

Copenhagen Accord fails to deliver, say some SIDS and LDC leaders

Cancun, 10 December (Hilary Chiew) – Political leaders from some least developed countries and small island states that have associated themselves with the Copenhagen Accord expressed their disappointment with the promised fast start finance that remains elusive and they are also concerned that the pledges are insufficient to keep temperature rise below a safe limit for them.

The second session of the Head of States dialogue organised on the side lines of the 16th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 6th Meeting of the Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) by the Mexican COP presidency saw the participation of six developing countries, Norway, the President of the World Bank and the secretary-general of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Chaired by President Felipe Calderon, the panelists today discussed the topic titled *“The struggle against climate change; what should our legacy be?”*

Guyana’s President Bharrat Jagdeo said Guyana attended the Cancun meeting with lower than normal expectation. He said he heard a lot about partnership but noted that the lack of trust is so palpable especially between the developed and developing countries.

On fast start finance, he said he had seen some dubious accounting of how developed countries are disbursing the money. We saw the Copenhagen Accord as a compromise. Although it is not perfect but there is some money there but (until today), not a cent has been disbursed to vulnerable countries.

We have not determined the criteria for vulnerability and propaganda will not solve the climate change problem, he said. The way forward is to have an aggressive fight to restore the momentum before

Copenhagen. That momentum is now replaced by disappointment and malice; and filled by climate skeptics. We should not let skeptics prevail. The only way to have tough actions is to have as many people as possible to put pressure on developed countries leaders who are laggards to make the right decisions, the President added.

Illustrating the excuses used by developed countries in disbursing funds, he said Guyana has a world class MRV (measurable, reportable and verifiable) system in its forest management. Whatever you pay, you will receive a report right down to the last tone (of CO₂). Yet, he had heard nightmare stories about financing.

Sometimes (the stories) gets worse the smaller you are. Small countries, he said, have to jump through many hoops but this was not the case with big countries like Indonesia and Brazil.

He warned that we risk taking away the biggest incentives to the carbon market if there is not going to be a legally binding agreement on emissions reduction. He said a carbon price signal is needed to mobilise private funding as public funding alone cannot do the job.

He stressed that climate change poses an existential threat to the developing countries. It’s a matter of life and death, people eating or not; sometimes we lose that perspective here.

Recalling UN secretary-general Ban Ki Moon’s remarks, “The perfect not being the enemy of the good”, **Nauru President Marcus Stephen** said for small island states the ‘good’ is their survival. It is important that it is the starting point. He said they are not in Cancun to derail the process but they support limiting temperature rise to below 1.5°C as that’s what the science says and urged Parties not to ignore the science.

Prime Minister of Central African Republic Faustin Archang Touadera said his country was expecting technology transfer in the field of renewable energy as compensation for sacrificing its forests in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

He said we need to realise that efforts need to be made by the rich as they had polluted more and that brought about the problem of climate change. We call upon Annex I countries to honour their commitments so that we can survive, he urged.

Kiribati President Anote Tong said the issue of vulnerability has to be addressed as all countries considered themselves to be vulnerable. We have to at some stage define vulnerability.

He said his country did not sign the Copenhagen Accord for the simple reason that keeping temperature rise below 2°C is not acceptable but later associated with it as there was understanding that association would trigger the flow of funds.

He however had not seen a cent and had to disappoint his people who requested for the construction of seawalls. We had done the study and know the costs but we do not have the money to build the seawalls, he said.

Despite most small island states' demands for 1.5°C to be the limit for temperature rise, he believed that even if that is achieved in the pending agreement, it would be too late for a country like Kiribati.

Samoa's Prime Minister Tuilaepa Lupesoliai Sailele Maliegeaoi said direct access for Parties is long overdue and there is need for clarity of fast start finance and increase in the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) proceeds to the Adaptation Fund.

While welcoming the 5th replenishment to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which is the only financial operating entity of the UNFCCC, he said replenishment to the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund must be through assessed contributions and not via pledges as is currently the case.

He said technologies must be appropriate, affordable and suitable for the population sizes of the Pacific Islands. The islands, he added, must not be used as dumping grounds for obsolete and untested technologies.

Referring to the plight of the vulnerable island states, **South African President Jacob Zuma** said it has been the case that the most vulnerable countries once again make a very compelling case and we must take note of their situations. Unfortunately, they can't do it on their own but if Parties work together, we can achieve more. Acting now cost far less than acting later, he said.

He stressed that as agreed in Bali, the politically accepted way for the climate regime to go forward is through an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol to establish a second commitment period and a legally binding outcome under the Convention.

We must leave Cancun having agreed to the overarching position and the continuation of negotiation of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. This will enable Durban to build on what is achieved in Cancun and ensure future generations inherit a world that is sustainable and climate resilient.

(South Africa will host the 17th COP and the 7th CMP in Durban in 2011.)

World Bank president Robert Zoellick said cooperation is needed among countries in promoting lower carbon growth. He stressed on the role of the market in allocating resources (in fighting climate change) efficiently such as through carbon pricing, incentives and disincentives. There is also the need to integrate development programmes and the poverty eradication agenda. He said it would be sad if one or two countries hold the climate negotiation hostage (and prevent) progress (in the multilateral process).

In conclusion, President Calderon said even if developed countries bring down their emissions to zero but as developing countries grow and continue to emit, the problem will be worsened. Island states not only vulnerable to impacts of climate change but may disappear. He said the logical thing to do is to stop global warming.

Likening the fight against climate change as a vehicle without a driver, he said somebody has to take control of the situation and steer it to safety. He said a 'all or nothing posture' (referring to specific demands of various Parties) should not prevail.