

SBSTA: Agreement on “REDD-plus” but other key issues to be resolved in Paris

Bonn, 12 June (Hilary Chiew) – The 42nd session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 42) closed on 11 June in an upbeat mood with the closing of the agenda item on tackling emission from forestry activities.

Agenda item number 4 is on the “Methodological guidance for activities relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries” or REDD-plus as commonly referred to.

After intense negotiations during the first week of SBSTA 42 (1-11 June), Parties reached agreement on 9 June on the matter and adopted the draft conclusion covering three areas of discussion: safeguards, non-market based approaches and non-carbon benefits.

The document will now move to the 21st meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Paris at the end of the year for consideration and formal adoption.

On safeguards, the SBSTA completed its consideration of the need for further guidance on ensuring transparency, consistency, comprehensiveness and effectiveness when informing on how all the safeguards referred to in decision 1/CP.16 (December 2010), appendix I, are being addressed and respected. It agreed to recommend a draft decision on this matter for consideration and adoption at COP21.

On non-market based approaches, the SBSTA completed its consideration of the development of methodological guidance on non-market based approaches such as joint mitigation and adaptation (JMA) approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests. It agreed to recommend a draft decision on alternative policy approaches, such as JMA approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests, for consideration and adoption at COP21.

On non-carbon benefits, the SBSTA completed its consideration of methodological issues related to non-carbon benefits resulting from the implementation of the activities referred to in decision 1/CP.16, paragraph 70.

Announcing the closure of the agenda item, SBSTA chair Lidia Wojtal (Poland) said the matter was deliberated for 10 years and the result would enable the full implementation of REDD-plus on the ground. Country groupings’ interventions also welcomed the conclusion of the agenda item with the Group of 77 and China stressing the need for developed countries to scale up support for effective implementation.

Upon the declaration by Wojtal that the agenda item “can now be considered closed”, Parties applauded before Wojtal gavelled the adoption of the documents.

The other key agenda items of SBSTA 42 were issues relating to agriculture; the 2013-2015 Review; impacts of the implementation of response measures; market and non-market mechanisms under the Convention; and methodological issues under the Kyoto Protocol.

South Africa speaking for the Group of 77 and China (G77 and China) welcomed the progress made during this session on a number of agenda items but at the same time registered its concern that no progress, or very little progress, had been made on others. This will unfortunately place us all under more pressure to finalise these matters in Paris at a time when we have to conclude intense negotiations under the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP), said South Africa.

The Group wished to reflect that on issues related to agriculture, the engagement was constructive in the two in-session workshops during SBSTA 42. The reports that will be considered in SBSTA 43 on these workshops should be comprehensive and capture the views of developing country Parties, taking into consideration the urgent need to increase the adaptive capacity of agriculture to deal with the adverse effects

of climate change. This, the G77 and China said, would continue to be the key priority for developing countries in light of the particular vulnerabilities of the agricultural sector and its relationship with the livelihood of millions, food security and poverty eradication.

On (the forum and work programme on impact of the implementation of) response measures, the Group reaffirmed the importance to give full consideration on what actions are necessary to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing country Parties arising from the impact of the implementation of response measures, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention. We need to continue the consideration of the issue at our next session in Paris, in order to adopt a decision on this agenda item in Paris. We are prepared to continue to engage constructively towards a resolution of the matter.

Regarding REDD-plus, the Group welcomed the work concluded in this session, forwarding three draft decisions to the COP, marking the end of a 10-year negotiation process. With the conclusion of negotiations on methodological guidance for REDD-plus, it is now up to developed countries to scale up and enhance support to all phases of REDD-plus activities, in order to move us effectively into the implementation of the Warsaw Framework for REDD-plus. In this context, the Group also welcomed the decision in alternative policy approaches, such as JMA for the integral and sustainable management of forests.

On the agenda items 9(a) and (c) that relate to Articles 5, 7 and 8 of the Kyoto Protocol (KP) and Section G (related to Article 3 paragraph 7 *ter* of the KP) of the Doha Amendment (on the second commitment period for emissions reduction), South Africa said the G77 and China has worked constructively to generate the necessary clarifications on the rules. These rules are necessary to achieve a sustained and effective implementation of the second commitment period (CP2) of the KP in a manner that maintains the environmental integrity of the commitments agreed in Doha (COP18 in 2012), and the G77 and China has shown extraordinary flexibility in the interests of implementation.

The Group hoped to work constructively with partners in Paris to resolve outstanding issues while preserving the integrity of the KP rules, and without weakening further the commitments of Annex I Parties for the CP2.

The G77 and China welcomed the special event that presented the report of the Structured Expert

Dialogue under the agenda item 2013-2015 Review and looked forward to continue working on the issue in Paris.

[COP 18 in 2012 decided to periodically review the adequacy of the long-term global goal and the progress made towards achieving it. The 2013-2015 review is the first review, and is a joint agenda item of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) and SBSTA. The Structured Expert Dialogue (SED) was mandated to assist the SBI and SBSTA to do so. It is to ensure the scientific integrity of the review through a focused exchange of views, information and ideas. The SED concluded its work following the second meeting of the fourth session in February 2015 in Geneva. There was a difference of opinion over the use of the SED report: see TWN Bonn Update #11: *2013-2015 review: Differences over use of Structured Expert Dialogue report.*]

On item 8 (c) that relates to emissions from fuel use for international aviation and maritime transport, the Group took note of the report by the secretariats of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). South Africa said the G77 and China holds a strong position that this agenda item should continue to be dealt with through a multilateral process, in a manner that is open and transparent, inclusive and Party-driven. The Group is strongly against the imposition of unilateral measures in addressing emissions, which would be contrary to the principles of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) and respective capabilities and equity.

The Group also welcomed the research dialogue that took place on 4 June where the scientific community made presentations on data and information gaps regarding research and systematic observation.

Maldives representing the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) said the output of the 2013-2015 Review presented to all of us the cause for alarm that global warming up to 2C exposed us to impacts that are not aligned with the ultimate objective of the Convention. It was disappointed that Parties were not able to reach an agreement. AOSIS remained convicted that the SED report is factual and balanced in its presentation that the long-term global goal is inadequate and should be strengthened to 1.5C to fulfill the ultimate objective (of the Convention). It said the work will be continued at the next session with the expectation that the outcome from the Review will be an important input for the ADP process in line with the Durban Mandate.

(The ultimate objective of the Convention expressed in Article 3 is the “stabilization of greenhouse gas

concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.”)

On item 9 (a) (related to Article 5, 7 and 8 of the KP), AOSIS said Annex 1 Parties without a CP2 commitment cannot carry forward their assigned amount unit, noting that “it is not possible to have your cake and eat it as well”.

On market and non-market mechanisms under the Convention, the Group appreciated the opportunity to discuss the matter to ensure that market mechanisms deliver net benefit i.e. environmental integrity and avoid double-counting (of generated carbon credits).

Sudan speaking for the Africa Group expressed appreciation for the successful conclusion of the discussion on non-carbon benefit. It said the draft decision is more important than it is perceived. It is a holistic approach towards achieving the ultimate objective of REDD-plus.

On the two in-session workshops on agriculture, it said the Group engaged constructively and looked forward to the report that will be considered at SBSTA 43 (at Paris in December) to be comprehensive and capturing the views of developing countries. It is however disappointed that again the matter on the methodological issues under the KP (item 9 a, b and c) remained to be resolved but it looked forward to swift resolution in the work in Paris (at SBSTA 43).

The Africa Group also expressed disappointment on the lack of progress over the deliberation of the long-term global goal (under the item 2013-2015 Review). It said over the last two years, Parties invested so much time on the Structured Expert Dialogue and the Group’s expectation was to leave Bonn with a draft decision for consideration in Paris. It looked forward to an open discussion in Paris and reach an outcome to inform the work of the ADP.

On the impacts of implementation of response measures, it welcomed the progress but noted that Parties were not able to finalise their work. The Africa Group looked forward to further deliberation and adoption of a decision that would put in place an appropriate arrangement for this important issue in Paris.

Angola representing the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) welcomed the SED report. It pointed out that under the current global warming increase of 0.8C which is already causing widespread impacts to over 860 million people in the LDCs, the risks of a 2C increase is too high and it runs counter to the ultimate objective of the Convention. It would like

to see the long-term global goal to be set below 1.5°C and anchored in the new climate agreement. It urged the ADP to take into account the outcome of the 2013-2015 Review and increase its ambition to adopt the 1.5°C warming pathway for the sake of humanity. It regretted that Parties were not able to conclude on this matter but recognised the valuable discussion in this June session, which formed a good basis for conclusion of this item at the next SBSTA session (in December in Paris).

On agriculture, Angola said the emphasis on adaptation is very important for the LDCs. It said the two in-session workshops were extremely valuable by showing and closing the knowledge gaps and resilience of smallholder farmers to the impacts of climate change, stressing that access to information on a timely fashion (via early warning systems) is critical.

It also welcomed the conclusion of REDD-plus and looked forward to the full implementation on the ground of the activities.

Representing the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, Panama welcomed the compromise reached on further guidance for (REDD-plus) safeguards, which marked the end of the 10-year negotiation. It never thought the process would take so long but is happy that with the conclusion, Parties are now able to implement the mechanism provided support is fulfilled, coordinated properly and made available to Parties.

On the market and non-market mechanism discussion, although it is pleased with the exchange of views, it is nevertheless disappointed that Parties were not able to reach conclusion.

The European Union (EU) thanked the SBSTA chair for an effective time management and flexibility in providing slots for additional meetings in order to find compromises in as many times as possible so that the SBSTA agenda can be streamlined for Paris. It said Parties had worked hard during these 10 days and we now welcomed the progress achieved on a number of issues, which are of central importance to the EU.

Despite lengthy discussions up to late evenings, the EU was glad that Parties found common grounds and came to a compromise on all three sub-items under REDD-plus namely, safeguards, non-carbon benefits and JMA approaches. It was also pleased to see progress on the issues relating to agriculture and would like to congratulate the successful completion of the two in-session workshops.

On the reporting methodologies of financial information by Annex I Parties, the EU was pleased to have seen a constructive participation in the joint

SBSTA-SBI-Standing Committee on Finance workshop and looked forward to the summary by the Secretariat.

Though discussions were not easy, the EU believed that we have made a good progress with regard to the response measures and this session has provided the necessary platform for Parties to build bridges in order to finalise this discussion in Paris.

The EU then mentioned SBSTA agenda items where it had expected more progress during this session.

Firstly, as for the methodological issues under the KP relating to Articles 5, 7 and 8 and associated issues, the EU was of the opinion that the outcomes are regrettably poor. We avoided application of "rule 16" only at the very last minute. In this context, to enable the full implementation of the CP2 of the KP, the EU now urges all Parties to work effectively and constructively for an agreement to ensure closing this agenda item in Paris

It regretted the lack of progress on the 2013-2015 Review and expect that the SBSTA 43 will continue the consideration of the SED report and submissions of Parties with a view of informing the COP that shall take appropriate action. The EU expressed an urgent need to find a way to finalise the 2013-2015 review and have a substantive outcome in Paris along with the long term goal under the ADP.

It was also disappointed with the inability of Parties to find a consensus on how to proceed with agenda items on the market mechanisms and non-market approaches that forced the "rule 16". As a result,

unfortunately, in Paris we will have to start from the same place where we were after Lima.

(Rule 16 is a rule of procedure that places an issue in the agenda of the next session.)

Representing the Environmental Integrity Group, Mexico welcomed the conclusion of REDD-plus, which is an important tool to deliver mitigation outcomes. It expressed concern on the discussion on market and non-market mechanism, which did not achieve an agreement. On the 2013-2015 Review, it deplored the fact that Parties could not reach meaningful conclusion and it called on Parties to come back and work decisively to demonstrate clearly how this process should be guided by science.

Australia speaking for the Umbrella Group, warmly welcomed the conclusion of REDD-plus and looked forward to work with all countries to enhance implementation of the mechanism to reduce emissions from the forestry sector. It further welcomed the workshops on agriculture but was disappointed that Parties were not able to come to an agreement on the 2013-2015 Review discussion and hoped that the matter can be successfully closed at the next session in Paris.

On market and non-market mechanism, it said some technical work that emerged in this session could lay the foundation for continued work at SBSTA 43 although it was disappointed that Parties could not reach a conclusion. On response measures, it welcomed the work and trust Parties to continue to work constructively towards a conclusion in Paris.