

ADP: Streamlining of 'Geneva text' begins

Bonn, 2 June (Meena Raman and Indrajit Bose)-After a rather unclear start on how to embark on the streamlining of the 'Geneva text' for the Paris agreement, Parties in the negotiating groups of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) began to make some progress in advancing the work.

The negotiations are based on a 90-page negotiating text called the "Geneva text", which was the result of work done in Geneva in February this year.

The negotiating groups were launched on Monday, 1 June, to consider sections of the Geneva text and to embark on a 'first reading', which according to the ADP Co-chairs, Daniel Reifsnyder (US) and Ahmed Djoghlaif (Algeria) is to "consolidate and streamline the text with a view to reducing duplication, overlap and repetition."

At the opening plenary of the ADP held on morning of 1 June, Reifsnyder said that there were 20 negotiating days left for Parties. He also outlined that two negotiating groups will meet in parallel every day, and will be supported and complemented by work in facilitated groups in between the negotiating groups. The work of the negotiating groups will be captured in a 'working document'. In the second reading, there will be substantive negotiations. A contact group will be convened on 2 June to take stock of progress and make the necessary adjustments for the second reading, added the Cochair.

The Geneva text is organised into the following sections: preamble (section A); definitions (section B); general and objective (section C); mitigation (section D); adaptation/loss and damage (section E); finance (section F); technology transfer (section G); capacity-building (section H); transparency of action and support (section I); timeframes and process related to commitments/contributions/other matters related to implementation and ambition (section J); facilitating implementation and compliance (section K); and procedural and institutional provisions (section L).

The first negotiating group was convened in the morning after the ADP plenary and focused discussions on the section on 'general and objective' and was chaired by Reifsnyder. The afternoon negotiating group discussed the 'mitigation' section and another negotiating group met in parallel on 'adaptation and loss and damage'.

Before starting the streamlining exercise, in the first negotiating group on the 'general and objective' section, considerable time was spent discussing the modalities of the streamlining process.

Reifsnyder proposed that simple paragraphs with similar options should be tackled first and showed example of how a paragraph might be streamlined. Parties sought clarity on how would concepts would be streamlined across sections, who would be the custodian of the streamlining exercise and how to ensure proposals of Parties are not lost. Some Parties such as Norway and Sudan (for the African Group) agreed with the Cochair that they should begin with the less complicated paragraphs.

During the negotiating group sessions on general/objective and adaptation and loss and damage, Reifsnyder asked of the Parties which paragraphs they would like to begin the streamlining exercise with. Upon consensus on the paragraphs to be streamlined, Parties went into an informal facilitation setting in a smaller room to begin the exercise, which met from 1-3 pm.

During the informal focused group, the Secretariat projected a proposal for a "consolidated text" on the screen and Parties looked at it to see if they were comfortable with the text. Parties spent time going over the consolidated proposals and if they agreed on the proposals, the paragraph would be considered streamlined.

The Secretariat prepared the consolidated paragraphs which were essentially paragraphs with similar options. For example, under paragraph 54.2 of the negotiations text, there are two options. One, "The governing body

shall adopt further guidance on reporting on adaptation and further facilitating/may facilitate the sharing of information on progress in and experiences with preparing and implementing adaptation actions.” Two, “The governing body **may facilitate** the sharing of information on progress in and experiences with preparing and implementing adaptation actions.” The consolidated text proposed by the Secretariat read: “The governing body [shall adopt further guidance on reporting on adaptation/] and may facilitate the sharing of information on progress in and experiences with preparing and implementing adaptation actions.”

Parties were not sure how to go about the streamlining process initially but it seemed there was more clarity on the process as, by the end of the day, Parties had approved a few “consolidated paragraphs” from the adaptation section of the negotiations text. For those paragraphs that the Secretariat did not have consolidated options, Parties asked for the consolidated paragraphs before undertaking the streamlining. In some cases, such as in adaptation, some Parties said they would send their suggestions to the Secretariat on where the overlaps might be which could facilitate streamlining.

During the negotiating group discussion on mitigation which was chaired by Djoghla, the secretariat initially proposed some paragraphs for consolidation with text on the screen. In certain cases, some Parties expressed their discomfort at the proposed consolidation, preferring to retain the original texts as they were in the Geneva text. Proposals also came from some Parties for streamlining, such as from Malaysia (speaking for the Like-minded developing countries), India, China, and Norway.

When concerns were expressed by some Parties such as Tuvalu for the LDC and Sudan for the African Group that they were worried about their positions being compromised, Malaysia intervened to clarify that the object of the streamlining was not to remove the options of any Party but to preserve them. Some progress was made in relation to a few paragraphs,

with further work conducted at the focused group discussion later at night from 7-9 pm.

On another matter, when the daily programme was first seen on Monday morning, it was noted that the meetings of the facilitated groups were closed to observers.

Malaysia (speaking for the LNDC) raised its flag during the negotiating group session on the general/objective section and sought assurance for the meetings to be opened to observers “because they are as much invested in the process”. To this Reifsnyder responded that the usual practice is that facilitated forums are limited to Parties only. Malaysia, requested the Co-Chair to reconsider his proposal and to allow the observers into the focused group meetings.

Reifsnyder repeated that the practice is closed to the observers and that “we may have problems” because of space and that “we want to afford priority to Parties” and sought Parties’ views on allowing observers into the focused group meetings. Saudi Arabia supported the LMDC proposal and said observers should be allowed. Nicaragua also said that for the sake of transparency, the process must be open to everyone. Besides, “the decision belongs to Parties. It is not a decision that the Secretariat can take for us,” said Nicaragua. The exchange led to observers being allowed into the meetings.

Three focused group meetings were held on 1 June on general/objective, on mitigation and on adaptation and loss and damage. The session on the general/objective was held from 1.30pm to 3pm and was co-facilitated by Diann Black-Layne of Antigua and Barbuda and Artur Runge-Metzger from the European Union. The mitigation focused group, scheduled from 7pm to 9pm, was co-facilitated by Franz Perrez of Switzerland and Fook Seng Kwok of Singapore. There were two rounds of focused group meeting on adaptation, for about an hour around 5pm and then again from 7pm to 8pm. The sessions were co-facilitated by Andrea Guerrero of Colombia and Georg Borsting of Norway.