

Political leaders disappointed in climate finance and slow progress

Cancun, 8 December (Hilary Chiew) – President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia lamented that the promise of Copenhagen has been lost and called for the US\$30 billion fast start finance to be made available immediately.

Revealing personally for the first time the delivery status of the US\$30 billion fast start finance, Zenawi said the general opinion in Africa is that the money has yet to be delivered and that reports of money delivered has little evidence to the ground.

Speaking at the High-level Segment of the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 6th COP acting as the Meeting of the Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) which opened yesterday, Zenawi said the fast start finance has to be delivered if we want to deliver trust and there has to be transparency in the delivery to address this concern.

(Zenawi was referring to the financial pledges made by developed countries under the controversial Copenhagen Accord at COP 15 last December. The document was not adopted by the COP but only “taken note of”.)

Echoing Ethiopia’s concern, Kenya’s Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga told the assembly comprising several heads of state and ministers of environment that it was learnt that only 30% of the US\$30 billion fast start finance was delivered but it is not at all clear how much of the money is truly additional money, and that they are more in the form of loans than grants.

In her welcoming speech at the opening of the High Level Segment, UNFCCC’s executive secretary Christiana Figueres said the stake in this

COP is high and so is the political stake as the multilateral process is in danger.

She said the world must not assess the effects of climate change on the most privileged but on those most vulnerable. Tuvalu, Maldives and Kiribati are having to move their citizens due to saltwater; the floods in Pakistan and Venezuela are all wake-up calls but has the world woken up and respond, she asked. The answer, she said, lies in the hands of Parties negotiating in Cancun.

Figueres said much good had come out from the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) negotiations (these are the bodies under the UNFCCC). Hence, Parties have reached a crucial stage of their work.

She urged them to converge on all outstanding elements by conciliating on the avoidance of a gap beyond 2012 with anchoring proposals that had been put forward this year, by conciliating financial support and assistance for developing countries and those most vulnerable, and by conciliating response measures with fairness in guiding mitigation efforts.

She said the eyes of the world are monitoring the Parties’ work and they will be reporting and certainly verifying their efforts.

UN Secretary-general Ban Ki Moon said Parties must act as a united nations, showing courage and compromise and urged every country to be part of the solution. He said the climate negotiation has been a long journey and it will not end in Cancun. However, Parties cannot let the negotiation run into complacency. Status quo will not do and a new future must take place here to move forward.

He said despite political and economic constraints at home, Parties must make progress as they are here to protect people against the adverse effects of climate change. He reminded that the longer the delay, the more we have to pay economically, environmentally and in the loss of human lives.

Since Bali (COP 13, 2007), he added, the health of our planet has continued to decline and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission continue to rise. And the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that global emission must peak within the next decade and decrease substantially if we are to limit global temperature rise to 2°C. To achieve that, we need results now to curb emissions and ability to create a more sustainable future; results that help especially the poor and the most vulnerable.

He warned that the world cannot sustain progress towards the Millennium Development Goals without solving climate change. It will not be able to reduce poverty, ensure energy security and international security without climate security. He said climate, energy, food and water security cannot be achieved in isolation.

Ban said there is a need for a balanced set of outcomes in Cancun and tangible progress is possible, pointing to decisions on Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD-plus), adaptation, technology transfer, creation of a new fund for long term financing, anchoring of national commitments and clarity on the future of the Kyoto Protocol.

He urged Parties to use the report generated by the High Level Advisory Group on Climate Finance spearheaded by him as an input to the negotiation on financial mechanism as it has shown how to raise the US\$100 billion (pledged in the Copenhagen Accord) by 2020.

He said the time for waiting while keeping an eye on everyone else is over. The world cannot let the perfect be the enemy of good. Actions now and movement on as many actions as possible must be our aim in Cancun as every country can do more.

Mexican president Felipe Calderon said the work so far has been substantive and that Parties are not negotiating alone. While their eyes and ears are fixed upon the negotiating table, there are

billions of people requiring a clear response from them that they cannot fail again.

He said let's not postpone what can be achieved in Cancun. Quoting the Chinese proverb – *The journey of a thousand li began with a single step* – he called upon Parties to take the first step in Cancun.

He said we are all on the same boat and it is time to act as a single crew and steer in the same direction. He urged Parties to make the last effort to come to an agreement and build a strong voice that will give the world the response that it deserves.

Several heads of states and ministers then made statements.

Yemen's Minister of Water and Environment, Abdulrahman Fadel Al-Eryani, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China said the time has come to secure the outcome and mandate stipulated in the Bali Action Plan, stressing that balance between the two negotiating tracks (AWG-LCA and the AWG-KP) must be respected and balance within each track must be maintained.

He said whatever outcome in Cancun must not prejudice achieving a legally-binding and fair outcome in the future. The central goal of the AWG-KP is for the second commitment period and he stressed the urgency of delivering the result for adoption at Cancun as it is the cornerstone of a successful outcome.

He said developed countries must show leadership to take economy-wide emission reductions and provide new financial resources for developing countries according to relevant provisions of the Convention.

Prime Minister Tillman Thomas of Grenada representing the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) said the 43 member states are most vulnerable to climate change. He said we must act now and act fast or the rising tide of climate change will over take. Cancun presents an opportunity to respond decisively to this challenge and this is a moment we must grab with both hands.

He said that Parties should not settle for a token decision that will not impact climate change, and said that what is focused on in Cancun is not enough. For example, adaptation does not have enough to support immediate adaptation actions

and there is a need to go beyond adaptation framework. He called for an Adaptation Committee to do work, provision for loss and damage already experienced and a mechanism to address this in terms of risk insurance.

On financial resources, he said a new fund is necessary during this meeting with adequate provision for priority access of SIDS and LDCs.

He stressed the urgent need to address emissions, referring to the UNEP Gap report that showed emission reductions pledges are not enough to reach goal of 1.5 degrees C as advocated by 106 countries. He called for an increase in the level of ambition.

He said that the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol is one of the central ingredients for Cancun to deal with, and that the results of the AWG-LCA must be legally binding by South Africa (at COP 17).

President Marcus Stephen of Nauru (on behalf of 14 small island states in the Pacific) said that his region is rich culturally, and the 10,000 people who speak his native language may soon disappear. However, climate change negotiation speaks in strange language, letters that carries the power to determine which of our nations may thrive or which may vanish below the waves. Without bold action it will be left to children to come up with words to describe the tragedy if we do not act.

He said that as members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) they use science, and are not seeking charity, not selling to the highest bidder. He called for a fair solution and efforts towards a two track legally binding solution in Durban: a new Durban protocol for the LCA, and an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol.

President Johnson Toribiong of Palau said that his country is safe for now but we must face stark scientific reality that much damage has already been done to the planet and sea levels in the Pacific are rising faster than other parts of the world. He awaits agreement on long term and fast financing and called for a follow through on financial commitments made. He said that just as climate change is a global challenge, efforts to reverse it must be a global.

President Álvaro Colom Caballeros of Guatemala talked about the more than 100 extreme rain events in his country that has cost 1/4

of the national budget to rebuild infrastructure and other needs. We cannot wait to fill out sentences in a paragraph, as we search for words we are burying more and more dead, and that this is happening in Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba and Venezuela.

He said that we must make an effort to reach an agreement; to answer one question: what are we going to tell our grand children 20 years from now about this meeting? The answer will depend on the conclusion reached at this conference today, he stressed. He called for an alliance for our common future and integrated human development, not to make money with but to change culture so new generations can have well being and deal with climate change. This is a crisis of principle of values, not how much money I am going to make but how many lives we are going to save.

Ethiopia's President Meles Zenawi said, in addition to issues related to financing, that Africa contributed less than 2% of GHG, which is virtually nothing to global warming. Yet, it is suffering the most as a result of global warming created by others. He said for Africa, climate change is not about future risks that may or may not happen. Many countries are facing increasing drought and an unprecedented level of flooding and this bizarre combination has already devastated agriculture outputs causing starvation. Every day of delay in the negotiation is paid in the lives lost. He said the African delegations want a legally binding agreement at the earliest possible.

Kenya's Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga said it sensed an air of despair and cannot but feel a sense of resignation. He said a long-term solution is certainly vital but called on Parties to deliver results tomorrow. Parties must stop the blame game and compromise to save the future as we all live in one village.

He said large economies must accept the fact of their share of emissions and blaming the past will not solve the problem of the future and that two wrongs do not make a right. He also said the most vulnerable countries must realise that crying victims will not stop rising sea level and must embrace the spirit of self-help.

Therefore, he said the key outcome from Cancun is an agreement to move decisively to achieve a

legally-binding treaty under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long term Cooperative Actions.

He said since a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol will be difficult (to be achieved in Cancun), Parties could possibly extend (negotiations of) the Kyoto Protocol until the legislation of the LCA is completed. However, he felt the establishment of a climate fund is within reach in Cancun.

He announced that Kenya and France will jointly launch a partnership on green energy to mobilise financing for 100% generation, distribution and connectivity of the African continent by the year 2020.

He also recommended that an endorsement be made in Cancun to establish a single authoritative body on global environmental governance to be located in Nairobi as currently the elements are scattered over many conventions.

Lesotho's Minister of Natural Resources, Monyane Moleleki, representing the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) said while it may be true that the COP may not had been successful but the restored trust and candid exchanges in Cancun had provided fresh impetus for success, particularly for COP17 and stressed that the centrality of the UNFCCC in combating climate change must be maintained.

It said Cancun should approve the establishment of an adaptation framework and committee and the establishment of an international mechanism to address loss and damage. It also said the new climate fund must be under the authority, guidance (of) and accountable to the COP.

To operationalise the said fund without commitment from the developed countries would be hollow.

It further said the major objective of the AWG-KP is to define economy-wide quantified emission reduction for Annex I Parties for the second commitment period.

Speaking for the Umbrella Group, Australia's Minister of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Greg Combet, said Parties must respect agreement made one year ago when many issues had been resolved at the (political) leaders level which provided the parameters for ensuing discussions.

He said Parties must capture the progress but acknowledged that countries have different views as to where to anchor their targets and must find a way to resolve this in the coming days.

He said Parties must focus on issues that need most deliberation, which are mitigation and transparency including International Consultation and Analysis (ICA). He believed there is a deal to be done in Cancun and urged Parties to be flexible. There is a need to work on text that is clean with clear options, he added.

European Union Commissioner for Climate Change, Connie Hedegaard, said although the EU was ready to commit to a legally binding deal in Copenhagen it realised that it cannot get it done even here in Cancun.

However, to come out with nothing in Cancun is not an option and she is weary of how the world will judge the Cancun meeting if Parties leave empty handed. She said it's easy to see how complicated and how slow the UN process is but much harder to see an alternative that can deliver results faster. Thus, for credibility's sake, Parties must ensure that this process lead to progress and they have 72 hours to do so which is not eternity but certainly enough to do a lot.

Belgium's Minister of Environment, Nature and Culture, Joke Schauvliege, representing the EU said the group is willing to consider a second commitment period as part of a wider outcome, which should include a global and comprehensive framework including all major economies. It said several Parties had made constructive proposals in laying the foundation to enhance measurable, reportable and verifiable (mitigation actions) that respects the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

It also said a balanced package must contain the essential elements of technology transfer, finance, REDD-plus and capacity building.

Venezuela's Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change, Claudia Salerno Caldera, representing the Group of Latin American and Caribbean (GRULAC) countries pledged the region's support for the work needed to be done.

With contributions from Mariama Williams of South Centre