

Bolivia strongly calls for return to Party-driven negotiations

Cancun, 9 Dec (Chee Yoke Ling) – Amidst confusion, the cancellation of two scheduled negotiating groups' meetings and the convening of small-room consultations involving ministers, Bolivia made an urgent and emphatic call for a return to Party-driven negotiations in the final days of the climate talks in Cancun, Mexico.

In a press conference at 4.30 pm on Wednesday (8 December) Bolivia's head of delegation, Ambassador Pablo Solon, stressed that an informal consultation cannot take the place of the official negotiations of the Conference of the Parties (to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change).

Solon said that at 2.30 pm his delegation received an invitation to participate in an informal meeting of about 40 to 50 delegations. "We attended and very respectfully stated that we have a problem, that we only have an informal meeting that the (COP) President has called. But that cannot substitute the formal negotiation process. Where was the place to discuss the text?"

"So we stated our apologies to the President and we left the meeting – we also said we hoped it is a clear message to re-establish the official place for 193 countries to participate, where no one is left outside."

The COP President, Mexican Foreign Affairs Minister Patricia Espinosa, convened a small-group meeting of about 50 Parties.

The Chairs of the two working groups were also present (the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and the Ad hoc Working Group under the Kyoto Protocol.) See TWN Cancun News Update No. 15.

(A large crowd was seen outside the room pushing to enter, with a developing country delegate saying in exasperation that, "we have been reduced to this to find out from the COP President what is happening".)

Solon said that in the morning a new paper had come out (a note on possible elements of the outcome of the AWGLCA that was prepared by the AWGLCA chair, Margaret Mukhanana Sangarwe of Zimbabwe, under her own responsibility).

There was confusion, according to Solon, because although this text is not a negotiating text, in reality it has some importance. The problem is where do we go to discuss this paper if there are no more formal meetings? What do we do with the text? Where will our negotiators go to negotiate with other negotiators? he asked, pointing out that there were scheduled meetings that had been cancelled.

At the same time an informal meeting with 40-50 delegates had begun, Solon related. He reiterated, "We are not against informal meetings that can bring inputs into the final process. But if there is no more formal meeting who is going to draft the text (for negotiation, consensus and adoption)?"

He said that his technical people did not come to Cancun to take a vacation, but were here to negotiate. "That is why we are announcing (at the press conference) that a few minutes ago we tabled 3 proposals, on shared vision, forests, and various approaches related to mitigation actions on what we want."

Solon said he hoped this signal would contribute to going back to the official formal process that involves all the Parties. He

emphasized that consultations are welcome and supplementary but can never replace the official negotiations.

To several questions from the press, he said that his delegation does not want to go into any process of finger pointing. “We want to give constructive suggestions, we want to see the different groups negotiating again tomorrow. We believe that process can be participatory and transparent, with 194 states.

It is not about a blame game but about a save (the conference) game,” he added.

“All we know is work on COP and CMP, but not the work on the AWGLCA – we do not know how the informal consultations carried out by the COP President is going. We in G77 do not want to repeat the situation of a year ago – where we as G77 were negotiating and did not know what was happening in another process.” (Referring to Copenhagen last year).