

Developed countries reject further adaptation work under the AWG-LCA

Bangkok, 2 September (Doreen Stabinsky) – As developing countries urged consideration of outstanding adaptation issues from the Bali Action Plan, developed countries refused to allow for draft decision text to be crafted in the contact group meeting in Bangkok.

The second meeting of the AWG-LCA contact group devoted to adaptation was held on 1 September. Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh (Trinidad and Tobago) was requested by the contact group chair Mr. Aysar Tayeb of Saudi Arabia (also the AWG-LCA Chair) to assist in conducting the meeting. Mr. Kumarsingh noted the request that had been made by the AWG-LCA Chair for Parties to submit to the Chair text versions of ideas that had been discussed at the previous session. He noted that the Chair had requested this text in order to have conclusions that would be reached at Doha. He further qualified this statement, indicating that the goal for the end of the informal sessions in Bangkok was not necessarily to have agreed text, but text that could reflect outcomes of the Bangkok session that could form the basis of a decision in Doha.

Switzerland, on behalf of the Environmental Integrity Group (EIG), expressed displeasure that the chair of the contact group (Mr. Aysar Tayeb) was not in the room. It reflected on the discussions in Bonn, whereby the work of the AWG-LCA would be organized in two big areas: informal groups on issues with a direct mandate from Durban, and the contact group, where discussions could be structured in clusters.

Switzerland said it was agreed that in the contact group would be placed those issues that are difficult to solve, where there is yet no agreement, with the idea to see if by continuing to discuss them, agreement could be reached. However if agreement is not reached, non-agreement cannot

be included in an agreed outcome. He requested Mr. Kumarsingh to convey this message to Chair Aysar Tayeb, and that the EIG was uncomfortable with the way things were being organized, including the absence of the chair for meetings of the contact group.

Mr. Kumarsingh stated that the status of the group was a contact group, not a spin-off group, and offered to suspend the meeting if there were objections to proceeding under his direction.

Argentina, speaking on behalf of the G77 and China, expressed their pleasure to see Mr. Kumarsingh in the role of conducting the meeting. He noted that for the G77, leaving Bangkok without a paper that reflects the discussions is not an option. He noted it was important to put adaptation at the level it belongs in the Convention, and highlighted that the Group would be happy to be allocated further slots during this meeting, in order to have a robust decision on adaptation in Doha.

He listed five key elements that should be taken into consideration in the work in Bangkok and invited other colleagues from the G77 and China to contribute with further comments and elements:

- Direct the Adaptation Committee to prepare recommendations on means to incentivize the implementation of adaptation actions, including finance, technology, and capacity-building identifying opportunities and further actions in collaboration with the Standing Committee and other relevant Convention bodies;
- Conduct annual workshops on ways to promote implementation of enhanced action of adaptation, including to review

progress on the Adaptation Committee workplan;

- Continue work on the National Adaptation Plans process for LDCs, and other developing countries, including through finance, including direct access, capacity building and technology;
- Carry out additional work on institutional arrangements, including regional centers, national-level institutional arrangements and a International Center; and
- Suggest further consideration by the Adaptation Committee of activities to promote economic diversification to build resilience.

Bangladesh, on behalf of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), associated itself with the statement of the G77 and China. He noted that Mr. Kumarsingh was there on behalf of the chair of the AWG-LCA, in order to have a robust outcome at Doha on adaptation.

He recognized that although there has been much progress on adaptation, resulting in the adaptation framework, the means of implementation has yet to be evolved. The Adaptation Committee has yet to work or to meet. He emphasized that the work now must be to strengthen means of implementation, and to identify gaps. The goal, he stated, is to enable adaptation on the ground in a broad manner, not through piecemeal international efforts.

Regarding way forward, he pointed out that the set of questions put forward by the AWG-LCA chair were very important, including how best to activate the Adaptation Committee, and resolve linkages between national and regional centers and an international center. He concluded that work in Bangkok should concentrate on these issues, and outcomes be taken to Doha for adoption.

Saudi Arabia, speaking on behalf of the Arab group said they would like to see a workplan agreed in Doha on economic diversification.

Mexico agreed with the statement by Switzerland. He noted that the agreement in Bonn was to a focused discussion in a single contact group, but that the arrangements currently looked more like spin-off groups, without the Chair or Vice-Chair presiding. He stated that the Chair was stretching his mandate and expressed his discomfort with this way of working.

Norway pointed out that the Cancun Adaptation Framework, including the work on national

adaptation planning, the work programme on loss and damage, and the Adaptation Committee, has an explicit mandate to strengthen adaptation and is the means by which the Bali mandate is being followed up. It emphasized that the Adaptation Committee will meet next week to discuss their work plan, with a mandate and indicative list of activities, and that no issues that have been raised here will not be taken care of by the Adaptation Committee.

It reminded delegates that when they next meet in Doha, there will be a joint agenda item with the SBI and the SBSTA where there is a place to discuss all the issues raised. She stressed that there should be no text on the table in Bangkok.

Bolivia expressed shock that there was concern over how the work was proceeding, given that the Chair of the AWG-LCA at the previous session had specifically requested Mr. Kumarsingh to help guide the work, as he was so familiar with the issues. He pointed out that at that time there was no objections or concerns raised. He asked Mr. Kumarsingh to convey this message to the Chair of the AWG-LCA and urged his colleagues to carry on in a constructive manner.

Bolivia voiced its support for the input from the G77 and China and LDCs, noting that from the perspective of developing countries there are still issues that are unresolved, and that these discussions are being held in the context of fulfilling the mandate of the AWG-LCA so that it can be closed.

He pointed to the proposal that Bolivia had submitted to the Chair on behalf of more than 70 developing countries, following the Chair's request for concrete proposals, and hoped that Mr. Kumarsingh would circulate the paper so that the colleagues in the room could see what the concerns were being raised.

Ghana, on behalf of the African Group, noted their pleasure at having Mr. Kumarsingh guide their work on behalf of the Chair. It gave full support to the statements made by Argentina and Bangladesh, pointing out that they were not here to renegotiate anything already negotiated, but to ensure enhanced implementation of adaptation actions.

Nauru, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, expressed their support for Mr. Kumarsingh guiding the discussion, as well as support for the views of the G77 and China and Bangladesh. It said the group looked forward to a

draft document at the end of this session in Bangkok.

The United States commented that over the past few years, the profile of adaptation has been raised, and that the US strongly believes a lot of progress has been made, through the establishment of the Adaptation Committee, the work programme on loss and damage, and the process for national adaptation planning. It noted that in the Durban decision there is an annex with an indicative list of activities for the Adaptation Committee, and that the Adaptation Committee will provide coherence both under and outside of the convention. It pointed out that there is a plan for the Adaptation Committee to deliver a workplan in Doha and further noted the agreement in Doha on activities on loss and damage, and that guidelines had been agreed on NAPs (national adaptation plans) and that this year Parties would develop modalities for support of NAPs, including for financial support.

The US stated that the AWG-LCA should be closed, pointing out that new spaces had been opened up for discussions and suggested that the further work to be done should be carried out under existing agenda items in the subsidiary bodies. It stressed that there was a need to trust that the Adaptation Committee would do what they have been tasked to do and concluded that there was no need to produce a negotiating text.

Australia stated that all major items had been moved into the subsidiary bodies, into a permanent framework for consideration. It emphasized that adaptation was an important issue, and recalled that the decision taken in Cancun (2010) affirmed that adaptation would have the same priority as mitigation. It said that in Durban a balanced package of four decisions on adaptation had been adopted, and further noted that adaptation was not one of the issues identified as needing further work before the closure of the AWG-LCA. It also stressed there was no agreement on moving forward and that there is no mandate to negotiate any new ideas. It said they did not agree to work on any text, nor did they agree to any more meetings during the informal session.

Japan pointed out that the Adaptation Committee was requested to develop a three-year plan and the other items under the Bali Action Plan were already under discussion. It stated there was no need to discuss text at this session.

China agreed that there have been decisions on adaptation, but pointed out that some issues have not yet been resolved. It pointed to the need to take tangible actions on the decisions already made and enhance the means of implementation. It noted the need to discuss how to support regional centers and non-LDC developing countries, and how to promote economic diversification, and that these are key issues to be resolved in Doha. It wanted negotiation text before leaving Bangkok.

The European Union pointed out that a lot of work had been done and processes set in motion. It suggested giving the Adaptation Committee time to function and perform, and did not see the need for new decision text.

Canada commented that adaptation is a very important issue, noting in the list of things established, the Adaptation Committee, the work programme on loss and damage, and that the work to enhance that process is not done. It added, however, that work on adaptation in the context of the AWG-LCA is over, pointing to the many bodies that were created under the AWG-LCA, including the Technology Executive Centre, the Climate Technology Centre and Network and the Steering Committee, that the creation of these bodies brought many issues of linkages, and that for Canada addressing those issues is important. It added that many of the residual issues identified by Argentina and Bolivia have already been addressed.

Canada said that the Adaptation Committee should be given time to do their work, to come up with a workplan, and that there would be opportunity to review the workplan during the Joint SBI/SBSTA workshop in Doha. It concluded that adaptation was not listed as one of the elements agreed in Doha for further work, and noted that this implies that work on adaptation under the AWG-LCA is done. Canada did not agree that text should be discussed.

Mr. Kumarsingh reiterated that the AWG-LCA chair had asked for text from the contact group.

New Zealand indicated its opinion that the task was to successfully close the AWG-LCA in Doha, stating it had no wish to negotiate what has already been agreed, and that the Adaptation Committee had already been given clear instructions on what to consider in its work.

The Philippines told Mr. Kumarsingh that it was happy to have him there and associated itself with

the statement from Argentina and other ideas that had been put forward by colleagues in the G77 and China. It stated that it belonged to the group of countries that had submitted the text proposed by Bolivia, noting that the Bali Action Plan states emphatically the need to support urgent implementation and action.

It noted that the profile of adaptation had been raised, yet that what people in developing countries urgently need is not profile or being mentioned, but enhanced action on adaptation. The Philippines stated that the intention of the submission is to harmonize means of implementation and support and to fulfill the mandate of paragraph 24 of decision 1/CP.16 (from Cancun), which requests the AWG-LCA to define linkages with relevant institutional arrangements under and outside the Convention, including at the national and regional levels.

It stated that the intention of the proposed text is to cement means of implementation and support together in a logical manner, and pointed out that is not revising what has already been agreed. It highlighted that the Adaptation Committee cannot define how it will link itself with other institutional arrangements, but rather that is the mandate of the COP.

Nicaragua, on behalf of SICA, and Ecuador supported the G77 and China's intervention as well as the text proposed by Bolivia.

Bolivia questioned how Parties wished to see their views reflected in the outcome of the work on adaptation, and stated it did not like the approach of text being written at the last minute, whether here in Bangkok or in Doha. It recognized that four COP decisions resulted from Durban but pointed to the issue of coherence and how all the work comes together. It stressed the need to reflect the sentiments expressed by many countries that the work on adaptation is not yet complete, and that the discussions from Bangkok need to be captured in text.

Norway pointed to several processes underway to take forward further work, including national adaptation planning for non-LDCs and an overview of regional centers, noting that these issues were taken care of. It said that by including response measures that there was a huge risk of

reopening decisions already made under the AWG-LCA.

Mr. Kumarsingh then suggested that prior to the next session, Parties meet informally among themselves with guidance for him as to what needs to be addressed for the conclusion of the AWG-LCA work on enhanced action on adaptation. He requested the secretariat to distribute the proposal submitted by Bolivia on behalf of 72 developing countries and directed the Parties to have a discussion on it prior to the next session.

Australia asked Mr. Kumarsingh for clarification on the status of the document to which he responded that it was a paper being circulated by Bolivia.

Bolivia added that it was not just a strange desire from Bolivia to waste paper, but that it was submitted on behalf of more than 70 countries in response to a request from the (AWG-LCA) Chair. It added that it expected to see more papers from other Parties and regretted that only one paper was being circulated.

The Philippines emphasized that any submission by any Party has legal status in the negotiations, adding that if the submission is in the form of a draft decision that it must be given a CRP number. It pointed out that it is only text coming from the Chair that has no legal status and requested that the paper be given legal status and offered to make a formal submission requesting CRP status if that would be necessary.

At that point, AWG-LCA Chair Aysar Tayeb entered the room and reminded the Parties that at the last meeting of the contact group on adaptation that he had clearly stated his desire for proposals from Parties. He added that the AWG-LCA has had an open invitation from the beginning of its work for submission of views, and that any views received would be made available on the website.

The Philippines reiterated its statement that if a Party puts forward a proposal as a CRP, the request was to be put on the website as a CRP. It asked whether this session in Bangkok was a resumed session and whether there would be a resumed or a separate session in Doha.