

No signs of a “shared vision” as divisions remain

Bangkok, 1 September (Marjorie Williams) – Sharp differences remain on how to deal with the twin goals of a long-term global goal for greenhouse gases emissions reduction by 2050 and a global peaking time frame. The division is whether these goals should be with or without the context of a comprehensive and integrated balanced package, which includes critical elements of the Bali Action Plan such as adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity building.

After two informal consultations on 30 and 31 August at the on-going informal session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the UNFCCC (AWG-LCA), positions on “shared vision” remain the same as expressed since the 2010 Cancun meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

On the one hand there is a large number of Parties arguing strongly for a “numbers-in-context” approach, i.e. that discussions on numbers on any long term global goal and peaking must be linked to the impacts of such goals and the necessary means of implementation (especially finance and technology). Parties with this position include the Africa Group, the Arab group, ALBA, Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand.

On the other hand, a group of Parties prefer to deal with a “numbers-only” outcome, with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Colombia, Chile and Costa Rica as leading proponents. The Umbrella Group of developed countries seeks to have “aspirational” numbers only. This includes Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the US.

The European Union essentially advocates a “numbers-only” approach with some

consideration of context such as a longer time frame for developing countries to peak.

At the 30 August first meeting of the Informal Group on Shared Vision [agenda item 3(a) of the AWGLCA] in Bangkok, the Africa Group supported by the Philippines, India, China and Brazil argued strongly that the context for agreeing to a global goal and global peak year was critical to a successful agreement. This view contrasted sharply with the view of a singular focus on the twin goals expressed by Trinidad and Tobago (on behalf of AOSIS). This point of view was supported by Singapore, the EU, Japan, the US, New Zealand and Colombia.

The session was facilitated by Professor Zou Ji of China, who told Parties that the focus of the discussion was on how the informal group could move forward in preparing for Doha and that the mandate was to advance the substantive discussion based on work done in Bonn (in May), the workshop on equity access to sustainable development (EASD) and other workshops, as well as building on previous decisions made in Bali (1/CP.13), Cancun (1/CP.16) and Durban (2/CP.17).

Zou said that the AWG-LCA Chair (Mr. Aysar Tayeb of Saudi Arabia) had provided two tools to facilitate the discussion: a factual matrix of actions taken and an Informal Note. He emphasized that the tools were informational only and not negotiating texts; they were simply facilitating tools to draw attention to key issues, key debates and key points for further discussion. He said that the objective of the Bangkok meeting was to develop key elements pointing towards text for discussion in Doha. He noted that there was very limited time and lots of work to be done. He urged the group not to consume the limited time with circular debate but rather to move forward to the key elements

to the text for negotiation and to identify key barriers or challenges.

The facilitator also said that he would like to focus to equitable access to sustainable development as in the past there were debate and different positions on this issue, and that part of the time of the proposed sessions in Bangkok would be allocated to discussing, merging and reaching common ground so the group can move forward.

While introducing and reviewing the two tools prepared by the AWG-LCA chair with the group, Zou made a brief introduction of the progress made in past year. He noted that starting from the Bali Action Plan (BAP), Parties reached two decisions in Cancun (1/CP.16) and Durban (2/CP.17) regarding shared vision issues. He noted that the matrix provided by the AWG-LCA chair showed the abstract of relevant paragraphs in those decisions. This is the current basis for the discussion. He said that in Bonn, Parties discussed shared vision and a final report was presented to the closing AWG-LCA plenary.

He pointed out that the AWG-LCA chair's informal note identified three options: option 1 is specific numbers for the long term goal for time frame of global peaking with their corresponding context (qualitative, quantitative or both); option 2 identified a range of numbers for these goals with their corresponding context; and option 3 is on possible process or mechanism with which to identify numbers or a range of numbers for the 2 goals.

Zou also reminded the Parties that there had been no official conclusion and that though the (May 2012) expert workshop on equitable access to sustainable development (EASD) did not have an official status, it led to a lot of ideas and opinions addressing the issue of long term global goal and shared vision. He said that the workshop was important to reflect opinions from the Parties. He also noted that there were many different sources of inputs including the CRP 39 document ('unresolved issues' from the Durban COP meeting) that could be the base of further contributions from Parties. The facilitator stressed that there was a need to seek more elaboration on option 3. He also wanted to focus on EASD in order to elaborate the concept of EASD in general and to examine EASD in the context of global goal and global peak as well as look at the context for EASD and equity. Following the facilitator's introduction, Parties

commented on his opening remarks and the documents presented.

Developed countries such as Japan and the US argued that the goals mandated by Cancun are an aspirational goal and that the distribution of reduction for each country, including the principle of distribution, is not the group's mandate. Developed countries also raised questions about EASD in the shared vision approach and some expressed discomfort with equity.

Uganda on behalf of the **African Group** said that the Group believes strongly that consistent with decisions of Durban and Cancun as well as Bali, shared vision should include goals on the other BAP pillars (finance, technology, adaptation and capacity building). Uganda urged the informal group to focus on what the number really means. It said that dealing with global peak may not have meaning if there was no focus on the context of sustainable development. It questioned the attempt to agree on specific numbers or range of numbers without a context including the nature of the burden sharing for most vulnerable countries in Africa and LDCs.

Uganda further noted that on equity, the group could consider a hybrid approach with other matters such as GDP, development gap and current capabilities. It also noted that the workshop in Bonn raised different parameters on defining equity so there could be a hybrid of some of these indicators that include sustainable development consideration taking into account what is already contained in the Convention. Uganda said that it believed that CRP 39 provided good parameters for consideration in arriving at a consensus in the matter.

Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of **AOSIS** argued for a variation of option 1 in the chair's informal note that would reference specific numbers without a context. Trinidad and Tobago said that it did not want to move too far away from 2/CP.17 (decision from Durban). It further noted the concept of survival and sustainable development could be included as an addition to context. It said that as there was no agreement on what is sustainable development, if the group was going to look at the concept, then survival and development will be one of them.

Singapore supported AOSIS and said that the group should focus on what was agreed in Durban and Cancun: long term global goal and

time frame for peaking. It argued for zooming in on the working towards a global goal and time frame and not include other issues. It agreed with Trinidad and Tobago that there are other context to be taken into account, including best available science and referenced UNEP documents and the output on the workshop on mitigation as other inputs that could be useful for setting the context for the global goal and time frame.

The Philippines noting that, as a country, it consisted of over 7,000 islands and was one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, thus it was important for it to emphasize the importance of context for reaching a fair decision in Doha. The Philippines said that reflection on the Bali Plan of Action paragraph 1 showed long term global goal for emissions reduction is not the only focus of shared vision. It included as a summary of the context, the principles of the Convention, CBRD, social and economic conditions. These, the Philippines says, are what it and other developing countries see as the main context that sets the condition under which to set the goals and identify the contribution for developed and developing countries.

With regard to remarks made by Japan and US that the goals are aspirational, the Philippines said that as it was located in the typhoon basin of the Pacific rim and was subjected to hits by earthquakes and drought in some areas, while other areas suffered from too much water. It was hence one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, and the condition under which the Parties address climate change is very important.

The Philippines stressed that the setting of long term global goal and peak year must be more than simply aspirational. It wants to make it concrete and “everybody will get there and everybody will do their share”. It emphasized that context was important. It said that a useful analogy was that if the goal was 100 kilometers, the context of how the goal was achieved mattered: “It mattered if some have flashy Lamborghinis, while some have rickshaws and some walked.” It said that it agreed with Africa, and “that the condition under which we would do or share in meeting those goals are important. Hence, the means of the implementation are just as important for meeting long term reduction.” It said that these should form part of shared vision as was in the Bali Action Plan, “the

mother of our mandate”, particularly para. 1(b)(i). The Philippines said that this discussion must stand for something meaningful in terms of numbers and context (since context sets the condition for how we would be able to meet the goals). It further said that it agreed with Trinidad and Tobago that the group should focus on 2/CP.17, as we need to focus on the goal, peaking and the context to avoid being myopic and vague.

China said that it agreed with the Philippines and that the BAP is clear that (shared vision) is not just long-term global goal for emissions reductions but include other issues. It said that Cancun reaffirmed that shared vision should address not only long term global goal but adaption, finance and capacity building in a balanced, integrated and comprehensive manner. China further noted that a group of developing countries had also flagged a number of unresolved issues for Doha, including adaptation, response measure, historical responsibility and adequacy. It said that with regard to shared vision, CRP 39 provide a good basis for how they would be reflected in the final outcome. China also noted that at the EASD workshop many delegates propose to have a work programme for EASD, which is how to implement the principle of equity. China said that this is a very useful suggestion and could be included in the Chair’s report to the COP.

India said that it agreed with Uganda and the Philippines that context is important. It said in the Durban decision in paragraph 3 ministers agreed that these items cannot be divorced from their context. India said that no one is disputing that agreement on global goal and peak are the mandate. It said that context leads you to these numbers, and that the numbers cannot be arrived at without context. They are not antagonistic – any options of number without context are the same as context without numbers; both of them go together.

Brazil said that it supported India, the Philippines and other developing countries that the group needs to discuss the context. It said that Durban is very clear; our ministers agreed to consider the numbers and the numbers cannot be undertaken in the abstract. Brazil said that context is not already agreed and that shared vision cannot exist as an abstraction. There is therefore a need to discuss financing requirements, technology and capacity building.

It said that these issues will impact food security energy security, the quality of houses and should not be a restriction to economic growth and social progress in developing countries.

Saudi Arabia pointed out that the objective of the Convention is the *“stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner”*. It said that that is the driver and that the Bali Action Plan emphasized this as it talks about social and economic conditions hence context was needed alongside the numbers.

Saudi Arabia said that we have always been consistent, pointing to Cancun para. 6 (*“... and bearing in mind that social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries”*), and 2/CP.17 paragraph 2 references on equitable access to sustainable development. So there has been consistency with global goal and peaking year. Saudi Arabia said it did not agree or accept global goal and global peak year without the relevant text on sustainable development.

Bangladesh further noted that when discussion focused on sustainable development it seemed that there is a presumption that there is an antagonistic relationship between a healthy environment and poverty reduction. It said that it does not have be, and argued that there must be some safe operating space between the two.

The United States said that the mandate from Durban was to talk about global goal to reduce emissions by 2050 and to identify time frame for global peaking while taking the context into consideration. It said that the group was told to take context in consideration, not define or elaborate it. It agreed with Trinidad and Tobago that context is taking a larger share of the time. The US said that it was intensely concerned about trend line and if we are on track to meet the 2 degree goal set out in Cancun. The US said that it supports 50% reduction by 2020 and peaking as soon as possible and agreed with Japan and others that the goal was aspirational and not the basis for top-down allocation or burden sharing arrangement. The US urged the group to concentrate on the mandate from

Durban and not on things that are a bridge too far to resolve in the week.

The European Union said that there was already agreement to work on long-term global goal in a certain context. The elements for that context were longer time frame for global peaking for developing countries and that social development and poverty eradication are the overriding priority of developing countries. The EU said that these things were already agreed. The EU also said that CRP 39 contains important elements as well as some elements that are controversial and difficult to agree on. Hence the focus should be on where agreement in Doha is possible. As with AOSIS, the EU said it preferred option 1 (of the options listed in the Chair’s informal note) but would be happy to listen to other Parties proposed options and see how we can make progress.

Colombia said that Cancun and Durban gave important mandates which are the unfinished tasks and that the group should focus on global goal and peak year. It said that it did not feel comfortable about EASD and noted the importance of fulfilling the Durban mandate in regard to closing the AWG-LCA.

The facilitator in responding to the intervention of Parties who wished to remove context from the options, drew attention to the Durban decision as the basis for the inclusion of context and it noted that this was the basis for the inclusion into the options outline in the AWG-LCA chair’s informal note. The facilitator also proposed that the second informal meeting address difficult issues and barriers to be overcome in order to move forward. He said that a major option is to debate on EASD, given the diversity of positions on this issue and the need to close the gaps and merge the positions. He proposed to develop some bullets on key elements based on the interventions from Parties as well as previous material as inputs for discussion in the 3rd meeting of the week.

Japan, Singapore, the US and Canada raised concerns about the facilitator’s proposal for the way forward, especially with regard to further discussion on EASD. These countries argued that the views on the issues were so polarized that it would be difficult to bridge the gap.

Bolivia supported by India and the Philippines supported proposal of the facilitator for the next meeting as EASD is critical and important for

moving forward as part of the mandate in Durban. India noted that paragraph 2 of the decision 2/CP.17 explicitly references EASD and that though the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) focused on scientific knowledge there was no intergovernmental knowledge on EASD. The Philippines said that EASD lays the foundation for numbers and that it sets the condition for a fair discussion on global goal for emissions reductions and time frame for peaking. It noted that it would useful to have a session were Parties could discuss and digest the information from workshop and science and figure out how this all related in terms of how we can have an approach in which the development objective of developing countries would not be prejudiced by developing

countries having to take deeper emissions reductions than we are ready to do using our own resources.

The facilitator in his closing remarks of the 30 August meeting said that it is a matter of understanding context and EASD and how to define the detail level of the range of the context. He said that context and EASD are overlapping; EASD can also be interpreted as part of the context. He said the he welcomes proposals from Parties about how to use the next round of discussion and would undertake bilateral talks to discuss and identify and determine the focus of the next sessions.

The informal group on shared vision will continue to meet on 1 and 2 September.