commensurate with the Fund's ambition to promote the paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways by providing support to developing countries to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change."*

The Bonn meetings are also taking place in the wake of the release of recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), on adaptation and mitigation, which are part of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5).

Presentations will be made by the IPCC authors during this June session, and it is expected that inputs from these reports will feature significantly during the discussions that will take place under the 2013-2015 review agenda of the SBI/SBSTA.

Ministerial roundtable on increased ambition of KP commitments

Governments had in Doha in 2012, meeting as the Conference of the Parties to the KP (CMP 8), agreed that Annex I Parties of the KP would ensure that their aggregate emission reduction commitments would *"be at least 18 per cent below 1990 levels"* in the 2CP.

Under decision 1/CMP8, known as the 'Doha Amendment' to the KP, they also agreed that the Annex 1 Parties of the KP *"will revisit"* their emission reduction commitments for the CP2 *"latest by 2014"*, in order to increase the ambition of their commitments, *"in line with an aggregate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions... of at least 25 to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020."*

They were also requested by the Doha decision to submit to the UNFCCC secretariat, by 30 April 2014, information relating to their

intention to increase the ambition of their commitments, including progress made towards achieving them, as well as the potential for increasing the ambition.

It was further decided that the information submitted by Annex I Parties “*shall be considered by Parties at a high level ministerial round table to be held during the first sessional period in 2014*”. The secretariat was also requested to prepare a report on the roundtable for consideration by CMP 10, to be held in Lima, Peru end of this year.

The high-level ministerial roundtable is supposed to make progress on the mandate from these Doha decisions. It is also noteworthy that only one Annex I Party (Monaco) has ratified the Doha Amendment to the KP as of now.

Ministerial dialogue on the DP

In Warsaw, Poland, Parties agreed “*to intensify their high-level engagement*” on the Durban Platform “*through an in-session high-level ministerial dialogue*” to be held in June 2014 (decision 1/CP.19). Accordingly, a ministerial dialogue is being convened at the June session.

According to an information note prepared by the secretariat, one of the main objectives of the ministerial dialogue on the Durban Platform is to “provide political guidance and support for the work of the ADP, in particular its work on the 2015 agreement, and build political momentum in the process leading to Paris 2015.”

The ADP

One of the most anticipated meetings will be that of the ADP. At its last meeting in March this year, it was agreed that the ADP will move into a “contact group” to elaborate on the elements for the draft negotiating text of the 2015 agreement (known as workstream 1) and to enhance pre-2020 mitigation ambition (known as workstream 2).

The Co-chairs of the ADP have prepared a scenario note for the June session that states that the “contact group will seek to further elaborate the elements for a draft negotiating text, building on the previous work of the ADP...” The Co-chairs have stated that “to facilitate the work of the contact group”, they have issued a “reflections note” containing an annex called “Landscape of issues identified by Parties”, which they say “presents” their “understanding of the possible elements for a draft negotiating text for the 2015 agreement that Parties have

elaborated so far, as well as options on the table”.

How the “landscape of issues” as reflected by the Co-chairs will be viewed by Parties is expected to see an interesting and lively exchange.

In relation to workstream 2 on the pre-2020 mitigation ambition, the Co-chairs’ scenario note indicates that they intend to initiate an exchange of views among Parties on their expectations or outcomes for COP 20 with a view to developing a draft decision for consideration by the ADP in Lima.

During the June session, the following events are scheduled: a forum on “experiences and best practices of cities and subnational authorities in relation to adaptation and mitigation”; and two technical expert meetings – one on “urban environment” and another on “land use”.

Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage

A significant outcome of COP 19 last year in Warsaw was the establishment of the ‘international mechanism for loss and damage’ associated with climate change impacts, to promote the implementation of approaches to address loss and damage in a comprehensive, integrated and coherent manner. An Executive Committee of the mechanism was also established.

Under the SBI/SBSTA agenda, Parties are expected to consider the composition of, and procedures for, the Executive Committee, and to make recommendations for adoption by COP 20.

Market and non-market mechanisms

In Warsaw last year, Parties could not arrive at a consensus regarding market and non-market approaches. Developed countries had hoped to launch a new market mechanism in Warsaw, which would have paved the way for the development of an international carbon market by 2020. Many developing countries on the other hand had questioned the need for this, when the ambition level for reducing emissions reductions in developed countries was very low. A number of developing countries preferred to advance non-markets mechanisms.

A related agenda item in this regard is on the framework for various approaches which is

viewed as the overarching framework for the new market mechanism and the non-markets mechanisms. Given the inability to reach any decision on these issues, they will continue to be considered at the current session of the SBSTA agenda.

The 2013-2015 review

Parties agreed in 2010 (at COP 16) on a long-term global goal to reduce greenhouse gases emissions so as to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to periodically review the goal. The COP agreed in 2011, to periodically review the adequacy of this long-term global goal in the light of the ultimate objective of the Convention and overall progress toward achieving the long-term global goal, including a consideration of the implementation of the commitments under the Convention. The review is also supposed to consider strengthening the long-term global goal, including in relation to temperature rise of 1.5°C.

In 2012, the COP decided to establish a structured expert dialogue to support the work of a Joint Contact Group of SBSTA and SBI and to ensure the scientific integrity of the review through a focused exchange of views, information and ideas.

At the June session of the subsidiary bodies, the IPCC authors will present the key findings of the contributions of Working Group II (Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability) and **Working Group III** (Mitigation of climate change) to Parties at SBSTA-IPCC special events. Four meetings of the structured expert dialogue will also be held during the first week. The subsidiary bodies will be invited to consider this and to take any further steps, as appropriate.

Technology Development and Transfer

In Warsaw last year, Parties could not reach agreement on the Technology Executive Committee's participation as an observer in the meetings of the World Intellectual Property

Organisation (WIPO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Developing countries have over the years, been battling with developed countries to address intellectual property rights and technology transfer in relation to climate related technologies. Given that both the WIPO and the WTO are discussing climate-related technologies, developing countries want the TEC to participate as an observer in these institutions, as the UNFCCC is the forum dealing with climate change. Developed countries could not agree to this.

At the June session of the SBI/SBSTA, this matter is expected to be one of the issues to be considered under the technology transfer related agenda.

Response Measures

The G77 and China had in Warsaw called for the establishment of a mechanism on response measures under the COP, to address the negative social and economic consequences of response measures taken by developed countries on developing countries and to recommend specific actions to avoid and minimise those consequences. It also called for the continuation of the forum on response measures under the subsidiary bodies to share, in an interactive manner, information, experiences, case-studies, practices and views on how to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing countries in this regard.

No agreement could be reached in Warsaw given divergent views on this matter between developed and developing countries. The SBI/SBSTA are expected to continue the consideration of this issue at the current Bonn session, with a view to providing recommendations to COP 20.

(*With inputs from Hilary Chiew)