

Developing countries table proposal for enhanced adaptation action

Bangkok, 1 September (Doreen Stabinsky) – About 70 developing countries tabled a concrete proposal to advance enhanced action on adaptation under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bangkok on Thursday 30 August.

This was done when Parties met in an informal group under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA) to examine further work needed on enhanced action on adaptation under the Bali Action Plan.

The Chair of the AWG-LCA, Aysar Tayeb (Saudi Arabia) began the session by distributing a matrix, which provided a record of decisions since Bali on how the ‘adaptation’ issue has advanced in the negotiations and what further work is needed. He noted that this contribution was factual, with no attempt to exercise any judgment. The Chair also distributed an informal note, reflecting further elements under adaptation that may require further elaboration.

Argentina, speaking on behalf of the G77 and China, noted the importance of adaptation for the Group, and that further work was needed on the topic. Argentina highlighted the need to incentivize the implementation of adaptation actions, as well as to increase means of implementation. The group expected further action from the COP (UNFCCC Conference of the Parties) in Doha.

Bolivia, speaking on behalf of itself and a group of developing countries – the Philippines, the African Group, the SICA countries (Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama), Argentina, Ecuador, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Venezuela – outlined the elements of a proposal on enhanced action on adaptation.

(It is understood that a copy of the proposal, in the form of a draft decision, has since been submitted to the Chair of the AWG-LCA.)

In its general description of the proposal, Bolivia recalled COP decisions 1/CP.13, 1/CP.16 and 1/CP.17 and Convention articles 4.1(e), 4.3 and 4.4 on financing for adaptation. It noted that the impacts of climate change worldwide are already having impacts on agricultural production and food security and that it is the historical accumulation of greenhouse gases since 1850 that has caused climate change, further noting the responsibility of developed countries in taking the lead as well as supporting developing countries in responding to climate change.

The proposal by this group of developing countries would establish a process through the Adaptation Committee, in collaboration with the Standing Committee, to develop recommendations with relevant Convention bodies and others, including the Technology Executive Committee, on means to incentivize the implementation of adaptation actions, including finance, technology, and capacity-building, identifying opportunities and further actions for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

Under the proposal, the Adaptation Committee and the Standing Committee would develop recommendations and guidance for the operating entities of the Convention and other financial mechanisms with a view to supporting developing country Parties, taking into account the needs of those that are particularly vulnerable, through long-term, scaled-up, predictable, new and additional finance, technology and capacity-building, with support for urgent, short-, medium- and long-term adaptation actions, plans, programmes and projects at the local, national, sub-regional and regional levels.

In addition, under the proposal, the Adaptation and Standing Committees would organize a workshop in parallel with 38th session of the Subsidiary Bodies on ways to promote implementation of enhanced action on adaptation in a coherent manner under the Convention and to organize such a workshop periodically every year thereafter.

The proposal also includes direction to the Adaptation Committee to include in its work programme activities to strengthen and, where necessary, establish regional centres and networks, in particular in developing countries, with support from developed country Parties and relevant organizations, and to facilitate and enhance national and regional adaptation actions.

The proposal also requests the Adaptation Committee to include in its work programme activities to strengthen and, where necessary, establish and/or designate national-level institutional arrangements, with a view to enhancing work on the full range of adaptation actions, from planning to implementation.

Ghana, on behalf of the African Group, spoke in support of the proposal by Bolivia.

Bangladesh, on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group, noted the progress that had been made on adaptation, especially in terms of the Adaptation Framework and guidelines that had been established for the NAPs process. However, it noted the shortcomings on means of implementation in terms of lack of predictable support, financing and other assistance to enhance adaptation.

It wondered how to ensure the formulation of NAPs (national adaptation plans) for LDCs, including the mobilization of adequate and predictable support for the formulation and implementation of NAPs. It also stressed that NAPAs (national adaptation programmes of action, precursor to NAPs) for LDCs be fully implemented. Bangladesh proposed that work concentrate on regional centers, and expressed the need for an international center, both of which could facilitate the exchange of ideas, best practices on adaptation, as well as enable capacity building for focal points.

The Philippines noted that the AWG-LCA cannot close its work with just the structure of the Adaptation Committee established, remanding elements to the subsidiary bodies or with workshops. It stressed that the means of implementation for adaptation must be addressed, and noted the need for additional institutional

arrangements with regard to adaptation finance and means for linking adaptation with the means of implementation. It pointed out that the implementation of NAPs required links with funding.

Nauru, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), indicated their agreement with the G77 position, underscoring that means of implementation are key elements, and that adaptation was a key issue for small island developing states. It noted there were a range of issues that needed to be addressed before the closure of the AWG-LCA, and particularly emphasized the need for long-term predictable, adequate finance and technology transfer, and the importance of regional centers.

Timor Leste echoed the comments made by the G77, LDCs and AOSIS, stressing linkages between means of implementation as a key issue that must still be addressed. In particular it noted the need to scale up long-term financing, with numbers attached, enabling implementation in all developing country parties. It lamented the lack of legal commitment in terms of contribution for long-term financing.

It also addressed the definition of loss and damage, noting that loss and damage is what happens beyond adaptation. This meant that there is also a need to consider the linkages between loss and damage and adaptation, and the need for a mechanism for those situations where adaptation is not possible. It indicated the need for predictable financial support in such a mechanism. Finally it noted agreement with AOSIS regarding the establishment of regional centers to assist with implementation of adaptation measures, particularly LDCs and SIDS.

Uganda associated itself with the Bolivian proposal and other statements made earlier, putting an emphasis on enabling activities, needs assessments, technology transfer, and access to the financial support necessary to carry these out.

Sudan echoed previous statements, remarking that we were still far from implementing the (2007) Bali mandate and noting that it was premature to conclude the AWG-LCA work on adaptation as we were still far from implementing adaptation on the ground. It agreed with the AOSIS proposal to put in place a process for the continuation of the work. It said that under the umbrella of the AWG-LCA there was a feeling of comprehensiveness, but without that there is a great challenge.

In terms of what work needs to continue, it noted that financing is far from satisfactory and means of

implementation were challenging. Sudan indicated a lack of capacity even to carry out a needs assessment and that they were struggling with NAPAs, NAPs and the technology needs assessment. It wanted to see decisions implemented and in that regard noted the need to find a way to continue the work towards enhancement of adaptation action.

Norway observed that there are many needs with regards to adaptation, that there are many arenas, many decisions, and that we are far from having done enough. It noted, however, that Parties have taken decisions on all these issues and that now it is time to implement what has been decided. It pointed in particular to the Adaptation Committee and its functions, mandates, and indicative list of activities.

With regard to regional centers, it noted that an overview of regional centers is on the list of indicative activities of the Adaptation Committee. On the issue of national adaptation planning, it pointed out that there have also been decisions taken there, and the task was now to get a comprehensive, coherent process underway that enables support.

Norway agreed that all this work will not be done by Doha, confirming and reassuring that they recognize that more work needs to be done, but stressing that there are already decisions taken that underpin the work that we will do. It suggested to take time and effort to implement and further enhance the Cancun Adaptation Framework, but disagreed with taking time to prolong the work of the AWG-LCA.

The United States reflected that the Adaptation Committee begins its work after this session, and that the AWG-LCA has passed on its consideration of all these elements to the Adaptation Committee. It recognized the need for means of implementation and noted the fast-start finance initiative, which the United States was pleased to participate in, would provide significant funding for adaptation.

The US suggested that the group has done its job in setting up mechanisms for going forward and that it should be proud for making this progress. From what was seen, the Cancun Adaptation Framework and Durban accomplished the request of the Bali Action Plan. It agreed on the challenging question of implementation, and noted that now the work is for the Adaptation Committee and those working on long-term finance. It concluded that the AWG-LCA should focus its time on other challenging questions.

The European Union noted that the matrix provided by the Chair shows very well the range and

depth of activity already underway. It reflected back on discussions in Bali, where the need to strengthen the implementation of the Convention in all areas was agreed. The EU noted that we cannot say that we are done with the implementation of the Convention, but what we have done is created a set of institutions and work streams which are designed so that we can continue the work in a dynamic way.

On finance, it noted that we have put in place a Fund and a Standing Committee, which we will have to continue to strengthen. The EU outlined several questions to address what could frame the discussion in the coming days: Is there something fundamentally lacking? Are we getting the right amount of coherence? Have we given the right guidance to the bodies? It noted that it was not hearing in comments around the room the need for new institutions.

Bolivia noted the need to respond to the constructive questions and conclusions being drawn during the discussion. In particular, in response to those countries that were proposing that “business as usual” on adaptation is enough, it said this was simply not an option. Bolivia stressed that all developing countries are putting forward a clear message, that these processes are not helping developing countries just yet, and that this is why they are putting forward these proposals to bring coherence to the work on adaptation, not just in the Adaptation Committee, but in the entirety of the work that we do under the Convention and the financial mechanism.

Bolivia commented that while it had lost track of the number of times it had been said that adaptation and finance links were being dealt with elsewhere under the Convention and that under the adaptation work we do not have to address it, it knew that it had heard it enough. It indicated the group of developing countries (that it spoke for) would put something together in writing for consideration.

Uganda took the floor again to emphasize the need to effectively and in an expeditious manner implement the Adaptation Framework.

Timor Leste also took the floor once more to note the important links between adaptation finance and underscore their desire for a discussion on to link adaptation to finance.

The next meeting of the group will be Saturday 1 September from 10:00-11:30.