

Developing countries call for a new institution dedicated to capacity building

Bonn, 8 June (Indrajit Bose) – A rich exchange of views on the need for a separate institutional mechanism on capacity building in the Paris agreement took place on 5 June.

This was at a facilitated session on capacity building under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP). While developed countries wanted to explore the need for a new institution on capacity building, developing countries were convinced that it was high time there was an institution dedicated to capacity building.

The co-facilitators were Artur Runge-Metzger (the European Union) and Tosi Mpanu Mpanu (Democratic Republic of Congo).

Saudi Arabia opened the discussions when it said that Parties should work in “collaborative and cooperative approach” rather than seeing the creation of a specialised institution as a “liability”. “You say the world has changed and we are having a new agreement that is applicable to all. That means we all need to be in this agreement. However, we are different from you. We are at different levels of capacity. The question that needs to be asked is how do I figure out I have the potential to deliver. How do I assess my technology and financial needs? There are those that are not even in a position to assess and say this is what I need to address a certain project,” said Saudi Arabia.

South Africa said that the CTCN providing capacity has not been done in a coherent manner. A lot of capacity is done by consultants. How do you say a certain thing has been implemented? it asked. **India** added that the CTCN had not been able to ensure access to climate friendly technologies.

Jamaica responded that for the CTCN, the capacity is only to participate. “What do you do when you implement technology projects? Sometimes, a country is not able to use the tools and the methodology that are needed to use the technology. So this is the missing part—a centralised body,” it said.

Burundi said that Parties need to sit and reflect on the issue and that lack of coordination among the Convention’s mechanisms did not help matters. **Senegal** said, “We want to remind that developing countries are tired to be called developing countries. What we want is to become developed countries.”

The United States wanted to know why a new institution is required when existing institutions such as the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) were already in place and how would a new institution do things differently from the CTCN. **The European Union (EU)** agreed that capacity building is a crucial issue and wanted to know whether the adaptation committee was speaking to the technology institutions on gaps.

Highlights of interventions

Saudi Arabia said that Parties need to be frank and candid. “If I have to establish an institution, is it a liability on developed countries to have it established? Do they see it as an undue commitment they have to fulfill?” it asked.

Referring to the developed countries, Saudi Arabia said, “You say the world has changed and we are having a new agreement that is applicable to all. That means we all need to be in this agreement. However, we are different from you. We are at different levels of capacity. The question that needs to be asked is how do I figure out I have the potential to deliver. How do I assess my technology and financial needs? There are those that are not even in a position to assess and say this is what I need to address a certain project,” said Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia added that it must not be seen as a liability for developed countries but a “collaborative and cooperative approach”. “Let’s have that kind of mindset and work accordingly,” it said, adding that developing countries are not saying they won’t do, the reality being they don’t know how to do.

“The lack of understanding, knowledge, capacities such as in technology and education need to be really addressed. You have got through your learning curve already. If you wait for our learning curve, it will take several years. We could start from where you ended,” said Saudi Arabia, suggesting that Parties maintain a collegial cooperative forum.

“Let us see how much we can do as adaptation and how much we can do as mitigation. Establishing an institution that will be in the agreement will put us in comfort. It does not end there if you say ‘I have an institution established for you. Now go and increase your capacity.’ We cannot be in an argumentative mode,” said Saudi Arabia reminding Parties that this should not be considered a liability because “you are sharing your experience, knowledge, state of the art technology” and added, “we hope you can help us with your technology transfer as well”.

South Africa said that the CTCN providing capacity has not been done in a coherent manner. “If it is cooperative action why is there no body that can govern it, and that is why the call for a mechanism. And often we don’t get to know the results. A lot of capacity is done by consultants. How do you say a certain thing has been implemented. It is difficult to measure results. It is for these reasons we need an institution,” said South Africa.

India added that the ownership of most climate friendly technologies has been skewed in that “we don’t have access to those technologies”. CTCN has not been able to do that. “We hope to see an enhanced role of the institution in the agreement. When I say access is barrier I mean to run a super efficient power plant for instance, there has to be a pool of technologies that need to be made available so that they are indigenously manufactured. The cost of IPR is a huge barrier. We see the role of the financial mechanism of the Convention to provide financial support to meet the cost of IPR,” said India.

Malaysia recalled its experience of attending a CTCN workshop and referred to it as a mixed experience. No one can say capacity has not been enhanced but there is a capacity need to meet the reporting requirements. “We need to see our first and second NATCOMs (national communications) to see the issue of capacity. Many of us are doing our biennial update reports. Things have come a long way. There are many lessons we can take from these,” said Malaysia, adding that capacity has to be localised. “If you look at financial, mitigation aspects, they all have links to capacity,” said Malaysia, adding that Parties need to make an honest effort to fill the gaps.

Referring to the Synthesis report on the implementation of the framework for capacity-building in developing countries, an agenda item under the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, **Jamaica** said it is an issue that is very much related to the ADP. “There is no central and focused unit addressing the review. Several countries have not been addressed. The paper looks at 50 national communications. They are using just 1 per cent of the developing countries to inform the process. We look at what has been happening and those countries that were able to implement projects. It is true that 99 per cent of the countries were not part of the assessment. So there are gaps already. We don’t have an institutional body to play this role. This is an example of why we need an institutional body dedicated to capacity building,” said Jamaica.

Further reflecting on what the US had said, Jamaica responded that for the CTCN, the capacity is only to participate. “What do you do when you implement technology projects?” said Jamaica. Sometimes, a country is not able to use the tools and the methodology that are needed to use the technology. So this is the missing part — a centralised body. Supporting Saudi Arabia, it said implementation drives capacity. “We are looking for tools. There are many countries that do not have the capacity,” said Jamaica.

Burundi said that there are bodies in the Convention but there is very little coordination among the bodies. It stressed on the gap on implementation. It said an institution is needed which could coordinate and help countries have capacity building. “Otherwise we lose our efforts. I invite my colleagues to sit and to see how we can put a body to coordinate everything on capacity building and to see how we can reach the goal on capacity building,” said Burundi.

Senegal said capacity building is the only element under the Convention that does not have dedicated institutional arrangement. It’s true that the Durban Forum on capacity building is there and it serves as a platform of discussion where people from a UN body, private sector and other agencies come in to share what has been done in developing countries. “We want to remind that developing countries are tired to be called developing countries. What we want is to become developed countries,” stressed Senegal, calling for institutional arrangements for capacity building in the ADP. “It is time to be treated as a standalone issue and not a crosscutting issue. Saudi Arabia is right when he talks of cooperation. We are here to talk with each other and hopefully understand each other,” said Senegal.

The **US** said that capacity is the end point but capacity building is a process, which is a collaborative

approach. The question is how to get there, it said, adding that there exists a range of institutions such as the Climate Technology Centre Network, the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Committee and others through which different kinds of work is continuing which will only grow in future. “The question is what is it out there, what are the gaps. We heard calls for institutional arrangements. It is important to focus on the end point of institutional arrangements, before we talk about how to structure something,” the US said. It said that a number of the proposals appeared close to the CTCN and sought information on how some of the proposals differ from what the CTCN does.

The **EU** said nobody is denying that capacity building is a serious concern and asked of the Parties how to do it most efficiently. It said that there is a need to understand the concerns raised. “We need to make links between various areas. Is the adaptation

committee speaking to the technology institutions on gaps? It would be interesting to know if there is a demand to continue this if we meet in Bonn or is it useful to carry it the next time we meet in Bonn.

Summarising the discussions, **Runge-Metzger** said that he had heard from Parties that there is a need for capacity building and country-specific provisions for capacity building. He also said that there are gaps within capacity building and these gaps are not picked up by those who should pick these up. To resolve this, a mechanism is a way forward is what he had heard from Parties. He also asked Parties to consider how to sequence capacity building because the need to deliver on capacity could not wait until after the (Paris) agreement. “Starting capacity building in 2025 would be too late,” he said.