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Concerns over proposed elimination of UNFCCC contribution to IPCC

Bonn, 11 May (Jade Chiang*) – Developing countries at the climate talks in Bonn expressed concerns over the proposed elimination of the contribution by the UNFCCC to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as contained in the proposed programme budget for the period 2018-2019.

The proposed budget for biennium 2018-2019 has been presented to Parties by the UNFCCC's Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa, and is currently on the agenda for discussions of the 46th session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI46). The SBI budget discussions are meant to address the core budget, which needs to be approved by the UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties (COP) in November this year.

When delivering their statements following the opening plenary of that SBI over 8 and 9 May, developing countries, led by the G77 and China were particularly concerned over the proposed cut to the contribution to the IPCC by the UNFCCC.

According to the proposal by the Executive Secretary, there is no provision in the core budget for any contribution to the IPCC for the period 2018-2019, (which is contrary to UNFCCC tradition.)

(For the period 2016 - 2017, close to Euro 500,000 was provided for in contribution to the IPCC). The 100 per cut in contribution raised the ire of developing countries.

Ecuador, speaking for the **G77 and China** said that the IPCC played a very key role and that it "was troubled that a wrong message could be sent from this process if the institution that generates the science upon which Parties claim to base their work on, is thwarted in its capacity to work effectively at this time of geopolitical uncertainty."

The G77 also expressed concerns over the actual budget allocations and the capacity of the Secretariat to fulfil the mandates and work programmes so as to pursue the objectives of the Convention. It said that there was "need to think strategically on the way forward so that this process continues to be based on science."

The **African Group,** represented by **Mali**, also expressed concerns that "the draft UNFCCC budget does not reflect the annual contribution to the IPCC, at a time when there is a pressing need to base our decisions on science."

It stressed that "support to the IPCC is a core priority budget item" and highlighted the importance of securing support for the institution, especially in the light of the mandates that Parties of UNFCCC have given to the IPCC.

Parties also expressed their views on the way forward for the various agenda items.

Speaking for the **G77 and China, Ecuador** reiterated the facilitative nature and the importance of the International Consultation and Analysis (ICA) process in leading to the identification of capacity building needs of developing countries, in order to enhance capacities for the reporting of information in subsequent biennial update reports (BURs)

(The ICA is a process adopted at the 16th session of the COP as part of the measurement, reporting and verification arrangements and applies to BURs, which are prepared by non-Annex I Parties.)

On the operation and use of a public registry for nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and adaptation communications, the G77 stressed the need for these discussions to be coordinated and to maintain coherence with those bodies that deal with similar issues.

(The issue of NDCs and adaptation

communications are being dealt with under the Ad hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement [APA] while the public registry for NDCs and the registry for adaptation communications is dealt with by the SBI.)

With regards to National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), the G77 expects to further explore the inter-linkages between NAPs and means of implementation, particularly with regards to financial resources for planning and implementing adaptation actions as well as for evaluating and determining priorities and needs of developing countries. The G77 also urged developed countries to provide adequate support to developing countries in meeting the cost of their adaptation actions.

The G77 emphasised that the work of the SBI should focus on technology development and transfer, as well as transparency so that the Technology Mechanism could enhance actions on technology development and support the implementation of the Convention and its Paris Agreement (PA). It also called for enhanced support for the implementation of the outcome of the Technology Needs Assessments (TNA) and facilitated access to technologies.

On the review of the role and the functions of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), the G77 said the aim should be at allowing the SCF to fully achieve its mandate of assisting the Conference of the Parties (COP) with respect to the Financial Mechanism of the Convention, including on the measurement, reporting and verification of financial support and mobilisation of financial resources and to oversee all financial flows that are provided and mobilised for the implementation of obligations.

On the Adaptation Fund, it noted that the only concern raised in the first two reviews of the Fund has been on the issue of sustainability and predictability of funds and noted that the outcome of the third review is crucial for the decision on the Fund serving the PA as of 2018.

The G77 said that these financial matters need to be advanced, notwithstanding the current uncertainty regarding the scale, flow, novelty and additionality of climate finance from developed countries to developing countries.

On response measures, Ecuador 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 to avoid the negative economic and social consequences of such measures. It welcomed the first Technical Expert Group meeting in this regard looked forward to the inputs and recommendations from the experts to support the work of the improved forum.

Regarding the matter of 'Arrangements for Intergovernmental Meetings' (AIM), the G77 emphasised the urgent need to define the role of non-state actors within the UNFCCC process, ensuring the full consistency with its country-driven nature, including the need to have a clear, legal, and policy framework to protect the objective, purpose and principles of the Convention and the PA from issue of conflicts of interest.

On the accounting of financial resources, the G77 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 must also be comparable and verifiable. No developing countries are to be excluded from receiving financial support for their enhanced climate change actions whether they have or have not ratified the PA.

It reiterated the importance of the synergy in all the bodies of the UNFCCC and the need to respect different national capacities and circumstances, noting that the Group is committed to achieve the long-term global goal including on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity-building.

Iran, for the **Like-minded Developing Countries (LMDC),** said that the public registry for NDCs is reflective of the scope and nature of NDCs under Article 3 of the PA and the registry should cover the various elements of NDCs on mitigation, adaptation, and the provision of finance, technology and capacity building.

"This discussion on the NDC registry is a purely technical discussion which should not duplicate, prejudice or prejudge the on-going negotiations in the APA with respect to the guidance for the features of NDCs. Furthermore, since there is linkage and synergy between the NDC and adaptation registry, we underline the importance of joint consultations to discuss the two registries together in a holistic and coherent manner," it stressed.

"On the review of the functions of the SCF and the Adaptation Fund, it is important to note that to date, we are still looking for a clear indication and quantification, through a clear roadmap, of the amount of climate finance that developed countries have provided and are supposed to provide consistent with their obligations under the Convention.

"It is worth noting that there is now a high degree of uncertainty not only with whether such obligations would be fulfilled but also with whether previous pledges from developed countries to provide climate financing under the UNFCCC and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) would in fact be fulfilled. Uncertainty in the scale, flow, and additionality of climate finance from developed countries will have a significant impact on the willingness and ability of developing countries to fully implement their commitments under the Convention and the PA," it said, adding that in this context, a process must be initiated to identify the information to be provided by developed country Parties in relation to their climate finance provision in accordance with Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement.

Mali for the **African Group** said it looked forward to the Technical Expert Meetings (TEM) on mitigation and adaptation. Enhancing urgent action on both adaptation and mitigation is critical for Africa and it is integral that these two processes are effective at enhancing action on adaptation and mitigation in the pre-2020 period.

The African Group expected a full and effective assessment of the Technical Examination Processes (TEPs) to determine if they have fulfilled their objectives and functions, noting that the outcome of the review should be used to improve the effectiveness of the TEPs moving forward.

On the issue of the UNFCCC budget, Mali stressed the importance of enhancing resources and support for adaptation and means of implementation. "In a context where the functions of the Secretariat have greatly expanded in recent years, we have seen not only that it has become increasingly necessary to do more with less resources in the core budget, but we have also seen a declining trend in voluntary contributions. Without the necessary budgetary resources, it would be difficult to complete critical pre-2020 work and to prepare for the effective implementation of the PA, it added further.

On the review of the functions of the SCF, the it highlighted that it should aim at enhancing the existing functions, identify gaps in implementation, and provide ways forward to build on the existing mandate.

On the Adaptation Fund, the African Group highlighted the important role of the Fund in further supporting developing countries together with other funds within the Financial Mechanism. It stressed that ensuring predictable and sustainable financing to the Adaptation Fund is of great importance.

On technology transfer, Mali recommended the periodic assessment of the Technology Executive Committee and the Climate Technology Centre and Network, with a view to improving performance in delivering their future mandates under the PA.

On the scope of the periodic review, it said Parties still need to set other goals guided by science, equity as well as provision of support to enable developing countries' contribution towards the attainment of the long-term global goal including pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C.

On capacity building, it called for supporting the needs and gaps identified by developing countries in designing and implementing projects and programmes in the context of NAPs and NDCs.

On the public registry for NDCs and adaptation communications, Mali called for a common understanding on the objective of the registry and its purpose. The registry should be dynamic enough to accommodate the mitigation, adaptation and support components of the NDCs, it said.

Ethiopia speaking for the **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** said that with respect to the LDC Fund, there is urgent need for adequate replenishment to fully implement the LDC work programme.

It said the LDCs are struggling to get their requests for readiness and project funding approved or their National Implementing Entities (NIEs) for direct access accredited by the GCF. Recognising the additional capacity and resource constraints in LDCs, the GCF should prioritise more direct engagement and information sharing with LDCs to streamline and expedite the process of accrediting NIEs in LDCs, it added.

Ethiopia called for space to discuss Technology Needs Assessments implementation and issues related to the availability and access to finances for environmentally sound technologies.

On capacity-building, it urged for adequate discussion time to both the first meeting of the Paris Committee on Capacity building and the 6th meeting of the Durban Forum.

In relation to the scope of the periodic review on the long-term global goal, it wanted to see further progress on defining the scope in accordance with relevant past decisions and reckoned that it would be useful to have an in-session workshop for that.

Speaking for the **Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Maldives**, in reference to the inventory reports of Annex I Parties, it reminded that all Parties have agreed to pursue a 1.5°C limitation in global surface average temperature increase under the PA and this would require global emissions to urgently peak and the decline to net-zero by mid-century in the second half of this century.

It was pleased with the support provided by the GCF for the formulation of NAPs and looked forward to support being provided for their implementation, noting the special situation of small island developing states and the need to effectively address adaptation and make efforts to avert and minimise loss and damage.

On the programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019, AOSIS said that despite constraints, Parties need to take a pragmatic approach in managing the budget to ensure sufficient resources to undertake important mandated work and activities.

Saudi Arabia speaking for the **Arab Group** stressed the necessity to strike a balance on issues related to the implementation of the PA in terms of mitigation and adaptation with a view to reaching a package in 2018. In this regard, it reiterated the importance of the provision of sufficient resources to developing countries and emission reductions by developed countries.

Venezuela representing the **Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA)** called for balance on the treatment of all issues. On the budget for the UNFCCC Secretariat, it proposed a readjustment to prioritise mandated activities of the COP and also said that the provision of support should not be limited to countries that have not ratified the PA.

The **Republic of Korea** speaking for the **Environmental Integrity Group (EIG)** said the transparency framework of the PA should be different from the current framework based on lessons learnt. It said the difficulties with the programme budget for the biennium 2018-2019 should be resolved at this session in Bonn.

The European Union said Parties are tasked to advance negotiations on the on-going implementation of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the work programme of the PA. It noted that transparency is the backbone of the international climate regime and therefore, the Multilateral Assessment (MA) and the Facilitative Sharing of Views (FSV) are key items of this SBI session. It also stressed the importance of the in-session workshop on engagement with non-Party stakeholders as 'they have an important role to play in the implementation of the PA. (The MA and the FSV are part of the transparency arrangements under the Convention.)

**With contributions and edits from Meena Raman and Prerna Bomzan*