

Wide ranging views at High level segment and “Mexico Dialogue”

Cancun, 9 December (Hilary Chiew) – Tuvalu’s deputy prime minister Enele Sosene Sopoaga reiterated his country’s rejection of the Copenhagen Accord as “it is a hollow document designed to serve short term political needs”.

At the joint high-level segment of the 16th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 6th COP acting as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol yesterday (8 December), Sopoaga said in Copenhagen (last year), the small island state rejected the Copenhagen Accord and it continues to do so.

He said that it is a document for the demise of nations like mine. We come to Mexico with renewed interest that the international community will not repeat Copenhagen.

He said Tuvalu seeks a clear mandate to continue the Kyoto Protocol and a new mandate to create a legally-binding agreement to implement the Bali Action Plan. The two track process must result in two legally-binding agreements and it can only be done by revitalising the Kyoto Protocol and creating the new one for countries not included in the Kyoto Protocol.

He said Tuvalu’s entire economy is threatened by the impacts of climate change and it has no means to rebuild itself. Therefore, it is requesting for a loss and damage mechanism to address this concern.

He said Parties cannot afford to have endless meetings but do nothing; and Tuvalu cannot afford to be held hostage by countries that have caused climate change crunching figures (endlessly). This is life and death for Tuvalu. It is time to save Tuvalu and the world.

Bruno Eduardo Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, said the recently revealed classified documents of the United States diplomatic cables by Wikileaks is interesting as it mentioned Cuba. Waving the document, he said climate change is a global threat that requires global solution and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is as valid today as it was in the beginning.

He said the people’s conference at Cochabamba, Bolivia (in April 2010) made essential proposals that had to be taken into consideration by the meetings in Cancun. Agreement in Cancun must assure sustainable development of developing countries and not add restrictions on their development.

It’s a selfish pretext of developed countries that wanted to liquidate the Kyoto Protocol by saying that it covers only 26% of global emissions but ignoring the fact that the UNFCCC covers 100% of the emissions, he said.

Parrilla said the present world order is unsustainable and human societies must organise itself in a different way.

Malaysia’s Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Douglas Uggah Embas said it has been a long journey from Malaysia to Mexico and he wishes to return home with a lasting memory of Cancun where convergence of critical issues were achieved collectively.

The essential element needed is the leadership of Annex I countries that will lead to deeper cuts. What we see thus far doesn’t reflect the level of ambition required by science to achieve 2°C temperature rise target. As it stands the second commitment period (of the Kyoto Protocol) is a legal requirement and should not be linked to mitigation actions of

developing countries. Central to developing countries is the creation of the new climate fund under the direct supervision of the COP.

He urged Parties to bring to a successful conclusion on REDD-plus as it will complement and support existing mitigation actions in developing countries and reaffirmed Malaysia's commitment to maintain 50% of its land areas as forests through sustainable management of forests and good agriculture practices. Our government has strived for low carbon society. Among the on-going programs is renewable energy and energy-efficiency, he said.

Vice chairman of the National Development and Reform commission of China, Xie Zhenhua said as a developing country, China is also a victim of climate change. It has strong sympathy for the negative impacts of climate change faced by LDCs, small island countries, African countries and other developing countries.

He said the Chinese government has identified proactive tackling of climate change as a key strategy for economic and social development. It has put forward a target in the 11th five-year plan to reduce energy consumption per unit of GDP by 20% by 2010 from the level of 2005, which includes optimising industrial structure, eliminating outmoded production capacity, enhancing energy conservation and improving energy efficiency, accelerating development of clean energy and increasing forest carbon sink.

He said its per capita GDP is only US\$3,700 and only ranks around 100th place globally, and China still has a huge population living in poverty and is confronted with multiple challenges of economic development, poverty eradication, livelihood improvement and climate protection.

He said China will incorporate the 40% to 45% emission intensity cut by 2020 from 2005 level as a domestic obligatory target in the medium and long term plan for national economic and social development.

China, he added, will continue to follow a path of sustainable development and will never repeat the old path taken by developed countries in their industrialisation process, which emitted greenhouse gases in an unchecked manner. China will adopt comprehensive policies to slow down the speed of emission growth and try to reach emission peak as early as possible.

He said Parties must insist on the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol as the basis for negotiation. Parties need to follow the mandate of the Bali Roadmap. Parties must also insist on achieving common development as the target. The ultimate solution to climate change can only be achieved through common sustainable development of all countries. Developed countries should take the lead in substantial emission reduction so as to leave necessary room for the development of developing countries.

He said as long as we insist on the principles of the Convention and the Protocol, as well as the mandate of the Bali Roadmap and the principles of Party-driven, transparency, inclusiveness and consensus through consultations, the Cancun COP is sure to achieve positive outcomes.

India's Minister of Environment and Forests, Jairam Rames, said it hopes to engage constructively in the negotiation and has made a detailed proposal on MRV (measurable, reporting and verification) and ICA (international consultation and analysis) of its emission reduction targets to stimulate discussion on the issue.

He said India announced in Copenhagen to reduce its emission intensity by 20 to 25% by 2020 from 2005 level and had already set in motion a low carbon strategy which is available in the public domain, keeping in mind the need for transparency. India's energy mix would still include coal but would see an increase in natural gas and nuclear power is expected to double over the next decade.

India has a new strategy governing forests of up to 70million ha in supporting the livelihood of 250 million people that depend on the forests.

Norway's prime minister Jens Stoltenberg said Parties risked losing confidence of the world that we are capable of meeting the challenges of climate change if they don't use the meetings in Cancun to move forward on the key elements of finance, mitigation, adaptation and MRV (measurable, reportable and verifiable).

He said financing is not about funding but balancing economic interests, responsibilities and creating trust among all countries. He said Norway's report concluded that mobilising the promised US\$100 billion a year by 2020 is challenging but feasible. It will require a combination of sources – scaling up of existing public instruments and increase in private

investment. And that pricing carbon emission has a double climate effect - curbing the potential sources of emission in developing countries and providing incentive for reducing emission in developed countries.

He said reducing deforestation can provide the largest and cheapest cuts. Since Copenhagen, more than 70 countries had come together to form a partnership to stop deforestation and recognise the rights of indigenous peoples and that progress needs to be secured in Cancun.

Singapore's senior minister S. Jayakumar said Parties had reached a crossroad in Cancun, as what happens here will determine the future of climate change negotiations. Although the Copenhagen Accord is not perfect, it did represent a modest step and contained important elements to move negotiations forward.

He pointed out that political will and political convergence on the key issues are needed to stitch all the elements together in a legally-binding nature without which there will be no agreement.

He said it is important to send a strong signal on the continuity of the Kyoto Protocol but how Parties choose to proceed is up to the sovereign rights of the states.

Germany Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Norbert Roettgen said its strategy of renewable energy has proven to be successful even in time of financial crisis. We had come out even stronger. Due to our strength in exporting environmental technology, we hold 30% of world market share and the share is rising. Its energy policy has laid the foundation for transfer of economy upto 2050 where it could reduce (fossil) energy consumption by 95% by 2050 and create upto 500,000 new jobs and saving upto €20bil in energy imports.

In Cancun, he said Parties need to prove that they are capable of acting in a multilateral manner as climate change can be addressed together to achieve more ambitious results.

Dialogues on the side

The first of two dialogue sessions was held on Wednesday, organised by the Mexican Presidency on the side line of the 16th Conference of Parties (COP) of 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).

The dialogue titled *Consequences of inaction: our responsibility to act now* provided a platform for countries from the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), African Group and Least Developed Countries to share their experiences in coping with severe climatic events and their expectations of the UNFCCC negotiations.

The second session – *The struggle against climate change, what should our legacy be?* is scheduled for 9 December.

The panel of six speakers, five from Parties to the UNFCCC and Sir Nicholas Stern (former economic adviser to the British government and who now heads the UN Secretary-General's High Level Advisory Group on Climate Finance) was chaired by Mexican president Felipe Calderon.

Calderon shared that the country already used up its annual budget of 1 billion pesos for post-disaster infrastructure reparation this year on just one hurricane event in January and had already spent another 1.5 billion pesos after another hurricane disaster. As such, Mexico is planning a special reconstruction fund of 5 billion pesos for next year.

Stern said many developing countries are facing a challenge of development in an increasingly hostile climate. As such adaptation and mitigation actions are bound together intricately whether we look at agriculture, infrastructure development or transportation.

He said as we tackle those problems, we must not forget how closely they are linked together.

Therefore, he said high carbon growth before long will kill itself and the serious growth route forward is the low carbon pathway.

If we are going to explore the idea of a green industrial revolution, we have to collaborate and this spirit of collaboration is to be valued and enhanced as Parties move forward in the on-going negotiation for the remaining 48 hours.

He said not only rich countries have to set example but they have to support this collaboration through finance.

President of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi said there is no other option but to adapt to climate change but should the temperature increase in the range of 5°C, it would simply be inadaptable.

He said as far as Africa is concerned, it has to adapt under a 1°C increase, it may manage under a 2°C increase but beyond that it would be impossible to do so. So, it will have to start mitigation now too as it cannot have one or the other (referring to adaptation) and that effort has to be replicated throughout the world as we will perish or survive together.

This, he said, is the obvious agenda that we all need to work together. If we can't manage climate change as a global community, it's clear that we can't manage other international cooperation as climate change is about common survival.

Zenawi said it would be difficult to get a perfect agreement and Parties will have to make do with what is possible. He added that while Africa would prefer a perfect agreement and recognised that it has more at stake with a quick and tolerable agreement but it is already facing the consequences of climate change.

President Johnson Toribiong of Palau said as a country made up of islands and atolls, Palau is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise. He also said the warming sea, which led to coral bleaching not only affects the fish stocks but also the tourism industry.

He said the Pacific islanders felt helpless because as a region with limited resources they cannot address the problem alone as it requires the whole world to reverse the process (of global warming).

Prime Minister of Grenada, Tillman Thomas said climate change is a planetary emergency that requires collective actions. He said vulnerable countries are not in a position to respond to disasters. He is concerned that it would take more resources to respond if we delay taking actions now.

Porfirio Lobo, the President of Honduras agreed that there is no way of doing it (addressing climate change) in isolation, as it needs to be properly coordinated. He said 70% of logging in Honduras is to produce firewood for the poor and the threats from climate change will even be greater if we don't resolve poverty.

Chairman of the Commission of African Union Jean Ping said the African continent emits as much as the state of Texas in the United States but yet it is suffering so much.

Noting the predicament of the small island states, he said some parts of Africa are also experiencing sea level rise. He said Niger is currently suffering from drought and people are dying and Lake Chad on which seven countries depend on for fisheries is drying up.

He said these issues are neglected but instead Parties are focusing on forests in the Congo Basin as that is their interests, referring to the attention paid to the forests under the proposed REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries) mechanism as a mitigation measure with financial support from developed countries.

However, he noted that very little attention is paid to outlying islands (in west Africa) that are hit by droughts where the inhabitants are forced to migrate and cross the Atlantic Ocean.

He said the 53 countries of Africa decided to come to Cancun to speak with one voice and ask people to be serious. He said Africa is ready to move to green energy but to do so it would need technologies that it doesn't possess.

Ping said developed countries must bear the responsibilities for causing climate change by helping poor countries to adapt and mitigate as the crisis deepens. He urged rich countries to put their hands into their pockets and the issue will be resolved. (Otherwise) If the boat sinks, you will sink with your hordes of money.

Zenawi said Ethiopia's development strategy is based on achieving zero emission by 2025 when it achieved middle income status by then. He said Ethiopia has massive potential for renewable energy in the form of hydro, wind and solar power. For example, he said in the Sahara where there is intense sunlight and boundless space to establish solar panel, it can generate enough electricity for the continent and for export to Europe.

He also said Ethiopia will rehabilitate its degrade land which could create a major carbon sink and at the same time produce biofuel. It would also retain moisture and manage flow of rainwater to improve agriculture activities. He said Ethiopia is planting a billion trees annually and plan to do more.

He said Ethiopia had achieved double-digit growth and believed it can maintain the growth in an environmentally responsible manner but to build the

dams and (wind) turbines it would need assistance. Resources must be mobilised in a manner that countries that provide the fund benefit from it as well and suggested that the best way is by pricing carbon. Auctioning of emission rights, reducing

subsidies for fossil fuel, taxation international transport are all option on the table of a financing mechanism that will address the concern of both developed and developing countries.