

Paris Agreement should not be renegotiated, say developing countries

Bonn, 9 May (T Ajit) - As climate change talks under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) convened in Bonn on 8 May, developing countries conveyed unequivocally that the Paris Agreement (PA) must not be renegotiated, nor its provisions reinterpreted.

This was stressed by the **G77 and China** at the opening plenary of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA).

The G77 also emphasized the importance of moving from conceptual discussions to textual negotiations by the 23rd session of the UNFCCC's Conference of Parties (COP23), to be held in November in Bonn this year.

This call to move to textual negotiations was also echoed by developing country groupings and developed countries.

The current climate talks in Bonn are scheduled to continue until 18 May and the first day also saw the convening of the 46th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the 46th session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

During the APA opening, Co-chairs **Sara Baashan (Saudi Arabia)** and **Jo Tyndall (New Zealand)** outlined the organization of the work during the May session.

Explaining the organization of work during the session, Co-chair Baashan said that the APA would continue work in a single contact group for all the agenda items. The first contact group would meet on 9 May to set the direction of work; the second meeting would be to take stock of work and work would be adjusted as necessary, and the third meeting would adopt conclusions. The second contact group would

take up overarching items on the APA agenda and crosscutting issues, Baashan said.

Baashan also informed Parties that the Co-chairs intended to organize an additional contact group on 13 May to provide an opportunity for interaction between Parties and other relevant constituted bodies with respect to implementation work of the PA.

(The work related to the implementation of the PA has been assigned to various bodies of the Convention, including the APA, the subsidiary bodies and other constituted bodies. Hence, the issue of addressing the inter-linkages between the work of the various bodies has become a concern for many developing countries).

The APA Co-chair said that informal consultations, which have been the mode of work thus far, would continue and the facilitators would remain the same, except for a few changes that will be elaborated when the contact group meets on Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia said that it had a proposal on how the co-facilitators of the informal consultations can be guided on inter-linkages and agreed to elaborate its proposal during the first meeting of the contact group.

Developing countries in their statements at the opening plenary also stressed the importance of balanced progress in all the elements of the PA's implementation work, adding that there should be a mechanism to coordinate all the implementation tasks allocated to the different bodies to ensure work progresses in a balanced manner.

Patricia Espinosa, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, also presented her remarks during the opening. She underlined the urgency of the task at hand by saying that COP22 in

Marrakech last year had requested the bodies to complete implementation related work by 2018 and urged Parties to work with a sense of urgency.

Parties also expressed views on what must be done at the Bonn session and outlined their expectations.

Speaking for the **Group of 77 and China (G77 and China)**, **Ecuador** said the “PA adopted under the UNFCCC is the collective achievement of all Parties, which seeks to enhance the implementation of the UNFCCC, in accordance with its principles and provisions, in particular equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), in the light of different national circumstances, and the right to development, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty”.

Ecuador stressed the importance of preserving the delicate balance of all the issues that was achieved in Paris and Marrakech. The outcomes of Paris and Marrakech are not to be renegotiated nor reinterpreted, as the process under the PA is irreversible, said Ecuador.

“We stress the importance of moving from conceptual discussions to textual negotiations by COP23 while maintaining the balance struck in the PA,” said Ecuador.

“All elements of the PA, including mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity building, transparency of actions and support, and the mechanism to facilitate the implementation and promotion of compliance, must advance. There must be the appropriate coordination to generate synergies while carefully analyzing overlaps with different bodies, in particular the SBSTA and SBI,” said Ecuador.

The G77 and China statement also laid emphasis on pre-2020 climate action. It stressed the importance of developed countries to take the lead in accordance with their historical responsibilities including by reducing their emissions and providing support to developing countries. It also recalled the importance on honoring their commitment to undertake pre-2020 action, particularly by ratifying the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol (KP) by the end of this year so that it can enter into force.

(The Doha Amendment refers to the second

commitment period of the KP for Annex 1 Parties to undertake emissions reduction for the period 2013-2020, which has yet to come into force).

Speaking for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**, **Ethiopia** urged Parties to start directing discussions towards textual outputs. It said that it would be important to instruct the co-facilitators of the informal consultations to share “informal notes that contain possible elements of skeletal decision texts”.

Ethiopia also said it would be useful to have a call for submissions from Parties on possible elements for a decision text on each of the thematic agenda items of the work of the APA. “We would encourage you to suggest a similar approach to the SBI and SBSTA Chairs on matters they have under their responsibility relating to the PA,” said Ethiopia.

“We understand that there is some alarming political back-peddling on the commitments made under the PA. Some major countries also have yet to ratify the agreement. We really hope that all Parties stay true to the spirit of the Agreement we all adopted and ensure that we take urgent action to fully implement the Agreement,” added Ethiopia.

Maldives spoke for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS)** and said that it was critical to ensure guidance on features, information and accounting of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to help accelerate efforts to limit temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C and added that developing the transparency framework would be an essential component of the Paris work programme.

It also called on Parties to move to text-based negotiations by COP23, to be able to meet the 2018 deadline.

Maldives also said that reaching a decision on the Adaptation Fund serving the PA is a priority and that the matter was ready for a decision. It also said that initiating work on quantified finance goal would be important and that sources of financing for loss and damage need to be defined. It said that the financing decisions would affect progress and outcome of work.

Maldives was also of the view that the facilitative dialogue of 2018 must be effective in

informing Parties of what must be collectively done to stay within the 1.5°C limit. “The dialogue should identify options for achieving this, with a view to inform Parties in preparing NDCs to be communicated by 2020,” said Maldives. It added that the design of the FD 2018 should be completed by COP23.

(At COP21, Parties agreed to the convening of a facilitative dialogue among Parties in 2018 to take stock of the collective efforts in relation to progress towards the long-term goal and to inform the preparation of the NDCs.))

Iran spoke for the **Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** and stressed that the finely balanced agreements and understandings reached in Paris and Marrakech must be observed and not renegotiated.

It underscored the importance of transparency and inclusiveness in the process of negotiations and said that there must be balance in the progress and treatment of the issues under negotiations. It said that textual negotiation should be based on the submissions and inputs by all Parties, and reflect their views in a balanced manner.

Iran also said that equity and CBDR are the foundational principles of the PA and the Convention and these will have to be reflected in the outcomes of the work of the APA and other bodies under their respective mandates from COP21 and COP22.

“These include, in particular, clear differentiation between developed and developing country Parties, flexibilities for developing country Parties, full scope and nationally determined nature of contributions, and linkage between actions and support in the guidance for NDCs; the modalities for the inclusion of adaptation communications as NDC components; the modalities, procedures and guidelines for the transparency framework in relation to both actions and the provision of support; the sources of input and modalities for the global stocktake; and the modalities for the committee under Article 15 of the Paris Agreement,” said Iran.

It also stressed that the key elements related to the implementation of the PA constitute “a single package”. “We therefore expect that the elements of mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology development and transfer, capacity-building and transparency of actions and

support, are addressed in a balanced, integrated, comprehensive, and mutually supportive manner, leading to progressively more effective common but differentiated ways of combating climate change by all Parties under the Convention and its related legal instruments,” said Iran.

The LMDC also underscored the importance of means of implementation in the post-2020 period and stressed the urgency of setting a new collective quantified finance goal from a floor of USD 100 billion per annum prior to 2025.

“In this context, additionally, the group stresses that the modalities for the accounting of the provision of financial resources from developed country Parties to developing country Parties, mobilized through public interventions, consistent with Article 9, paragraph 7, of the PA, must aim to provide transparency and consistency, and the reported information must be comparable and verifiable. No developing country is to be excluded from receiving financial support for their enhanced climate change actions whether or not they have ratified the PA,” Iran added.

“The great ambition that we have shown and continue to show as developing countries to address climate change through our actions should be matched by even greater ambition, and no backtracking, from developed countries to show that they lead in reducing their emissions and in providing all the needed support and means of implementation for developing countries to also do more under the Convention and its related legal instruments,” it added further.

Speaking for the **BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China)**, **China** underscored the principle of equity, CBDR-RC in the implementation work of the PA. China said text-based negotiations should begin as early as possible, reflecting the views of Parties in a balanced manner. The outcome of work should reflect differentiation and the nationally determined nature of Parties’ contributions. China said the group was concerned about the gap in support by developed countries and urged them to honour their commitments. It also underscored the importance of pre-2020 issues, including the ratification of the second commitment period of the KP.

Mali spoke for the **African Group** and said

that the process must move towards a Party-driven and Party-owned text. It said that different items were at different levels of maturity and sought guidance on work between the May session and COP23. It said that there were several linkages between transparency and global stocktake and that these items are linked to mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation under the SBI and SBSTA, as well as with mandates given to the constituted bodies of the Convention.

It called on the Co-chairs to “to prepare a non-prescriptive, non-exhaustive note, at your own responsibility for consideration by Parties, which outlines the scope of negotiations under each of the agenda items to minimise duplication across issues that require distinct separation”.

Saudi Arabia for the **Arab Group** also underlined the need to preserve balance in relation to what has been achieved under the PA. It said that complete coordination between SBSTA and SBI and APA must be guaranteed and all the issues must proceed in a balanced manner. None of the matters must be neglected. Transparency measures have to be across all the elements, including on means of implementation, said Saudi Arabia. It also said that for any review mechanism, support should be provided to developing countries.

Bolivia for the **ALBA Group (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America)** stressed that Article 3 of the PA is sacrosanct and that the PA must not be reinterpreted, renegotiated or its balance altered. Bolivia said that all the processes must take into account the points of view of all the Parties. It said that equity is the premise for all decisions to be taken and that harmony with Mother Earth should be sought and support to developing countries must be provided. It added that negotiations must be transparent and coherent and the facilitative and non-punitive character of the PA must be recognized.

(Article 3 of the PA provides that as NDCs to the global response to climate change, all Parties are to undertake and communicate ambitions efforts as defined in the various articles relating to mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer, capacity-building and transparency framework for action and

support).

Guatemala spoke for the **AILAC (Independent Alliance of the Latin America and the Caribbean)** and said that Parties had the responsibility to “finalize the rulebook” by 2018. It said that climate action needs the participation of all countries and all stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations.

The **European Union (EU)** said that it had found the workshops and roundtables on different issues very useful to advance Parties’ technical understanding of the issues. (Prior to the start of the Bonn session, roundtables and workshops were held on NDCs and adaptation communications. An intersession workshop on Transparency Framework was also held in March 2017.)

The EU added that Parties should leave COP23 with elements of a draft text. “Each item is different and has to be treated in a tailored way. We have an important deadline in 2018. We will put efforts into that mandate. Additional work should not be our priority,” said the EU.

Speaking for the **Environment Integrity Group (EIG), Switzerland** said that work has moved from the conceptual to the technical phase and concrete proposals allowed in depth exchange among Parties and these would lead to concrete solutions. It added that Parties need to engage in technical work through 2017 and that they should not rush to textual negotiations as it will only lead to a “lengthy bracketing exercise” at present. It was of the view that by the end of 2017, Parties would be able to capture texts and text-based discussions could begin from 2018. Switzerland clarified that Parties were discussing technical guidance and not negotiating a political agreement.

Speaking for the **Umbrella Group** of Parties, **Australia** said that Parties should move from conceptual to technical discussions. It said that the roundtable on NDCs had illustrated the need for technical work to be conducted for other areas such as adaptation communications. It said that there was much work to be done on the Transparency Framework. It added that work on transparency of support was under the SBSTA and that Parties should prioritise work on Transparency of Action under the APA.