

SBSTA: Developing countries disappointed over opposition to references to UNFCCC

Kuala Lumpur, 2 June (Hilary Chiew) – Developing countries expressed deep disappointment that no conclusions could be reached on the issue of adaptation measures in agriculture at the UNFCCC's 44th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) at the recently concluded Bonn climate talks, due to objections by developed countries to have references to the Convention in the draft conclusions on the issue.

Led by **G77 and China**, developing countries cautioned that the move (by developed countries) sent the wrong signal for future work of the Paris Agreement (PA) that is to enhance the implementation of the Convention, which includes ensuring that food production is not threatened.

The **Least Developed Countries** reprimanded developed countries in “derailing” progress for a conclusion on the agriculture issue at the Bonn session.

They highlighted this in their closing statements at the 44th session of the SBSTA that met between 16 and 26 May, alongside the Subsidiary Body for Implementation and the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Paris Agreement.

During the adoption of the conclusions of the work done by Parties, which preceded statements by Party groupings, SBSTA Chair **Carlos Fuller (Belize)** informed the plenary that the agenda item on issues related to agriculture could not reach any conclusion and rule 16 of the UNFCCC's Rules of Procedure applied. He said the matter will be taken up at the next SBSTA session and urged Parties to come prepared.

(According to rule 16, “Any item of the agenda of an ordinary session, consideration of which has not been completed at the session, shall be included automatically in the agenda of the next ordinary session, unless otherwise decided by the Conference of the Parties.)

Another contentious item where several meetings were held among Parties, related to Article 6 of the PA involving three sub-items namely: cooperative approaches referred to in Article 6(2) of the PA (viewed as relating to market-mechanisms); rules, modalities and procedures for the mechanism established by Article 6(4); and the work programme under the framework for non-market approaches referred to in Article 6(8).

[Article 6 (2) of the PA states: “Parties shall, where engaging on a voluntary basis in cooperative approaches that involve the use of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes towards nationally determined contributions, promote sustainable development and ensure environmental integrity and transparency, including in governance, and shall apply robust accounting to ensure, inter alia, the avoidance of double counting, consistent with guidance adopted by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement.

[Article 6(4) states: “A mechanism to contribute to the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and support sustainable development is hereby established under the authority and guidance of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement for use by Parties on a voluntary basis....”]

The draft conclusions noted that Parties had an initial exchange of views and agreed to focus on establishing common understanding (on the matters) at SBSTA 45 (in November 2016) and invited Parties and observer organisations to submit their views by 30 September.

While developed countries wanted specific guidance to be given for the submissions, developing countries wanted the submissions to remain open. Proposals by workshops on the market mechanisms by developed countries were also not agreed to by several developing countries on the ground that these were premature.

(Market-mechanisms in particular have been contentious in the UNFCCC negotiations in the run-up to the PA.)

The work of SBSTA 44 included work on its staple items as well as several new ones that were mandated by the Paris Conference of the Parties (COP) last year.

The staple items were: Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change; issues relating to agriculture; research and systematic observation; methodological issues under the Convention; methodological issues under the Kyoto Protocol; market and non-market mechanisms under the Convention; and cooperation with other international organisations.

The Paris-mandated items included: the technology framework under Article 10(4) of the PA; assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the global stocktake referred to in Article 14 of the PA; modalities, work programme and functions under the PA of the forum on the impact of implementation of response measures; matters relating to Article 6 of the PA; and modalities for the accounting of financial resources provided and mobilised through public interventions in accordance with Article 9(7) of the PA.

Groupings of countries delivered their respective statements during the closing plenary.

Thailand, representing the **G77 and China**, stressed that on agriculture (in relation to adaptation measures), the Group has engaged constructively in the informal consultations to continue the consideration of the reports of the first two workshops held at SBSTA 42, as well as in its participation in the two workshops mandated at SBSTA 44.

The Group regretted that “despite our constructive approach and rich exchanges of views during the informal consultations, we were unable to reach conclusions, due to the objection of some partners to make reference to the Convention, including its objective, principles and provisions, despite that it is agreed language from the previous SBSTA conclusions.”

Registering its concern that this “does not send the right signal for future work”, Thailand said the PA represents an important step in our efforts on climate change, through enhancing the implementation of the Convention, including its provisions and principles, in particular equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), and that the delicate balance of all issues which were achieved in Paris must be preserved.

It further said the G77 and China considered that adaptation of agriculture to the adverse effects of climate change continues to be the key priority for developing countries for SBSTA work, in light of the particular vulnerabilities of the agricultural sector and its relationship with the livelihood of millions, food security and poverty eradication.

“This is in line with the PA, which recognises the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse effects of climate change ... it is important to recall that the PA states in its objective that food production is not to be threatened,” it added.

On the elaboration of the technology framework under Article 10(4) of the PA, the G77 and China noted the progress made during this session, highlighting that the Technology Framework should play a strategic role in the implementation of the PA. The guidance to the Technology Mechanism, it added, should be flexible, balanced, systematic and comprehensive in order to respond to the evolving needs of climate technology development and dissemination in developing countries.

Commending the cooperative spirit demonstrated by Parties which enabled the successful conclusion on research and systematic observations, the Group emphasised the importance of addressing regional climate research and data needs, and requested for developed country Parties to continue to provide the necessary resources to support these initiatives.

It looked forward to the continued discussion on how the assessment of the IPCC can inform the global stocktake (under the PA) at SBSTA 45 (in Morocco in November) and also to the discussion to further consider and refine the scope of the next periodic review at SBSTA 46.

On response measures, the G77 and China reaffirmed the importance of giving full consideration to identify necessary actions to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing countries arising from the impact of the implementation of response measures and avoid the negative economic and social consequences of response measures on developing countries.

It welcomed the progress made to operationalise the work programme of the improved forum on the impact of implementation of response measures and the terms of reference developed for the *ad hoc* technical expert groups that will support the work of the improved forum.

The Group also reiterated the importance of

supporting multilateral solutions when addressing emissions from fuel used for international aviation and maritime transport, while taking into account the principles and provisions of the Convention and not on the basis of unilateral measures.

On matters relating to Article 6 of the PA, the G77 and China welcomed the call for submissions.

On accounting of financial resources, it reaffirmed that the modalities for accounting of financial resources by developed countries to developing countries, mobilised through public interventions, in accordance with Article 9(7) of the PA, must aim to provide transparency and consistency. The reported information, it added, must also be comparable and verifiable.

Speaking for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**, the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** said it was very disappointed in the manner that developed countries “derailed” progress in reaching a conclusion on matters relating to agriculture.

“Our colleagues in Annex 1 rejected the same Convention language in the draft conclusions text that was used in a similar conclusion text at SBSTA 42 ... We hope that negotiations at COP 22 would yield positive dividends so that we ... can have some concrete actions on the ground at our national levels for our most vulnerable farmers,” it said.

The DRC acknowledged progress made on the technology framework and expected its further elaboration (in Morocco) that will be inclusive and comprehensive to include elements such as up-scaled financing for technology development and transfer, particularly the outcomes of the Technology Needs Assessments, research and development of technology in LDCs and integration of gender.

Representing the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)**, **Maldives** said for the subsequent assessment report cycle, it may be useful for the IPCC to synchronise its reporting cycle with the global stocktake (mandated by the PA) to ensure inputs (for the global stocktake) are informed by the latest science. Having the IPCC Special Report on the scenarios for limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degree C as early as possible in 2018, would allow it to be considered in time for the facilitative dialogue in 2018, it added.

“Adequate and predictable finance is a prerequisite for climate action especially for adaptation in small island developing states. Implementation of adaptation actions on the ground to build resilience is paramount for our Group. We look forward to further developing

modalities for accounting of financial resources,” said Maldives.

With regards to Article 6 of the PA, it stressed the need for guidance to address environmental integrity and transparency, including governance and the need for a robust accounting system that avoids double counting. It looked forward to the development of a mechanism that delivers overall mitigation in global emissions.

For COP 22 in Marrakech later this year, Maldives said that priority is the review of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage. “We look forward to working with all Parties to ensure the current work on loss and damage under the Convention is as effective as possible and to enhance the WIM to ensure that it is fit for purpose,” it concluded.

Mali speaking for the **African Group** welcomed the continuation of the Technical Examination Process (TEP) on mitigation and the establishment of the TEP on adaptation.

“We view these processes as opportunities for initiating and delivering concrete actions in order to close the ambition and the adaptation gap. To this end, the African Group has developed the Africa Adaptation Initiative to enhance adaptation, as a contribution to the pre-2020 action and shared the details of the initiative in the Technical Expert Meetings (TEMs).”

“We found the workshop very useful but it is imperative that the TEP on adaptation is more than meetings and reports to ensure it is a living process through which the needs, gaps and challenges to enhancing adaptation action on the ground are identified and addressed, including opportunities to scale up and replicate adaptation actions for implementation. We would like to stress the importance of the TEMs process for enhancing action, and we welcome the opportunity to work with Parties to ensure that the actions identified can be realized,” it emphasized.

The African Group welcomed the elaboration of the technology framework and is ready to engage with Parties on the elaboration of the framework on updating Technology Needs Assessments (and enhancing implementation of their results, on assessment of available technologies, and on enhancing financial and technical support for the implementation of the Assessments.

It believed the elaboration of the technology framework will not only be limited to initial activities and welcomed the conclusion on the agenda item, the

call for submissions on the elaboration of the technology framework including the content, features and characteristics, and the purpose and the themes of the technology framework in order for the secretariat to prepare a compilation of Parties' submissions for consideration at SBSTA 45.

"We welcome the assessment of the IPCC and the global stocktake as it provides a platform to avail the best available science to inform the global stocktake. In this regard, we hope that future IPCC work will inform the implementation of the PA by providing region-specific reports," it said.

The Group recommended that consideration be given to the fact that Parties still need to set a global goal that will not only be a temperature goal but to also include adaptation, mitigation and means of implementation.

It also welcomed the progress made in finalizing a work programme for the improved forum on impact of the implementation of response measures. However, the African Group noted that there is still a gap on modalities for support to developing countries to do assessments on the impacts of response measures.

On market and non-market mechanisms under the Convention, it welcomed the draft conclusions.

Speaking for the **Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC)**, Costa Rica said the submissions in the upcoming months will be fundamental as we move to Marrakech to have a good basis to reach agreement in issues such as the Nairobi Work Plan, the technology framework, the operationalisation of Article 6 of the PA and the accounting modalities for financial resources.

It welcomed progress made by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to regulate CO₂ emissions in international air transport with a view to achieve an agreement on a global market measure at its 39th General Assembly (27 September to 7 October 2016). This market measure is global and single as opposed to the establishment of multiplicity of unilateral measures from a range of states.

Australia representing the **Umbrella Group** welcomed the open sharing of views and contribution in the discussion on market and non-market mechanisms under Article 6 of the PA as this had improved mutual understanding. It looked forward to further progressing technical solutions to ensure markets are ready well in advance of 2020.

It is pleased with progress on adaptation including the ambitious plan of activities in the Nairobi Work Plan. It also appreciated the French Presidency's informal

consultations in the review of the WIM for loss and damage and looked forward to undertaking the review (of the WIM) in Marrakech.

On response measures, the Umbrella Group welcomed the conclusion of the work in producing the work programme for the improved forum on the impact of implementation of response measures.

Noting that the intersection between agriculture and climate change is important for all countries as it touches on food security, livelihood and needs to ensure sustainable growth, it welcomed the rich discussions in the in-session workshops and looked forward to constructive discussions in Marrakech on how to take this work forward.

It said that Parties had made productive start in the discussion on the modalities on accounting for financial resources, noting that it is important to provide transparency on climate finance flows consistent with the Paris outcome.

Switzerland for the **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)** also welcomed the progress made and the clear way forward on the crucial item of modalities for accounting of financial resources and looked forward to the views on clear guiding questions and interactive exchanges at the planned in-session workshop.

The EIG appreciated the IPCC leadership and expertise in the special event on how IPCC can inform the global stocktake.

On matters relating to Article 6 of the PA, it said there were fruitful discussions on various elements but was concerned by the unsatisfactory outcome of the deliberations.

It also regretted that on the issue of agriculture, "a forward looking compromise" could not be found, adding that, "agriculture plays a critical role in climate change and must be part of our endeavour to combat global warming and to adapt to it."

The **European Union (EU)** looked forward to the implementation of the substantive conclusions in the Nairobi Work Plan, and said Parties can exchange experiences, information and knowledge to inform and support future adaptation policies and practices.

It noted that the new technology framework under the PA should underline the cross-sectoral role of technology under the UNFCCC and develop synergy with initiatives outside the Convention.

On agriculture, the EU welcomed the constructive and open discussions of the agriculture workshops and looked forward to the reports later this year.

It believed that the IPCC should be the key scientific input (source) for the global stocktake.

Recalling the significance of projected growth in emissions from international aviation and maritime, the EU emphasised the importance to achieve agreement for an effective market-based mechanism at the ICAO general assembly in order to achieve the carbon-neutral goal in 2020 as a first step in line with the long-term global goal agreed in Paris.

On matters related to Article 6 of the PA, it said it was unfortunate that Parties could only conclude on an unguided call for submissions without reference to technical work or workshops.

On the modalities for accounting of financial resources, the EU looked forward to submissions by Parties and observer organisations as inputs for further work and also for the in-session workshop in Marrakech.