

Developed countries say no to guidance on support for adaptation communication

29 May, Penang (T Ajit) — Parties to the UNFCCC's Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) discussed the issue of 'adaptation communication' spread over several informal consultations during the two weeks of climate talks held in Bonn from 8-18 May.

The informal consultations were held to discuss 'further guidance in relation to the adaptation communication, including, inter alia, as a component of nationally determined contributions (NDCs), referred to in Article 7, paragraphs 10 and 11, of the Paris Agreement (PA), and were co-facilitated by **Nicolas Zambrano Sanchez (Ecuador)** and **Beth Lavender (Canada)**.

(Article 7.10 reads: *Each Party should, as appropriate, submit and update periodically an adaptation communication, which may include its priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions, without creating any additional burden for developing country Parties.*

Article 7.11 reads: *The adaptation communication referred to in paragraph 10 of this Article shall be, as appropriate, submitted and updated periodically, as a component of or in conjunction with other communications or documents, including a national adaptation plan, a nationally determined contribution as referred to in Article 4, paragraph 2, and/or a national communication.*

During one of the informal consultations, the **G77 and China** and the **European Union (EU)** both proposed a structure respectively for the discussions, which they referred to as a "skeleton," comprising an outline for further guidance in relation to adaptation communication.

The bone of contention was over provision of adaptation support to developing countries, which the **G77 and China** had included and said that there should be guidance on support. They referred to Article 7.13 to say that providing

support was mandated under the PA.

(Article 7.13 of the PA states: *Continuous and enhanced international support shall be provided to developing country Parties for the implementation of paragraphs 7, 9, 10 and 11 of this Article, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 9, 10 and 11.*)

Developed countries, however, said there should be no reference to support in the "skeleton", indicating that there should be no guidance on support for adaptation communication and that adaptation communication itself was a voluntary exercise.

What followed was an exchange, interspersed with long silences between interventions.

The structure that G77 and China proposed was follows:

"1. Preamble/Introductory remarks

1.1. Guiding Principles/Guidance

2. Purpose

3. Elements

3.1. Common elements

3.2. Additional/Opt in Opt out/Optional

4. Vehicles

5. Linkages

6. Support for developing country Parties (including in the preparation, submission and implementation of adaptation communications)

7. Other matters

Presenting the proposal above, **Argentina** for **G77 and China** clarified that the support for the preparation, submission and implementation was with reference to Article 7.13 of the PA and that by support, it meant provision of the means of implementation.

The **EU** proposed the following structure:

Preamble

Recalling relevant Articles referred to flexibility, vehicles, and linkages

Purposes

*The purpose/s of the adaptation communication is/are to:-
[...]*

Elements

Elements and sub-elements for the adaptation communication - [...]

Reference to existing guidance on the sub-elements mentioned above

The EU said that Articles 7.10 and 7.11 cover flexibility and vehicles (for communication on adaptation) and it would be sufficient to recall these in the preamble.

Saudi Arabia agreed that flexibility is granted in the PA as regards providing an adaptation communication. On vehicles for adaptation communication, it said there were existing guidelines for vehicles but for some vehicles, specific guidelines would need to be developed. It added that adaptation communication could be a component of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and therefore there was need to mention and develop specific guidelines.

Following Saudi Arabia's comment, there was silence for a couple of minutes, with no one willing to take the floor to intervene. (This was quite unlike the sessions in other areas where there had been rich exchange of views. See [TWN Updates](#) from the Bonn session).

Breaking the silence, **Argentina** for the **G77 and China** intervened and asked Parties to engage in its proposal and said that the EU proposal did not include support, which is very important for us. We would ask not only them, but also other colleagues how to capture Article 7.13," said Argentina, and added that adaptation communication is an important way to fulfill the provisions of the PA.

After a while, the **EU** responded that adaptation communication is a voluntary exercise and that it is not mandatory adding that it was for Parties to come forth with a communication or not. The EU also said existing guidance on support is there with respect to the vehicles Parties can use to forward or communicate their information. It

gave the examples of National Adaptation Planning (NAP) process, Green Climate Fund's (GCF) readiness support as well as NDCs.

Argentina responded that support was not voluntary and referred yet again to Article 7.13. "Article 7.13 has a 'shall'. That is why support figures in our proposal," said Argentina.

As the silence following Argentina's intervention was making its presence felt again, **New Zealand** raised it flag to say that there should be common guidance for all Parties and should the support provision survive in the skeleton, then information should be provided by both developed and developing countries.

Japan also intervened to say it was "weird" to have a section on guidance on support because they were talking about guidance to Parties on how to develop their adaptation communication, adding that there could be an annex to reflect the kind of support that exists already. It also said that the guidance should be based on national circumstances and priorities of Parties.

Australia added that support was already referenced in the PA and the relevant paragraphs should just be recalled in the final 'skeleton' Parties would agree on.

Responding to Australia, **Argentina** said recognizing an article was very different from implementing it. "The purpose of including support is to know how you are going to support developing countries in the different stages of the adaptation process. This is about implementation. We are trying to provide some ideas on how the adaptation communication will look like. This is everyone's document. We have different provisions in the PA. We are trying to provide elements. Some Parties have obligations and we need to see how to implement that. Just to state Article 7.13 is not enough. We can state it but we also need to implement it and for implementation, it is important to have information on that," stressed Argentina.

In response, **Canada** expressed concerns about including support. It said that support provided and received would be considered under the transparency framework and what Parties were doing under discussions on adaptation communication was to avoid additional burden. "A separate heading under the skeleton at this point (on support) is not the most appropriate. We understand that transparency of support is

key, but having it as a header is not how we see it working out,” said Canada.

Switzerland intervened in a one-liner to say no to reference on adaptation support and called on Parties to “stick to the mandate”.

Responding to Canada, **Malawi** said that transparency discussions had not concluded and it was very important for developing countries to keep a heading on support. This would ensure that the issue is given its due consideration, said Malawi.

Kuwait supported Malawi and said that Parties should not indulge in an exercise where they end up renegotiating the PA and reiterated that support had to find a mention in the structure. Kuwait also clarified that no additional burden applied to only developing countries, not all countries.

Uruguay also said that there is a very clear provision under Article 7.13, which says that continued and enhanced support “shall” be provided. In this regard, it said a heading needs to be there, it added.

Jamaica also said that there is recognition in the PA on support for adaptation communication. **Algeria** too spoke along the same lines as Jamaica and said that it was not in a position to accept EU’s proposal without the support element.

South Africa said the issue of support is crucial. Responding to the EU, South Africa said that the GCF support is limited to NAPs. “When we talk of support, we must take cognizance that there is need for support for the development of adaptation communication,” it added further.

China said adaptation communication would be a very important input to the global stocktake, for which the adequacy of support would have to be reviewed. It was therefore important to include support in the guidelines, it said.

In response, the **EU** said that it would be happy to just recall Article 7.13 and nothing more.

The last word went to **Argentina**, (representing the **G77 and China**) which said emphatically that “referring to Article 13.7 in the preamble is not enough and this should be clear to everyone in the room.”

Following the interventions, the co-facilitators, in relation to the adaptation communication included both the proposals as is, in their [informal note](#), with the following note:

“This annex contains proposals for possible “skeleton” outline of further guidance in relation to an adaptation communication identified by Parties in the context of developing further guidance in relation to the adaptation communication, in light of the discussions held during APA 1.3. The table is included here with a view to providing Parties with an overview of the proposals made at this session on this issue. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list, does not exclude the identification of additional “skeleton” outlines, nor does it prescribe or prejudice in any way the scope, structure or content of the further guidance to be developed.”

Parties are expected to take the matter further at the next session of the informal consultations under the APA which will take place in November later this year.

Edited by Meena Raman